

Safety Tips for the 2014 Hurricane Season

Hurricane season runs June 1 through November 30

WILMINGTON, Del. – Today, Delaware Governor Jack Markell and U.S. Sen. Tom Carper joined the American Red Cross, the Delaware Emergency Management Agency and the Delaware Department of Homeland Security to urge Delawareans to prepare themselves, their families, and their businesses for the 2014 hurricane storm season. The **Atlantic and Caribbean Hurricane season begins June 1 and runs through November 30.**

“Hurricanes have resulted in real damage to homes and businesses across the state in recent years, but we’ve also limited the damage because of the support we have received from the public in prevention and response efforts” said Governor Jack Markell. **“Our best defense is to be well prepared before any storm arrives and we all have a role to play. Keeping our communities as safe as possible requires advanced coordination and cooperation among state government, the general public and organizations like the Red Cross.”**

“If the superstorms of the last several years have taught us anything, it’s to be prepared for everything,” said Sen. Carper, chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. **“Now is the time to protect your homes, businesses and property from severe weather.”**

“Being prepared and staying well informed through local media and DEMA’s web site is most important in keeping our families and neighbors safe during severe weather events. Our citizens must prepare now for this year’s hurricane season so that they know what to do before, during and after a hurricane strikes,” said Delaware Safety and Homeland Security Secretary Lewis D. Schiliro.

A 2013 survey by the American Red Cross and The Weather Channel found that few Americans living in coastal counties have taken necessary action to prepare for severe tropical storms and hurricanes. Only about half of those surveyed have an evacuation plan or a plan for communicating with family members if they are separated. Nearly a third of people did not have an emergency kit with supplies.

“The importance of maintaining and sustaining your knowledge of your community, hazards, home, neighbors, your planning efforts, and maintaining and sustaining knowledge of storm impacts are the primary areas of consideration that will assist you in making decisions to preserve your personal safety and that of your family and your neighbors, said Jamie Turner, director of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency. “Have a plan, have a kit; exercise and update both on an annual basis.”

“Preparedness is critical when it comes to life-threatening disasters such as hurricanes,” said Patrick Delaney, CEO, American Red Cross Delmarva Region. “It’s important families and individuals make time to build an emergency kit, create an evacuation plan, and download the Red Cross Hurricane App to help make it through the next storm safely.”

Even communities far inland from the coast can experience hurricanes depending on the course of the storm, often with the threat of powerful winds and widespread flooding. In addition, strong rip currents even at large distances from the storm can threaten those at the beach many miles away.

PREPARE BEFORE THE STORM

Hurricanes are powerful and dangerous storms. They can bring heavy rains that cause major flooding, destructive winds that down power lines, uproot trees and damage homes, and storm surges that travel several miles inland destroying everything in its path.

As hurricane season approaches, it is important to know the difference between the threat levels.

- A **Hurricane Watch** is when conditions are a threat within 48 hours. It's then time to review your hurricane plans. Get ready to act if a warning is issued, and stay informed.
- A **Hurricane Warning** is when conditions are expected within 36 hours. It's then time to complete your storm preparations and leave the area if directed to do so by authorities.

Now is the time for families and individual to build an emergency kit and create an evacuation plan. For more information, go to <http://www.ready.gov/american-red-cross> or www.dema.delaware.gov.