

Hurricanes

Technical Bulletin Number 5

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Commissioner Bronson surveying Hurricane Katrina damage in South Florida. He noted that **“preparation and planning make a huge difference”** and urges Florida farmers to plan and prepare for emergencies.

Hurricane Facts

- The official Atlantic hurricane season is from June 1st to November 30th. These dates encompass 97% of tropical hurricane activity.
- 40% of all U.S. hurricanes have hit Florida.
- 83% of category 4 or higher hurricanes have hit either Florida or Texas.
- Following a hurricane, Disaster Recovery Centers are key sources of information and assistance from federal and state agencies.

Florida's Hurricane History

Florida leads the nation in direct hurricane hits for the period 1851 to 2004. A comparison of twenty year periods beginning in 1851 indicates major hurricanes tended to hit Gulf Coast states before 1891, then favored Florida and the West Gulf until 1911, shifting to the eastern Gulf Coast states and Florida during the next twenty years, then to Florida and the Atlantic Coast states during the 1940s-1950s, and back to the

western Gulf Coast states in the following twenty-year period. Florida experienced 110 hurricanes during this period versus the next highest states: Texas (59), Louisiana (49), and North Carolina (46). Forty percent of all U.S. hurricanes hit Florida. Eighty-three percent of category 4 or higher hurricanes strike either Florida or Texas. September has as many major hurricane landfalls as October and August combined. Texas and Louisiana are the prime targets for pre-August major hurricanes. The threat of major hurricanes increases from west to east during August with major hurricanes favoring the East Coast by late September. Most major October hurricanes occur in southern Florida. The earliest hurricane in the season was Alma which struck northwest Florida on June 9. The latest in the season hurricane struck on November 30 near Tampa. The Gulf and Atlantic coasts, where most of this country's hurricane related fatalities have occurred, are experiencing significant population and economic growth. Because Florida will continue to grow, Floridians must plan and be prepared for hurricanes.



Information from NOAA Technical Memorandum NWS TPC-4 (http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/Deadliest_Costliest.shtml). Map prepared by Scott B. Taylor, Division of Forestry, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Family and Farm Disaster Planning

✓ Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your farm and family. Know your vulnerability to **storm surge, flooding and wind.**

✓ Locate a safe room or safe areas for each hurricane hazard.

✓ Determine escape

routes from your home or farm and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.

✓ Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.

✓ Make a plan now for what to do with your pets.

✓ Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children or employees know how and when to call 911.

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Farm and Family Disaster Planning (continued from page one)

- ✓ Check your insurance coverage.
- ✓ Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a [Disaster Supply Kit](#).
- ✓ Use a NOAA weather radio and replace its battery every 6 months.
- ✓ Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.
- ✓ Acquire and study *Help After a Disaster* available from http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/process/help_after_disaster_english.pdf

Disaster Supply Kit

- ✓ **Water:** 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days
- ✓ **Food** for 3 to 7 days: non-perishable packaged or canned food/juices, foods for infants or the elderly, snack food, non-electric can

opener, cooking tools/fuel, paper plates/plastic utensils

- ✓ **Blankets/Pillows**
- ✓ **Clothing** seasonal/rain gear/sturdy shoes
- ✓ **First Aid Kit/Medicines/ Prescription Drugs**
- ✓ **Special Items** for babies and the elderly
- ✓ **Toiletries/Hygiene items/ Moisture wipes**
- ✓ **Flashlight/Batteries**
- ✓ **Radio** Battery operated and NOAA weather radio
- ✓ **Cash** Banks or ATMs may not be open.
- ✓ **Keys**
- ✓ **Toys, Books and Games**

- ✓ **Important documents** in a waterproof container: insurance and medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
- ✓ **Tools** keep a set with you during the storm
- ✓ **Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
- ✓ **Pet care items:** proper identification/immunization records/medications, ample supply of food and water, a carrier or cage, muzzle and leash

A lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common to all hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce risks to life and property.

