



HURRICANE HEROES

A behind-the-scenes look at a firefighter's job during a hurricane

PLANNING FOR PETS

An animal expert shares her top tips to keep your pet calm in a storm

PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

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hurricane SURVIVAL

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The Human Side of FIREFIGHTING

BY KRISTAL MCKENZIE

A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT A FIREFIGHTER'S JOB DURING A HURRICANE

The Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) is more than an organization that provides emergency service response. It is the men and women who sacrifice their lives and families to serve Bermuda. While the BFRS works closely with various government departments, as well as the Red Cross, to ensure safety is the highest priority during a normal day, they have extra challenges during a hurricane.

Fire Safety Education Officer Sergeant Gavin Carter explains how he and his colleagues manage particularly stressful emergency situations. "All fire trucks on-island are custom built for Bermuda's roads so that hopefully anywhere they go is accessible," says Carter. "There's also a fire boat on hand, which is stored at the Clearwater Station, which supports the Royal Bermuda Regiment (RBR) and Bermuda Police Service (BPS) if needed."

One of the challenges is proper staffing, as all equipment needs to be operated by trained professionals who sacrifice greatly to keep the rest of us safe. On top of that, firefighters can be stretched thin when members of the public don't utilize common sense and good judgement and put themselves, and others, at risk.

"The public is urged not to take any unnecessary risks during a hurricane," says Carter. "The BFRS acknowledges and appreciates the majority of the public who help keep Bermuda safe during hurricane season and help to recover after a storm."

However, not many people know what must be endured to have this emergency service available, and the toll these roles take. From providing emergency medical services to responding to road traffic accidents, the scope of this role seems to know no bounds.

HURRICANES IN THE FIRE TRUCK

"People must realize that if they put themselves at risk, we have to put ourselves at risk," says Carter. "We have to be in the station 10 hours before the storm is a threat

and have had to shelter in place anywhere from 12-36 hours during a storm. You must make sure your own home is well secured, and your family is prepared as best as possible beforehand," he says.

Worrying about their own families is also stressful during these times. "You might not always be able to stay in communication with your family; that can be extremely taxing mentally and emotionally."

Considering that each shift is two days (9a.m. – 6p.m.), two nights (6p.m. – 9a.m.), then off for four days, it's a marked difference when in hurricane mode. The shift pattern can change to 12 hours on, 12 hours off. "Depending on the severity of the storm, you may not go home for days," says Carter.

This can be especially taxing as calls are coming in non-stop. "We get calls about everything from sparking electrical lines to roofing jobs. That means we are working longer and harder because of our duties during a hurricane," he explains.

They have had to make difficult, ethical decisions like whether it's even safe to help. During Fabian, for example, emergency workers were ready to go out on the Causeway, "but we were called back and had to make the hard decision to not help in that situation as it was too dangerous for us as well."

While attempting to drive back to the Hamilton station, the strong winds felled large Casuarina trees near Sleepy Hollow in Hamilton Parish that blocked the road. Although risky to get out of the vehicle to try and clear them away, they had no choice in order to proceed. "After struggling in the wind and rain to move these huge limbs from our path, we got back in the truck to discover it would not start," Carter remem-

bers. "We ended up having to ride out the storm in a cramped space hungry, tired and anxious. When the storm was finally over, we had to kick in to clear the roads and continue to prioritize the needs of not only ourselves, but others. That was a tough ride."

EMERGENCY DISPATCH

"Police, Fire, or Ambulance, where is your emergency?" That's how 911 calls for emergency dispatch are answered. All calls are picked up at the BPS Co-Ops Centre in Prospect, with the police operator answering incoming calls.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, calls are then transferred to Bermuda Fire and Rescue Dispatch facility at 49 King Street for fire services or an ambulance. During a hurricane, calls are dispatched in co-ordination with the Emergency Measures Organization, and when it is safe to respond, they utilize all available resources.

Hurricane season can be very stressful as there are increases in all types of calls—automatic fire alarms activating, electrical pole fires, road traffic accidents and various medical emergencies, just to name a few.

"It's helpful that all members of the household, including young children, know their address and phone number," says Carter. He explains that it can save lives if the person making the call is able to answer the basic questions needed to assist the dispatcher in determining the priority of the crisis:

- Where is the patient?
Address, landmark, house colour...
- What is the problem?
- Caller's name and number.
- Is the patient conscious and able to talk to you?
- What's the patient's name, age, gender?

