

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY PROCLAIMS MAY 20-26 HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Urges Citizens to Prepare Now for Busy Storm Season

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley has proclaimed May 20-26 as “Hurricane Preparedness Week” and urged all citizens to prepare for this year’s predicted increase in storm activity by assembling disaster preparedness kits and updating emergency plans. Hurricane season officially begins on June 1.

“Sub-tropical storm Andrea was a wake-up call for our state and a reminder to all North Carolinians to get ready for what could be a busy hurricane season,” said Easley. “Our state’s vulnerability to hurricanes ranks second only to Florida, so every citizen must be prepared.”

Despite increased hurricane activity in recent years, a poll conducted earlier this month by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research, Inc. indicated that most North Carolinians are not concerned about or prepared for major storms during this hurricane season. According to the poll, about 54 percent of those interviewed said they did not feel vulnerable to damage from a hurricane, related tornadoes or flooding. More than half of the respondents said they did not have a disaster plan and 68 percent said they did not have an emergency supply kit.

“Citizens across our state must take personal responsibility to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies so they can be safe on their own for the first few days after a storm,” said Easley. “If those who are able to prepare will do so, then police officers, firefighters and EMS crews will be able to help those in life threatening situations first.”

To better educate citizens on what they need to do to prepare for hurricane season, the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety spearheaded a 30-minute television program that will air this summer in English and Spanish on several stations across the state. Titled “Get Ready, North Carolina!” the program outlines some of the real dangers from hurricanes and tells people what they need to do to prepare their families.

The program was paid for with U.S. Homeland Security grant funds assigned to the N.C. Citizen Corps program and was produced by Ron Sachs Communications. Citizen Corps is a network of state, local and tribal councils whose mission is to encourage every citizen to participate in making communities better prepared to respond to emergencies through education, training, and volunteer service.

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North Carolinians are also encouraged to review and update their homeowners' insurance policy to make sure it includes coverage for accidental damage and natural disasters and, if necessary, flood insurance.

Families should have an emergency plan and emergency preparedness kit ready to go at all times. The kit should contain enough non-perishable food and a gallon of water per person per day to last three to five days, and should also include the following essentials:

- Copies of insurance papers and identification sealed in a watertight plastic bag
- First aid kit
- Weather radio and batteries
- Supply of prescription medicines
- Bedding
- Changes of clothes
- Personal hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and deodorant
- Cash or checkbook
- Pet supplies including food, water, leashes, bedding, muzzle and vaccination records

Citizens should stay informed during a storm by keeping a battery-powered radio for weather and evacuation information and should know evacuation routes in their community. People also need to heed the warnings of state and local officials and evacuate quickly when told to do so.

This year, officials are encouraging people to evacuate their homes with their pets to specially designated pet-friendly shelters. Trailers at the shelters will be equipped with pet crates, but citizens should bring feeding dishes, food and water, immunization papers and other pet supplies.

For more information on how to prepare for any type of emergency, visit www.ReadyNC.org. To find out about volunteer opportunities and basic emergency response training visit the Citizen Corps website at www.citizencorps.gov.

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