For more information, visit <http://www.floridadisaster.org>

Shellfish Environmental Assessment Section Hurricane Response

When a hurricane warning is issued by the National Weather Service, the Shellfish Environmental Assessment Section (SEAS) Environmental Specialists temporarily close shellfish harvest areas included in the warning at sunset. These precautionary emergency closures are in anticipation of storm surge, heavy rainfall and power outages at waste water treatment plants that could endanger

SEAS personnel or contaminate Shellfish Harvest Areas with surface water runoff. If the hurricane does not strike the area and the anticipated damage does not occur, then Shellfish Harvest Areas will be immediately reopened the following day at sunrise. However, if Shellfish Harvest Areas are contaminated, SEAS Environmental Specialists will systematically collect water samples and shellfish meat

samples for testing to ensure a safe and wholesome product can enter the marketplace.

Shellfish Harvest Area closure information is available from each of the Division's offices or by visiting www.FloridaAquaculture.com.

Post Hurricane Shellfish Plant Inspection

After a hurricane the following actions are implemented to determine whether shellfish processing plants are capable of producing wholesome products.

Division staff calls the plants that have been impacted by the storm. If contact is made, staff determines if there was: loss of power, length of time power was lost, type and amount of product on hand, measures taken to insure temperature abuse has not occurred (ice, port-

able generators, refrigerated vehicles or trailers), integrity of water supply, facility damage, extent of storm surge, and length of time for repairs. Plant management is informed what actions will be necessary before processing can resume. Staff follows up with an in-person inspection as soon as practical.

If no phone contact can be established, staff conduct an inspection as

soon as it is safe to do so. Special attention is given to: structural integrity, water supply, cooling systems, and ice production. Plant management is informed what actions will be necessary before processing can resume.

When processing plants have extensive damage, the processing certification license may be suspended. The Department notifies the U. S. Food and Drug Administration as to the status of processing plants listed on the Interstate Certified Shellfish Shipper List.

Hurricane Recovery Contact Information

Internet

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/>
<http://www.fema.gov/>
<http://www.floridadisaster.org/>
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/>
<http://www.myflorida.com/>

Telephone

Agency for Workforce Innovation
(unemployment claims) - 800-204-2418

American Red Cross: 800-HELP-NOW (800-435-7669)

American Red Cross Food, Shelter, and Financial Assistance:
866-GET-INFO (866-438-4636)

Construction Industry Licensing Board - 850-487-1395

DACS, Division of Consumer Services (to report price gouging and fraud) - 800-HELP-FLA (800-435-7352)

Department of Children and Families (Disaster Food Stamp Hotline) - 800-342-9274

Department of Financial Services (insurance complaints and assistance) - 800-22-STORM (800-227-8676)

Elder Services Hotline - 800-963-5337

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – 800-621-FEMA (800-621-3362)

Florida Emergency Information Hotline - 800-342-3557

Florida Power and Light - 800-468-8243

Salvation Army (donation hotline) - 800-996-2769

Volunteer Florida Foundation (to donate money or volunteer) - 800-354-3571.

U.S. Dept of Agriculture - Farm Service Agency Offices
(Noninsured crop disaster assistance and agricultural emergency loan)
State Office (Gainesville) - 352-379-4500

FSA County Offices

Alachua, Bradford - 352-376-7414

Baker, Duval, Nassau - 904-266-0088

Bay, Washington - 850-638-1982

Brevard, Osceola - 407-847-4201

Broward, Palm Beach - 561-683-2285

Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Liberty - 850-674-8388

Charlotte, Lee - 239-997-7331

Citrus, Sumter - 352-793-2651

Clay, Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns - 386-328-5051

Collier, Glades, Hendry - 863-983-7250

Columbia, Union - 386-752-8447

DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee, Sarasota - 863-773-4764

