

Hurricane Readiness

By Ryan Thompson, Pine Knoll Shores Police Chief

Unless you have been living under a rock, you know that the official start to hurricane season was June 1. I can't overstate enough that now is the time to prepare for a hurricane. If you know me, or you have read any of my other articles about hurricane preparedness, you have heard that admonition to get ready now. The reason I keep saying it is because I do not see enough people preparing their families and homes for a hurricane.

I do practice what I preach. At the beginning of June every year, I purchase all of the water and nonperishable food that my wife and son will need (and I buy what we use so it won't go to waste), and I pick up extra bags of dog food. I check our flashlights and battery supplies, make sure that my generator has enough fuel, and I pick a pet-friendly place for my family to stay in the event they need to evacuate.

I also have a list on my fridge of documents and items for my wife to pack and take with her in case she needs to leave the area. Getting this head start on preparing for a hurricane every year allows me to spend more time in Pine Knoll Shores preparing my staff and our citizens—and generally takes a lot of stress off me. I never have to wonder which grocery stores are running out of water, food and batteries because I already have everything I need.

There are dozens of hurricane preparedness lists available on the internet that provide a great blueprint of everything that you will need to survive after a storm in case it takes first responders a while to get to you. The basic foundation of preparedness for everyone is enough food, water, pet food, flashlights and batteries, a portable cell phone charger and medication to last for a week.

Hopefully, everyone who owns property in Pine Knoll Shores already has their hurricane re-entry pass. If you do not, you will have to wait until December 1 to get one. In the past, our staff spent more time issuing hurricane re-entry passes in the days leading up to a coastal storm than we did actually preparing ourselves. The people who waited until the day before Hurricane Florence to get a re-entry pass were not prepared. The people who needed a delivery of cases of water by our first responders the day after Hurricane Florence were not prepared. Please prepare yourselves and your family.

The last two important hurricane issues worth mentioning are mandatory evacuations and calling us to check your property for damage during and after the storm. If our town officials issue a mandatory evacuation, everyone should leave. There are certain circumstances where our first responders will evacuate if a powerful enough hurricane were to make landfall here. If it is too hazardous for us, it is too hazardous for everyone. By staying on the island when a mandatory evacuation has been ordered, you place not only yourself but our first responders at risk in the event we have to come save you.

After Hurricane Florence, our police department was flooded with calls from residents asking that a police officer check their property for damage. Our police officers worked 16-hour days for nearly two weeks straight. We were conducting welfare checks, blocking flooded streets, helping the Fire Department with debris removal, directing traffic so power crews could get into tight places and start repairing our infrastructure, answering domestic

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PUBLIC SAFETY

POLICE

During May, there were 10 arrests; 49 911 hang-ups; 18 alarm activations; 5 animal calls; 2 larceny calls; 1 breaking or entering call; 13 disturbance calls; 26 assist Fire/EMS calls; 2 motor vehicle collisions; 10 assist other agency calls; 360 traffic stops; 84 citations issued for one or more offenses, which included 18 speeding, 3 stop sign/stop light, 10 registration/inspection, 12 license revoked/expired, 43 other traffic violations, 4 drug violations and 6 alcohol violations; 63 beach patrols; 363 business checks; 469 foot patrols; and 206 residence checks. Police personnel participated in 213 training hours. Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) worked 54 hours.

FIRE AND EMS

During May, responders handled 3 fires, 24 rescue and emergency medical service incidents, 2 service calls, 3 good intent calls and 7 false alarm and false calls. Training hours were not available at the time of this report.

REMINDER: Lock your doors, especially your vehicles, and don't leave valuables in sight. Report suspicious people or vehicles to dispatch (726-1911) so that the police can be notified. You are not "bothering" the police if you call to report something that doesn't look right. They prefer to assess the situation rather than find out after the fact that you had noticed something and didn't report it. Alert citizens are assets to the community.

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ARTICLE DEADLINE

DUE DATE	ISSUE
Mon., July 15	Aug.
Wed., Aug. 14	Sept.
Sat., Sept. 14	Oct.
Mon. Oct. 14	Nov.
Wed., Nov. 13	Dec.
Wed., Dec. 11	Jan. 2020
Wed., Jan. 15	Feb.
Wed., Feb. 12	March

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The 19th of the month prior to desired issue

Articles always welcome.