

June 1, marks the start of the 2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season which runs until November 30th. This year, experts are forecasting an above-average year for tropical development. Though the state of Florida has avoided a land-falling hurricane the last five years, it is important to remember how dangerous and devastating these powerful storms can be. Even tropical storms can produce widespread and devastating impacts, Tropical Storm Fay of 2008 being a recent example, and the phrase “it’s just a tropical storm” should also instill a mindset of preparedness.

Florida is the hurricane capital of the United States and no matter where you live in the Sunshine State, you are vulnerable to the effects of a hurricane. History teaches that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster. Pre-season forecasts can estimate how many storms may develop within a given season, but they *cannot* tell where storms will make landfall.

Now is the time to make preparations so that you can protect yourself, your home and your business in the event that tropical system threatens your area. Residents and visitors should stay informed of the latest information during an approaching storm by monitoring a trusted local information outlet, and knowing when to put your family disaster plan into action. The best way for residents to make their families, homes and businesses safer is to be prepared before a disaster happens.



A personal disaster plan and a well-stocked disaster supply kit are essential tools to ensure your family’s safety and security during a hurricane. Residents and businesses can prepare for the 2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season now by going to www.FloridaDisaster.org, where you can create a personal disaster plan and a business disaster plan.

Building a disaster supply kit is a simple and effective way to sure a family has enough water, food, medicine and other essential supplies when other resources may not be readily available. Different families have different needs, so residents to be sure to take into account their family’s specific needs. A recommended items that should be placed in a disaster supply be found on www.FloridaDisaster.org.



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Another important outlet you can use to help your family prepare for this hurricane season is www.KidsGetAPlan.com. This fun, interactive website presents basic weather safety and emergency preparedness concepts through age-appropriate activities and stories. While online, kids can play games that teach them how to build a disaster supply kit and understand other essential safety facts.

Tropical system hazards come in many forms, including storm surge, high winds, tornadoes, and flooding. These are all threats to the Sunshine State during Hurricane Season and this means it is important for your family to have a plan that includes all of these hazards. The National Hurricane Center will issue Tropical Storm and Hurricane Watches and Warnings when these conditions are expected along a specific coastal area.



- **Tropical Storm Watch:** An announcement that tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are possible within the specified coastal area within 48 hours.
- **Tropical Storm Warning:** An announcement that tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are expected within the specified coastal area within 36 hours.
- **Hurricane Watch:** An announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained of 74 mph or higher) are possible somewhere within the specified coastal area. *Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.*
- **Hurricane Warning:** An announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are expected somewhere within the specified coastal area. *Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.*



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The following are the 2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season names with pronunciations.

1. Arlene (ar-LEEN)
2. Bret (bret)
3. Cindy (SIN-dee)
4. Don (dahn)
5. Emily (EH-mih-lee)
6. Franklin (FRANK-lin)
7. Gert (gert)
8. Harvey (HAR-vee)
9. Irene (eye-REEN)
10. Jose (ho-ZAY)
11. Katia (ka-TEE-ah)
12. Lee (LEE)
13. Maria (muh-REE-uh)
14. Nate (nait)
15. Ophelia (o-FEEL-ya)
16. Philippe (fee-LEEP)
17. Rina (REE-nuh)
18. Sean (shawn)
19. Tammy (TAM-ee)
20. Vince (vinss)
21. Whitney (WHIT-nee)