The island is broken up into three zones and each zone has a standby point. The zones are from Dockyard to the Rubber Tree in Warwick (WEST), the Rubber Tree east to Shelly Market Place (CENTRAL), Shelly Bay Market Place east to St. George's and St. David's (EAST)

Emergency Medical Dispatchers normally would have a full staff of 12 people, but they've been working with eight people for a while now. Dispatch is covered 24 hours a day, which is in 12-hour shifts: two days on from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., two days off, then two nights from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

"Dispatchers are the unsung heroes of the job as it's stressful on a regular day. There's no 'normal,' but during hurricanes it's a different type of madness," says Carter. "It can be not only physically taxing on shift, but mentally and emotionally draining as you hear the variety of calls that come in and know you can only try and get help to them sometimes."

In the aftermath of a hurricane, assistance is sent out in priority. BFRS then works with the RBR to clear the roads and get Bermuda back up and running again. Contrary to what people think, dispatchers don't have the ability to see incoming calls as seen in some overseas countries. Budgeting and advances in technology are needed to better serve in that area.

"Education on how the 911 system operates is very important," says Carter. "If the public understands how the system works, they will know we are trying to help."

GETTING PEOPLE TO HOSPITAL

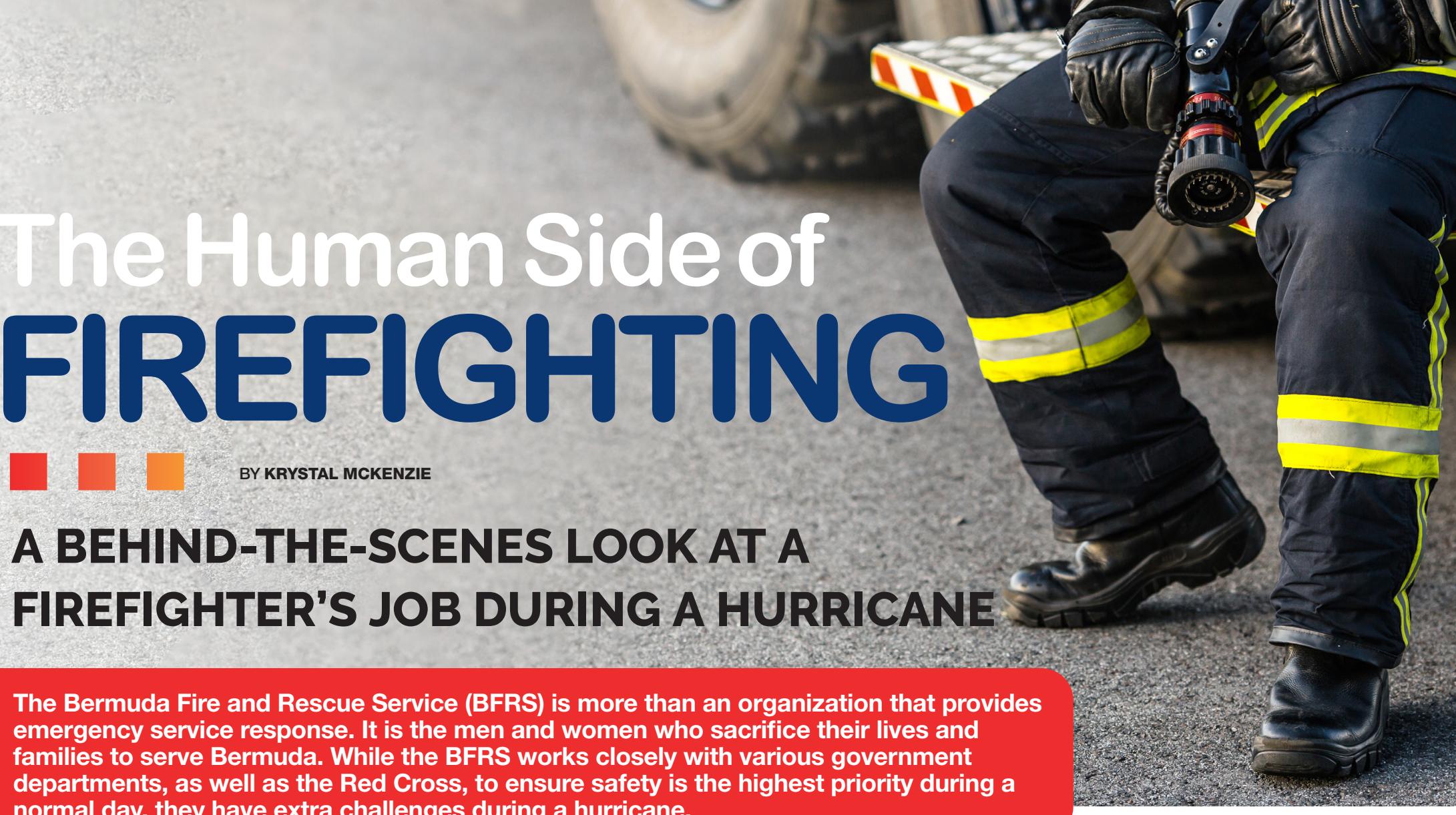
During the day, firemen are expected to leave the station within 60 seconds of an alarm going off. "At night that increases to two minutes, so you have to be prepared around the clock. In extreme circumstances, we go outside of our job description to get the job done while considering our own safety," says Carter.