Dixie, Gilchrist - 352-463-2358

Escambia - 850-587-5345

Gadsden - 850-627-6365

Hamilton - 386-792-1308

Hernando, Pasco - 352-588-5211

Highlands - 863-385-7853

Hillsborough, Pinellas - 813-752-1474

Holmes - 850-547-2850

Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie - 772-461-4546

Jackson - 850-526-2610

Lafayette, Taylor - 386-294-1851

Lake, Orange - 352-742-7005

Leon, Jefferson, Wakulla - 850-997-2072

Levy - 352-486-2125

Madison - 904-973-2205

Marion - 352-732-7534

Miami-Dade, Monroe - 305-242-1197

Okaloosa - 850-682-2416

Okeechobee - 863-763-3345

Polk - 863-533-2051

Santa Rosa - 850-623-2441

Seminole, Volusia - 386-734-2535

Suwannee - 386-362-2681

Walton - 850-892-3712 ext. 2

What to do. Where to go. Who to talk to.

After a Presidential Disaster Declaration is signed, individuals and farms should contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at 800-621-3362 to apply for assistance and receive a FEMA application number.

Once an application is processed, further assistance will be available at Disaster Recovery Centers which

may be established regionally or in each of the declared counties. Federal, state, local, and volunteer representatives will be available at the Centers to assist with:

Small Business Administration offers low interest loans to individuals and businesses for refinancing, repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of damaged property (real and per-

sonal). Loans may be available to businesses that suffered economic impacts. An SBA declaration can be made independently or in concert with a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance for individuals not covered by regular state or private unemployment insurance, will be eligible for unemployment benefits and may be provided until an individual is re-employed or

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Safeguarding the public, protecting the environment, and supporting Florida's aquacultural economy.



Our thanks to Commissioner Bronson, the Governor's Office, and the National Hurricane Center for providing information or images.

Visit

<http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com>
for Florida aquaculture information

Stopping Price Gouging during Emergencies

During a state of emergency the State of Florida may invoke a price-gouging statute. This statute makes it illegal to charge excessive or exorbitant prices for essential items, including shelter, gasoline, food, water, ice, lumber or generators, unless the increases in the amount charged are attributable to additional costs incurred by retailers.



Individuals or businesses found to have engaged in price gouging face fines of up to \$1,000 per violation, or up to a maximum fine of \$25,000 per day.

Commissioner of Agriculture Charles H. Bronson encourages residents who witness what they believe are price gouging incidents to report it at once to his department's price-gouging hotline:

1 800 HELP FLA (435-7352)

What, Where, Who

up to 26 weeks after the major disaster is declared (whichever is shorter).

Farm Service Agency offers low interest disaster loans to farmers, ranchers and agricultural operators for physical or production losses. Loans of up to 80 percent of actual production loss or 100 percent of the actual physical loss, with a maximum indebtedness of \$500,000, may be made to the tenant or owner.

Temporary Housing Program may be authorized to meet housing needs. This FEMA program has several components: Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program for individuals or families who have received written notice of eviction or foreclosure due to financial hardship. Rental Assistance for homeowners or renters whose dwelling is unlivable. Minimal Repair Program provides money for owner occupied, primary

residences which may have sustained minor damage and are unlivable. Mobile Homes or Other Readily Fabricated Dwellings that FEMA may move to, or near, the disaster site.

Other Needs Assistance (ONA) Program provides grants to help families meet serious needs and necessary expenses that are not covered by other government assistance, insurance, or other conventional assistance programs. Financial aid can be provided for: medical expenses, transportation costs, home repairs, replacement of essential property, protective measures, or funeral expenses.

Unmet Needs Assistance assists individuals through partnerships with volunteer, non-profit organizations, faith based groups and the private sector.

Florida Department of Insurance provides assistance and information

to resolve insurance claims.

Crisis Counseling to relieve disaster related stress and prevent the development of physical and mental health problems.

Cora Brown Fund for individuals that are not eligible for assistance from other sources may be eligible under special circumstances. Awards are based on FEMA review.

Food Coupons provided by USDA at the federal level and the Florida Department of Children and Families at the state level. Length of eligibility for receiving food coupons will be determined by the President.

Legal Assistance provided by the Young Lawyers Association of America to low income individuals for non-fee generating cases.

Income Tax Service from the Internal Revenue Service to identify casualty loss credits, early tax refunds and information on lost tax documents.