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FOR GEORGIA COUNTIES

Disaster News

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JUNE IS HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS MONTH; GEORGIANS GET READY FOR STORMS AND FLOODS

ATLANTA – South Georgia residents have already survived weeks of flooding but it's time to get ready for hurricane season, said officials with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). June is National Hurricane Preparedness Month.

Georgians have faced 10 declared disasters from hurricanes, tropical storms and heavy rains since Hurricane Alberto in 1994. The most recent was the March 26-April 13 severe storms and flooding. Disasters between Alberto and this year's record flooding include floods in 2008 and 1998, and hurricanes Ivan in 2004, Floyd in 1999, and Opal in 1995.

Although hurricanes can't be predicted long in advance, residents can take care of many important preparations this month, before the rush that accompanies a storm's arrival.

"Early preparations will help Georgia residents be ready in the event of a storm," said Charley English of GEMA. "It's everybody's responsibility to be ready."

The Ready Georgia Web site, www.ready.ga.gov, provides online step-by-step tools that enable you to create a custom preparedness plan and emergency supply kit. You can create a personal profile with basic family member information (medical instructions, pets) and contact information (work, school, emergency contact, meeting place). After you create your profile, a custom checklist and plan will be generated with recommended amounts of food and water your family will need to survive for 72 hours along with a personal emergency communication plan with specific meeting places.

Key preparations before the rush of the storm include assembling a disaster kit, having an emergency plan, staying informed, and getting involved.

"Don't wait to start preparing," said Terry Quarles of FEMA. "There are several things every person can do in June, before a storm's arrival, to ensure they're prepared and can cope better with the storm's effects."

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Georgians' preparations should include:

- **Disaster kits** with water and nonperishable food for at least three days, portable radio and flashlights with plenty of batteries; prescription medication, important documents, and other special needs such as baby diapers.
- **An emergency plan** so each family member knows how to find others. Have another emergency contact person who lives out of town.
- **Stay informed** on evacuation orders and routes. Check with your insurance agent on flood insurance and your homeowner's policy.
- **Get involved** by contacting groups such as the Citizen Corps Council to learn how your community prepares for hurricane season and how you can help. For more information on the council, go to www.citizencorps.gov.

For more information on those and other preparations, go to www.ready.gov.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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For more information on Georgia's disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov or www.gema.ga.gov or www.ready.ga.gov/ or <http://twitter.com/GeorgiaEMA>