He remembers one incident in particular. "We had a call come through dispatch for someone needing to get to the hospital as they didn't have access to oxygen and couldn't breathe. The ambulance was not able to get the person and return them to the hospital, so we went," he says. "We took our chainsaws and used them to clear roads to get the patient and transport them to the hospital in the Delta 1 vehicle. We had to knock hard on the door of the Emergency Department to get them to come out and accept the patient!"

For these front-line rescue workers, it's all in a day—or night's—work especially during hurricane season.

Duty calls: An Emergency Medical Dispatcher answers the call, left

Sergeant Carter sheds some light on training, right



SPECIAL CARE FOR **SPECIAL NEEDS**

SOME HURRICANE PREP ADVICE FOR CAREGIVERS AND PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



BY KRYSTAL MCKENZIE

It's challenging enough to prepare for a hurricane as an adult. Imagine having to prepare a child with special needs to weather the storm.

So how do parents explain events like these to a child with special needs? *The Royal Gazette* spoke to the government's Child Development Programme Team to ask for advice on how to make this potentially scary time easier to manage. Keep in mind that these tips can be utilized by all parents.

Firstly, adults need to be well prepared for the coming storm. You will need to have enough supplies such as water, food, medications, batteries and flashlights. Do not forget to have diapers or baby formula.

The house also needs to be safe. The safer you feel as a parent, the safer your child will feel. Remember that your child is connected to your emotions. If you feel safe and act calm, it will reassure your child, so pay attention to your facial expressions and voice tone. If you have fears or concerns, talk to family and friends away from the children. Be cautious about talking on the phone near your child.

It helps greatly to explain the preparation. For example, you need to move away the trampoline because it was unsafe to be under the tree.

Make sure your child knows the emergency pick-up plan from school.

Prepare an emergency box with your child's favourite snacks and toys in case you need to leave the house.

Minimize TV, media coverage and social media images and videos about the storm because it can increase anxiety and fear.

Keep the routine as normal as possible to help your child know what's next, for instance, meal and bedtimes.

If your child has a fear of darkness, be sure that they have a flashlight near the bed (in case of power failure) or a nightlight in their bedroom. If your child has a sensitivity to loud noises, during the storms they can listen to calm music. Be sure you have a battery-operated device that can provide this soothing feature.

Try to distract your children from the storm by having fun and by playing with them. The whole family can listen to music and dance, have fun and forget about the storm for a few moments. Be sure to have access to toys and games because you will need to

keep children busy with indoor activities.

The entire family can sleep together in the room least exposed to the winds. One fun idea is to make a tent in the room with blankets and have an indoor campout!

Your child may be more impatient, irritable or demanding during this period and it is normal. As a parent you need to be more responsive to what your child is experiencing. You can show this by reflecting their feelings: I know that you are scared, big storms can be scary. Your child may need extra hugs and kisses. Your baby may need to be in your arms more often.

Parents, you'll need to adapt to your child's sensory issues. Again, if they have a hypersensitivity to noise, soundproof headphones can be helpful as can listening to calm music. If their anxiety is increasing, deep pressure or tactile objects (e.g., chewy tool, tangle and a fidget ball) can be soothing. You can prepare a toolbox with calming strategies and objects. Trust your instincts as parents normally know what works best with their children.

It is also important to explain what may happen and what to expect. Talk about the rain, the wind, a tropical storm. It becomes less scary when we know what is coming. Social stories, books or videos may help you to do that. Explain that a power failure may happen and what it means. For example, you can explain that the lights, the TV and the internet may not work.

In case of a power failure, you can put visual signs on the things that are not working (e.g., the fridge, the TV) as a reminder for your child.

Finally, explain that you may need to evacuate, what the process will be and where will you go.

Remember, you're a family, and you can get through this together!

For more information, you can contact the Child Development Programme at 478-3333 or through Facebook and Instagram.

www.facebook.com/CDPBERMUDA

www.instagram.com/CDPBERMUDA

Hurricane Preparedness Checklist for Children with Special Needs

(courtesy of <https://www.friendshipcircle.org>)

Rehearse

Emphasize the importance of practicing an emergency evacuation plan several times before an emergency occurs. This applies to all types of emergencies.

