



Union County Health Department

1224 W. Roosevelt Blvd., Monroe, NC 28110 Phone (704) 296-4800 Fax (704) 296-4807

News Release

September is National Preparedness Month Time to Prepare, Plan and Stay Informed

August 31, 2012, Monroe, NC – The Union County Health Department would like to remind our residents that September is a good time to prepare – not only for the next hurricane or flood – but for any emergency that might put you and your family at risk. In today’s world we need to be prepared for many kinds of emergencies, whether caused by disease outbreak, hurricane, wildfire, severe weather, earthquake or an act of terrorism. As the Ready.gov slogan says, “Prepare, Plan, Stay Informed.”

Step 1: Build a Kit

- Build a Kit, which includes items like non-perishable food and bottled water. The kit should also include:
 - Wind-up or battery-operated radio
 - Wind-up or battery-operated flashlight
 - Extra batteries
 - Copies of prescription medications and medical supplies
 - Bedding and clothing, including sleeping bags and pillows
 - A first aid kit
 - Copies of important documents: driver’s license, Social Security card, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, etc.
- Make sure you have a “to-go bag” ready in case you need to evacuate, including:
 - Wind-up or battery-operated radio
 - Wind-up or battery-operated flashlight
 - Extra batteries
 - First aid kit
 - Maps
 - Important documents such as proof of residence, pictures of your family including pets, insurance policies, and tax records
 - Comfortable clothing and blankets



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- Unique family needs such as prescription medications, pet supplies, infant supplies or any other unique need your family may have

Step 2: Make a Plan

Prepare your family

- Make a Family Emergency Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, child care and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.
- Plan to Evacuate
 - Identify ahead of time where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
 - Identify several places you could go in an emergency, a friend's home in another town, a motel or public shelter.
 - If you do not have a car, plan alternate means of evacuating.
 - If you have a car, keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.
 - Take your Emergency Supply Kit.
 - Take your pets with you, and know ahead of time if the hotel/motel or shelter you plan to stay in will accept pets. Bring a carrier, food and water, and your pet's vaccination record.

Step 3: Be Informed

Before a disaster, learn how you will know there is an impending hazardous event. Familiarize yourself with the signs of events that come without warning and learn how to receive advance alerts and warnings for predictable hazards like hurricanes. Knowing about the local emergency plans for shelter and evacuation and local emergency contacts will help you develop your household plan and will also aid you during a crisis.

Familiarize yourself with the terms used to identify a hurricane.



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- A **hurricane watch** means a hurricane is possible in your area. Be prepared to evacuate. Monitor local radio and television news outlets or listen to NOAA Weather Radio for the latest developments.
- A **hurricane warning** is when a hurricane is expected in your area. If local authorities advise you to evacuate, leave immediately.
- Hurricanes are classified into **five categories** based on their wind speed, central pressure, and damage potential. Category 3 and higher hurricanes are considered major hurricanes, though Categories 1 and 2 are still extremely dangerous and warrant your full attention.

Prepare Your Home

- Cover all of your home's windows with pre-cut plywood or hurricane shutters to protect your windows from high winds.
- Plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything else that is not tied down.
- Keep all trees and shrubs well-trimmed so they are more wind resistant.
- Secure your home by closing shutters, and securing outdoor objects or bringing them inside.
- Turn off utilities as instructed. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

The information above is a just a sample of what residents can do to prepare. More information about preparedness can be found at the following websites:

- <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/phpr/>
- www.readync.org
- www.ready.gov
- www.bt.cdc.gov
- www.redcross.org

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