

Hurricane Readiness

Be sure to have cash on hand in case ATMs are not working. Just as mentioned above for gas stations, banks may be without power for a period of time.

Don't wait until the last minute to prepare your home for the storm. We've all seen the mad rush to purchase plywood and other supplies to protect homes. Decide what you may need ahead of time and make your purchases early. If you need help to bring in patio furniture and other items, be sure to make arrangements for that before the last minute as well.

Register with the Carteret County CodeRED communication service that allows the Emergency Management team to notify citizens about emergency situations. To register, visit carteretcountync.gov/525/Emergency-Notification. Direct all questions about CodeRED to the Emergency Services Department at 222-5841.

Mandatory evacuation—what does this mean? It means that if you are a resident the Emergency Management Office is strongly recommending that you leave the island. It does not mean that we can forcibly make you leave. There may be a time in the storm when rescue efforts will be shut down because it is unsafe for emergency services personnel to be out in the storm. If you were to need services, there could be a time lapse before you receive assistance. Be sure to consider this possibility when making your decision about evacuation.

If you evacuate, when should you choose to leave? It is recommended that you leave at least 48 hours before the estimated landfall of a hurricane. If you can possibly leave at least 72 hours out, you may avoid traffic issues.

Where should you go if you evacuate? My personal recommendation is beyond Raleigh, Burlington or Greensboro. That should place you beyond any potential path of the storm and you will have power throughout your stay in the motel. Be sure to check with motels ahead of time to make sure your pets will be welcome. It is also a good idea to let friends and family know that you have evacuated.

If you require evacuation to a facility for medical reasons (oxygen, assistance with medications, etc.), you must register with Carteret County Emergency Services. If you do not have internet access, call Natalie Gible at the Pine Knoll Shores Public

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Safety Department at 247-2268 for assistance. If you do have access to a computer, go the Carteret County website (carteretcountync.gov) and select Emergency Services under the "Services" tab. On the right side of the Emergency Services page you will see a "Special Needs Registration" link. This link will give you access to a form to be completed and returned to the Emergency Services Department. Take care of this now to be sure your request is processed before you need it.

It's good to check the town's website (townofpks.com) or Facebook page for updated information after a storm has passed. If you do not already receive emails from Town Manager Brian Kramer, send an email to Town Clerk Scott Sherrill now at admin@townofpks.com to be added to that list. If you don't have internet access from your evacuation site, you may call the Pine Knoll Shores Public Safety Building at 252-247-2268 or the Carteret County Communications Center at 252-726-1911 to be sure the bridges have reopened before you return to the area. An important (and obvious) point: *do not* call these numbers to ask when electricity and cable services will be restored. If you're in town, the town's radio station, AM-1610, is a good source of information as well.

2014 Hurricane Season Preview

It's difficult not to be subjected to what seems like an overwhelming volume of hurricane predictions this time of year, and while some of these forecasts might be construed as glorified arm-flapping, there is a method to the madness—to help underscore the need to be prepared first and foremost—and that's a good thing. The purpose of this article is to help demystify all the prediction terminology so we can ascertain what type of season we should expect and why. For instance, the "hurricane season" could really be termed the "tropical cyclone season" because cyclones can develop into both tropical storms *and* hurricanes and that's what we're most concerned about. The hurricane season officially runs for a six-month window that opens on June 1 and closes on November 30, yet the formation of a cyclone outside the six-month designation is not outside the realm of possibility. As an example, Hurricanes Alberto and Beryl collectively spent seven days in tropical storm status in May 2012.

Most experts agree that the Atlantic Ocean basin continues to be in a heightened trend of tropical cyclone activity, compliments of cyclical ocean-atmosphere interactions, coupled with possible impacts from warming climate and seas (there's still a lot of debate on this). On a finer scale, forecasters are generally predicting a "below normal" hurricane season for 2014 based predominantly on the likely development of El Niño during the summer/early fall, and model predictions calling for near- or below-average sea-surface temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean. Warmer water serves as "fuel" for cyclones.

Because El Niño is considered the main driver for this year's hurricane season, it's worth diving into this phenomenon a little more. El Niño is actually a component of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) that occurs in the Pacific Ocean basin. ENSO "warm phase," or El Niño, occurs once every two to seven years and generally produces atmospheric conditions that suppress the formation of tropical cyclones in the Atlantic. That's big for us, obviously. Interestingly, the term "El Niño" means "Little Boy" or "Christ Child," which was coined by South American fishermen noting the appearance of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean occurring near Christmas. As you may have guessed by now, "La Niña" (the girl child) is the "cold phase" of ENSO and tends to produce atmospheric conditions more favorable for tropical cyclone development.

So how do we know when El Niño or La Niña is upon us? Traditionally, ENSO cycles were determined empirically based upon the differences in surface air pressure between Tahiti and Darwin, Australia. Today, scientists use sea surface temperature measurements along the equatorial Pacific as an indicator of El Niño or La Niña (particularly in a region known as Niño 3.4). If the sea surface temperature variance is greater than or equal to +0.5° C in region Niño 3.4, then the conditions are classified as El Niño and vice-versa (i.e., if the temperature variance is



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