Pack the necessities

Collect your child's medication, insurance card, medical documents, cell phone with charger and recent photos of family members inside a sealed plastic bag. Keep it close to you in case of a sudden evacuation. Also keep orthotics or medical equipment nearby in a way that's easily carried.

Plan a few meals ahead

Many children with special needs are on special diets or formula, which may be impossible to continue during an emergency. Fill the kitchen sink and a cooler with ice so that you can plan out the next few meals without opening the refrigerator too often.

Comfort is a necessity, too

Allow your child to select a comfort item, such as a stuffed animal, to hold close during the emergency, and take that comfort item with you wherever you go.

Remain calm and confident
Be confident, honest and matter of fact in explaining the situation, assuring your child that your job is to keep the family safe. If there's not enough time to answer questions, tell your child the time and date that you will be able to answer questions.

Give the kids a job

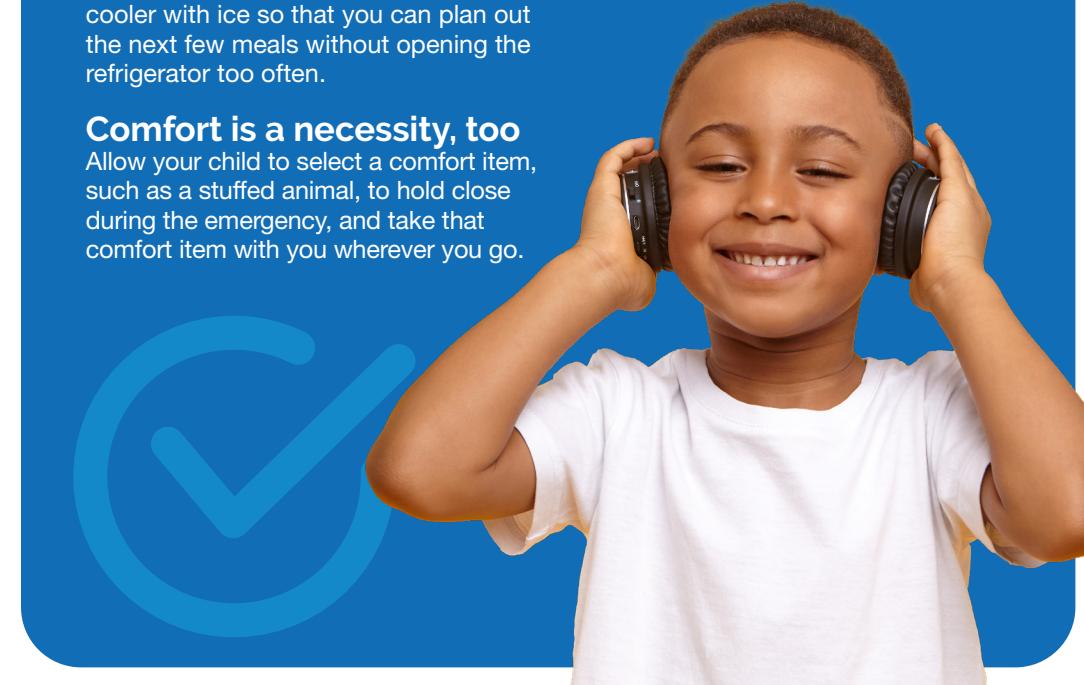
Keep your children involved in emergency preparedness. Ask them to find the sleeping bags and extra blankets. Put them in charge of flashlights and batteries. Have them fill up pitchers of drinking water. Busy kids are less anxious and more confident.

Sensory toolkit

Earplugs, soundproof headphones and white noise machines are important tools for reducing fear during a hurricane. Other items to consider are soothing tactile input, such as silly putty or a fuzzy blanket, and something to block bright light, such as sunglasses, an eye mask or baseball cap.

Low-tech fun

Introduce old-fashioned fun and games. Get a deck of cards or a board game. Zip together your sleeping bags and tell stories. Sing songs. This is often what children remember most vividly about emergencies. It's the silver lining of the hurricane's clouds.



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KEEPING PETS CALM IN A STORM

AN ANIMAL EXPERT SHARES HER TOP TIPS

BY TIM SMITH

Dark skies, noisy winds, unfamiliar scents and being confined to a small space with stressed out owners – major storms add up to a potentially anxious time for our beloved pets.

We can help animals cope with a storm by understanding what might make them frightened, looking out for the tell-tale signs that they are uncomfortable, preparing properly for the storm and, most importantly, training them to handle those difficult hours as we bunker down.

Carol Terceira, owner of Noah's Ark Feed and Supply in Devonshire, says: "It would be perfectly normal for a pet to be restless during a storm, but you should be aware of the signs of stress."

