

Hurricane Season 2010

A message from Paul Rasch, Jr.
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Hurricane Season is always a time for preparedness, and we enter the 2010 season with the experts in agreement that the weather patterns expected this year will be more favorable for storm development than any time in recent years. The Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook from the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center is calling for a 5% chance of a below-normal season, a 10% chance of a near-normal season, and an 85% chance of an above-normal season; in 2009 these numbers were 25%, 50% and 25%. Forecasters predict a 70% chance the anticipated weather patterns could bring fourteen to twenty-three named storms, of which eight to fourteen could become hurricanes, including three to seven major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5).

The Town of Hilton Head Island has constantly worked to improve our plans and resources, trying each year to be a little better prepared than we were the year before. The one aspect of this we cannot actively control was recently well summarized by FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate: "We can only be as prepared as the public, so it's important that families and businesses in coastal communities take steps now to be ready. These include developing a communications plan, putting together a kit, and staying informed of the latest forecasts and local emergency plans. You can't control when a hurricane or other emergency may happen, but you can make sure you're ready."

Two significant changes have been implemented by the National Weather Service that you should be aware of as well:

- Due to improved computer modeling, the National Weather Service will be able to issue **Watches and Warnings** twelve hours earlier than they could previously. This means that we should now receive watches 48 hours before the arrival of hurricane conditions here and warnings 36 hours before. The same is true for Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings.
- The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale will now be known as the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The scale keeps the same wind speed ranges for each of the five hurricane categories, but no longer ties arbitrary storm surge and flooding effects to each category. Storm surge predictions will be calculated specifically for each storm, taking variables such as tide level and storm speed into consideration. The end result should be much more accurate surge predictions.

Important resources available for you, as both Town staff and individuals, include:

- The Town's new, free, **E-Subscription Service**. Easily signed up for through the Town website, the service allows you to select from an extensive list of topics and receive e-mail or text messages whenever one of your chosen subject areas is updated with new information. *Hurricane Season Information and Emergency Alerts are among the choices available to you!*

- The ***Citizen's Guide to Emergency Preparedness***, our all-hazard public education folder, contains significant amounts of information on hurricane preparedness, as well as evacuation and reentry. Printed copies are available in the Main Lobby of Town Hall, Fire & Rescue Headquarters, or any Fire Station. It is also available on the Town website.
- The Hurricane Season Information section of the Town website has been updated and expanded, with many useful and appropriate links having been added.
- The Citizen Hurricane Hotline (800.963.5023) will continue as a resource for the general public.
- A ***2009 Hurricane Emergency Information Wallet Card*** was distributed to all employees last year. As all of the information it contains (the Secure Online Staff Portal Access Information, Government Employee and Citizen Hurricane Hotline Numbers, etc.) remains valid a general redistribution of the card is not planned for this year. *Please make sure that you have and carry your card with you throughout the season!* If you did not receive one or it has been damaged or misplaced you can get a replacement from either me or Human Resources.
- The below list of ***Pet Friendly Hotel*** websites is provided for your convenience. While you no doubt care for your pets as much as I do mine, please remember that only service animals are accepted in shelters and at many hotels. I sincerely hope this list is helpful to you in making appropriate arrangements for you and your furry/feathered family members.

www.OfficialPetHotels.com

www.petswelcome.com

www.pettravel.com

www.petfriendly.com

www.dogfriendlyhotels.org

www.dogfriendly.com

www.bringfido.com

www.tripswithpets.com

www.1clickpethotels.com

www.travelpets.com

www.allstays.com/Special/petfriendly.htm

www.doginmysuitcase.com

Hopefully this provides you with a good overview of the resources which have been put in place and how we can prepare together for the next few months. I encourage you to explore the resources listed, to do the planning and preparation necessary to safeguard your family and home and to remain aware of the weather and any developing storms. I will keep you advised of any additional information by e-mail and the various systems listed above.

Please don't to hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or I can provide any additional information, and let's work together to achieve a safe season for all!

Thank You –

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