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Are You Prepared in the Event of a Hurricane?

Did you know that in Connecticut, hurricane season is June 1st through November 30th? Hurricanes can destroy property, uproot lives and even cause the loss of life. For these reasons, the Central Connecticut Health District is urging residents to be prepared for upcoming hurricanes this season.

According to the Department of Public Health, a hurricane is a storm with thunder, lightning and very strong winds. Hurricanes can have winds blowing anywhere from 75 miles per hour or greater. They are rated based on the speed of their winds; the higher the rating, the more damaging the wind can be. In addition to high winds, there is flooding in coastal areas and rivers can also flood due to storm surge and heavy rain.

A hurricane watch is typically issued when there is a hurricane threat within 24-36 hours. A hurricane warning is issued when conditions (winds that are 74 miles per hour or greater or dangerously high water and rough seas) are expected within 24 hours.

It is extremely important to have a plan of action in the event that a hurricane strikes the area. Families should designate who is in charge of younger children and loved ones, as well as any neighbors who may be elderly or have special needs and pets. Knowing the evacuation routes is helpful in the event of an evacuation, to reduce stress in the case of an emergency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends the following items to create a disaster ready kit before any indication of a hurricane:

- ✓ One gallon of water per person, per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- ✓ At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food (canned goods, protein bars, granola bars, etc) and a manual can opener
- ✓ Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- ✓ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Whistle to signal for help
- ✓ Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- ✓ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ✓ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ✓ Local maps
- ✓ Cell phone with charger

Once you have gathered the basic supplies, the following items may be added as well, depending on the needs of your family:

- ✓ Prescription medication and glasses/contacts
- ✓ Infant formula and diapers
- ✓ Pet food with extra water for your pet
- ✓ Cash and change
- ✓ Copies of important family documents (Social Security card, insurance policies, bank account numbers)
- ✓ Sleeping bags or warm blankets
- ✓ Matches in a waterproof container
- ✓ Paper cups, utensils and plates

- ✓ Feminine hygiene products
- ✓ Books, activities for children
- ✓ Change of clothing, including long sleeved shirt, long pants, sturdy shoes

Once you have collected all of the items and information you will need, it is important to sit down with your family and discuss the information that will be put into the plan. It is also suggested to keep a list of local contact information for places such as local hospitals, local utilities, local American Red Cross, local TV stations, local radio stations, your property insurance management in the case of an emergency and to stay updated on any changes after the storm.

The Central Connecticut Health District has free copies of “Connecticut Guide to Emergency Preparedness” available for any resident of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield who wish to be prepared in the event of an emergency. This guide has information for all types of emergencies and how to prepare for each of them. For more information about emergency preparedness in the Central Connecticut Health District, celebrating 15 years of service, please contact our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Judy Torpey at (860)721-2816.