Terceira says pets can express stress by pacing, panting, showing wide eyes, keeping their tail down, lip-licking and yawning. It can escalate to signs of fear, like shaking, hiding or trying to be as close to you as possible.

"If a dog shows signs of stress in a storm, this has the potential to escalate with each exposure if there is no intervention."

She urges owners to keep a close watch on their pet's behaviour on stormy days. "Sometimes it's enough to improve the environment, redirect behaviours, add calming supplements and treats or use a compression jacket," she says.

For some dogs, however, it may become necessary to use medications prescribed by the vet.

Terceira has put together some additional tips so pet owners can help their pets weather any storm:

TRAIN YOUR PETS

Dogs and cats have a natural tendency to find a small space, out of the way, where they can rest and feel secure.

Terceira advises owners to take advantage of this natural behaviour by training their pet to a crate. "Keep your pet familiar with their crate and do not just pull it out for vet visits or storms. You want them to view their crate as their safe space and not be a harbinger of something potentially unpleasant in their future."

When the storm approaches, Terceira suggests putting treats and a safe toy inside the crate and leaving the door open.

Other training tips include:

- *Get pets such as birds, hamsters and guinea pigs accustomed to being handled in normal situations so that they find it less stressful if they need to be handled during a storm.*
- *Train cats to use a litter box indoors well before the storm. Give them a litter and location they accept.*
- *Train your dog to eliminate while on a leash, as this might be the safest way of doing it after a storm. Alternatively, train the dog to eliminate on a pee pad.*
- *Engage your dog in training regimes such as sitting or pawing so they learn to direct their attention to you instead of the storm.*

PET HURRICANE KIT

This should include basic first aid such as vet wrap, scissors, saline rinse, antibiotic cream, tweezers and medication. Stock up on water and pet food for a few days. Consider freeze-dried shelf-stable versions as an alternative to refrigerated or frozen food. Pureed pumpkin can help settle digestive issues. Other items include a crate, bedding, toys, chews, cat litter box, litter, scoop, place to dispose of soiled litter, disposable pee pads, collar or harness and leash.

MICROCHIP AND VACCINATE YOUR PETS

Collars with ID can help reconnect you with your lost pet, but what happens if the collar becomes lost? "A more secure way to identify your pet is to have them microchipped. All vet offices and dog wardens will have the capability of scanning your pet," says Terceira.

KEEP YOUR PETS SECURE

As well as providing a secure, den-like environment, a crate can stop your cat and dog from trying to escape the house during the storm. It can also help you transport your pet instantly and safely in case of an emergency. "Birds and small animals generally have their own regular home enclosures, but you may want to have smaller portable carriers for each in case you need to relocate quickly," Terceira says.

You can also keep your cat in a room where they can be comfortable behind closed doors.

Large animals, such as horses and goats, should be housed as best they can. Their homes should be secured in the same way as

our homes. Ensure they have extra water, while extra hay can reduce stress and give extra food security. Rabbits and birds housed should be brought into the house in a temporary indoor cage or travel crate.

"A change like this is stressful for them, but less so than being out in a strong storm, which can damage housing and allow escape," she says.

If your animal does escape during a storm, you should notify vets and online pet sites such as Facebook: Bermuda Lost and Found Pets; and Pet Connection Bermuda. Keep a good photograph of your pet printed and ready to share electronically so you can quickly upload a photo, with date, last known location and contact information. That information can also be emailed to vets. After the storm, put food and water outside. The scent from a dirty litter box can help guide your cat home.

TRY TO STAY CALM

Our own behaviour can make our pets more anxious. "Pets can be extremely sensitive and are easily impacted by our behaviour even when we do not think we are giving off cues," Terceira says. "My advice is to be prepared yourself as best you can to avoid the panic or anxiety that can accompany last-minute prep. This will help children and pets to stay calm."

If things do get stressful, she says pet owners might find it beneficial to move their pets to a quiet part of the house with you or allow them to retreat to their crate. A favourite, long-lasting chew can also help keep a pet relaxed. Terceira also suggests engaging in easy play and using a white noise machine to block out the storm noise. For serious storm anxiety, consult your vet or dog trainer for help.



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* Based on 2019 Argus Humberto data.

It's Important to Remember the Little Things

THE BERMUDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HELPS BUSINESSES PREPARE FOR A HURRICANE

BY TIM SMITH

It might seem trivial compared with all the important tasks on your hurricane to-do list, but don't forget to grind those coffee beans.

As CEO of Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, Kendaree Burgess reminds business owners that if the rest of their world is ravaged by chaos in the wake of a hurricane, they will be thankful they can at least kick their day off with a cup of coffee, electricity or no electricity.

Burgess says it's often the small things in life that we appreciate the most in the time of crisis. "Grind the coffee beans in advance of the storm! People remember to replace their flashlights and all that stuff, but if you wake up the morning after a hurricane and you can't have your coffee, the day isn't going to start very well," she says.

That is just one piece of survival advice the Chamber provides its members in the run-up to a storm to ensure their staff and business premises, as well as everyone's families and homes, are fully prepared.

Businesses may have a fair number of new employees to the island who may have no expe-

rience with hurricanes. Small business owners have additional worries. "If you are a small business, it's a challenge getting everything you need to do that's professional and personal. That's boarding up your home and securing your premises and then doing that same thing if you are a shopkeeper, getting all those things prepared in time for the arriving storm," says Burgess.

Before hurricane season begins, businesses should develop a comprehensive hurricane response plan, describing the procedures which will keep staff safe and ensure business continuity. All staff should be familiar with the plan, which should cover:

- Who will perform the various emergency functions, such as boarding up or securing outdoor equipment.
- Evacuation procedures and a list of any necessary equipment.
- Review of insurance policies to ensure there is adequate coverage.
- Contingency plans if the equipment or building becomes damaged.

As the storm approaches, you should secure doors, windows and other openings, bring outdoor furniture inside, store important documents in a safe place,

disconnect and cover electronic equipment, block gutters with clean rags and turn off gas, electricity and other utility services.

Staff should be released from work if the Causeway or other main roads are about to close, and according to advice from the Bermuda Government. Employers should make sure their staff have enough time to make their own preparations at home.

Burgess says: "Covid has helped us prepare for hurricanes. For a lot of people, they can afford to be more generous on the work-life balance side of things. At one stage, you would have worked right up to X o'clock on the day before the storm and then gone home to prepare your property. A great number of us now work from home. You can get your work done and prepare for the storm."

Other items on the Chambers' list include:

- Do all laundry and iron clothes before the storm, so that you don't run out of work clothes if you lose power.
- Get cash from bank machines.
- Charge all electronic equipment you may need for work, such as iPads and laptops.

"People have to take hurricanes seriously," Burgess says. "We live on an island where we could be

without power for three or four days. It's basic preparation. You have to make sure you have a way to feed yourself if you will be without electricity. You have to make sure you have some clean clothes and that your transportation has enough petrol in it so you are not running on empty and find out that the gas station close to you isn't functioning."

"And look out for those who may be experiencing a hurricane for the first time. The first hurricane for someone may create a level of anxiety."

Phil Barnett, President of Island Restaurant Group and a veteran of numerous storms, has learned to juggle the need to protect his business premises and his family at home. Barnett stresses the importance of communication.

"Make sure that there are clear lines of connection between the managers who are on duty as well as their direct reports," he says. "WhatsApp services have made it immeasurably easier because we can send out a message to multiple people who can disseminate that to multiple other people."

He also says businesses need to trust their staff to make good decisions. "You have to communicate that staff need to have the ability to independently think in regard to how they can make it in after a storm, if they can make it in," says Barnett. "Plan for the worst and, if you don't get it,

you are in a much better position than what you plan for."

He lives on a property with a lot of trees. "Depending on the storm, oftentimes I have to cut my way out, so I'm not the first person onsite at my business. That's why it's really important that you allow your staff to independently assess and recognize what's best for the business."

He takes time to ensure new staff from overseas are aware of potential problems, such as being without running water after a storm, and the need to keep enough ice to stop food from spoiling.

On that note, the Chamber provides members with an extensive shopping list and general to-dos. Burgess concludes, "If you don't have major damage after a storm, the only thing that's really upsetting is the list of regrets. Why didn't I grind those coffee beans?"



Kendaree Burgess

Proper Insurance Keeps You Covered During A Storm

BY ERIN SILVER

If you live in a hurricane-prone zone, you'll want to make sure you have insurance and that your policies are up to date. After all, you likely have property, such as a home or business that you want to protect. *The Royal Gazette* consulted with leading Bermuda home insurer BF&M for some of their best insurance-related tips.

KNOW YOUR POLICIES

It's important to read your policy to understand your coverage, exclusions and limits, and to talk to your insurance company to address any questions. This way you know what's covered if your property is damaged after a hurricane.

"Deductible" is a term often heard after a hurricane at claim time. The hurricane deductible (also called "excess"), is the first amount of the storm-related loss

or damage that policy owners are financially responsible for before your insurance provider will pay the rest of your claim. A lower deductible means you pay less upfront when you make a claim; a higher deductible may lower your premiums. When considering a higher deductible it's important to factor in the mostly likely reoccurring financial obligations that arise during hurricane season. A higher deductible may place you in a period of financial distress.

Many people are not aware of all the benefits existing under their home insurance. Insurance companies often get asked whether home insurance covers flood damage; BF&M insurance, for instance, covers damage to buildings and contents from floods. If you have contents insurance, contamination by salt in your home's tank associated with a storm is covered. Damage to underground pipes and cables servicing the home is covered, as well as damage to outbuildings, cesspits, walls, gates, fences, footpaths and driveways. Coverage against loss of rent or the cost of alternative accommodation if a property is deemed uninhabitable can also be included in the policy.

UPDATE YOUR POLICIES

If you've purchased, inherited, got new furniture or have completed any renovations, you'll need to update the sum insured of your home and contents insurance. Your "sum insured" means the estimate of the cost to replace or rebuild. You don't want to end up being underinsured, which means that you won't be covered for the actual reconstruction/replacement value of property damaged in a storm, potentially leaving you having to cover costs out of pocket.

Since costs rise over time, your original sum insured may need to be adjusted, or your claims payment might not fully cover the actual cost to rebuild or replace your damaged property. Now is a good time to call your insurance

provider for a quote or advice on how to calculate the value of your property and figure out how much insurance you should buy to protect you from financial losses.

ASSESS THE DAMAGE

As soon as it's safe, take a look around your property. When you've been cleared to go inside, take note of any damages. Take pictures to document the damage, then try to protect your property as best you can to avoid further damage (with tarps, for example, to ward off water damage). Call your insurance provider's claims department to discuss next steps. You can also go on their website to file a claim. Their website will likely contain all the information you need to get the process started.

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One of the most important steps you can take is to review your insurance policies. Make sure you're covered in the event you need to make a claim.

BEFORE



Check your policies

Make sure your insurance policies are up-to-date.



Prepare an emergency kit

Check supplies including a battery-operated radio, flashlights, extra batteries, first aid kit and medications.



Have a family plan

Develop an emergency plan for your home, property and pets.



Stock up on food and water

Have a three-day supply of drinking water and non-perishable food. Fill bathtub and buckets with water.



Charge up

Make sure to charge your mobile device and save all emergency phone numbers.



Protect your property

Board up windows. Clear yard of loose objects. Move your vehicle, bike and/or boat to a secure location.

DURING



Remain indoors

Stay in the structurally strongest part of the house, and away from windows and doors.



Secure important documents

Store valuables and personal papers (e.g. insurance, medical records, passports, etc.) in a waterproof container.



Follow official instructions

Do not go outside unless local authorities announce an evacuation or if it is safe to step outside.



Monitor the news

Stay tuned to the Government Emergency Broadcast Station on FM 100.1.

AFTER



Check everyone's safety

Ensure all family members, friends and neighbours are safe, especially senior citizens.



Stay alert

Continue to monitor local news for the latest updates. Keep the roads clear for emergency vehicles.



Discard perishable food

Get rid of perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers) that have been above 40°F for 2 hours or more.



Inspect your property

Secure your house and property against the possibility of further damage. If you hire anyone for repairs, keep receipts.



Note the damages

List and photograph all damages sustained. Get two written quotes for repairs.



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Don't Leave Repairs To The Last Minute

STAY ON TOP OF YOUR HONEY-DO LIST TO MAKE HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS EASIER

BY TIM SMITH

The window that has been cracked for months, the door that doesn't shut properly and the overgrown tree in the middle of the garden. We all have those jobs around the house that we never seem to get around to doing.

Yet the little things that are a minor nuisance for most of the year can suddenly become major problems if a hurricane comes. That damaged window and ill-fitting door could leave you and your family badly exposed to the elements, while branches can easily break from the overgrown tree and become dangerous missiles.

According to Bermuda's national disaster coordinator Steve Cosham, staying on top of your odd jobs is one of the most important aspects of preparing for a storm. "If you have got something in your house that's on your honey-do list to repair, don't put it off, especially in hurricane season," says Cosham, who heads up the Bermuda Government's Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Team.

"It might be your shutters or doors. You may notice a hinge is a bit loose—take whatever action you need to tighten it up. Some people say they don't have the time to prepare. That's not true. You have the time but you sometimes don't put it in the right priority," Cosham adds.

Even if it turns out there isn't a hurricane, it won't be a waste of

your time because we have winter storms in March with winds of over 100mph. "These things need to be done anyway," Cosham reminds.

Assuming you've not left those Do It Yourself tasks until the last minute, in the lead-up to a storm you should turn your attention to ensuring your hurricane toolkit is in good order. Your kit will generally be tailored to suit your needs, but Cosham provides the following advice on essential items:

First aid kit. Ensure it is fully stocked and check in with the Red Cross or St. John Ambulance if you require recertification.

Water. You will need three gallons per person, per day. Buy large bottles or fill baths, pots and pans. Alternatively, use a bucket and rope to access your tank water.

Food. Stock up on enough non-perishable food that does not need cooking to last for seven days. Ensure you have thought about everyone's special dietary requirements.

Cooking equipment.

If you have no electricity, you can plan to use your barbecue or camping stove outside after the storm has passed. If you don't have one, try asking your neighbour if you can share theirs. Ensure you have a spare gas canister if you are planning to use the barbecue.

Medication. Check prescription renewal dates and get enough to last three weeks from your pharmacist.

Flashlights. Check that they work and that you have the correct batteries as back-up.

Portable radio. Make sure you have enough batteries so you can listen to the Emergency Broadcast Facility on 100.1 FM.

Personal hygiene. Stock up on toiletries, hand sanitizer, medical gloves, trash bags and other personal items.

Cell phone. A solar-powered USB charger can prove very useful if you have no electricity. If you have an analogue landline, check it is still working.

Pet food and medication supply. Make sure you have a good plan to look after your pet throughout the storm.

Games and books. You may need something to keep the family entertained if you lose power for a long time.

Steve Cosham

Dean Rubaine



here 30 years ago, everyone was filling up their baths with water, so that's what I did. But I had a tank next to the door so after a while I thought, why am I doing this? People need to adapt to the situation."

Once you're confident your own home is prepared for the storm, it's time to think about other people in your community. "After you have thought about yourself and the family you live with, it's about other relatives around the island. How can you help them prepare?" says Cosham. "Check on your community and neighbours. Go through their list, like you did with your own. It may well be your mom who is elderly. She can't use a toolkit, but you can leave it there for someone else to use who might be helping her."

If you are concerned about your financial security, you should also check with your insurance company to make sure you have enough homeowners insurance to repair or even replace your home. Make sure you also have coverage for your car, cycle and boat. "If your house and vehicle are uninsured and damaged you will need money to repair them," Cosham says. "The people who have insurance are the people who recover quickly and properly."



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First Aid Training Can Make A Difference

A ST. JOHN AMBULANCE OFFICER ISSUES HURRICANE-RELATED ADVICE

BY TIM SMITH

One of the most frequent things onlookers say at the scene of an accident, according to Joshua Correia, is: "I didn't know what to do."

Correia, the training officer at St. John Ambulance Bermuda, says you can avoid that helpless situation by completing a first aid course to equip yourself with the knowledge and skills to deal with a crisis until emergency services arrives. This is never more important than during a hurricane, when it may be impossible for an ambulance to reach your home for hours.

"Basic skills save lives, certainly with regards to stemming blood and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation," Correia says. "At some point you might be in a situation where your training can mean the difference between somebody surviving or somebody dying."

Your first concern is to ensure the scene is safe for you to respond to the incident. "What I don't want to happen is that one person needs help and then when somebody jumps in to help them, they need help as well," Correia says. "Look for any hazard that is on the scene that is going to be a threat to your personal safety as the person giving help, such as electric wires or an unstable vehicle."

It is also important not to panic. "Hopefully if you are ever in that situation, you take a moment, take that breath in, and say, 'I know what to do here. I have been trained on this and I'm going to do what I learned,'" Correia says.

Here, he outlines potential medical situations arising from a storm and offers first aid tips on how they can be handled.

BROKEN GLASS

Unless you have shutters, there's always a danger bulky items may smash your window during the height of a storm. If anybody gets injured by a shard of glass, your first priority is to stop the bleeding with a sterile dressing or clean cloth.

"Put direct pressure on the bleeding wound and hold it," Correia says. "If it starts to bleed through, put something else on top of that. Never remove what you put on the wound to stop the bleeding."

He tells people to resist the temptation to look at the wound to see if it's stopped bleeding as the clot will begin to form with the pressure you provide.

"Depending on the situation and the severity of the cut, you might end up needing to go to the hospital for further care or evaluation. It might need stitches."

If glass is embedded in a wound, do not remove it. "Bandage the embedded object in place with a bulky

object so it can't move around and cause additional injury," Correia says.

Wear appropriate footwear to ensure you don't get injured while helping the victim and sanitize your hands before and after giving treatment.

BROKEN BONES

After a storm, you will often come across unexpected hazards in your yard which may cause you to trip and break a bone. Correia's advice: "Immobilize. Keep it still. Every time you move it you risk causing more damage."

He also says the first thing to do is get to safety without further complicating the injury. It might mean scooting along on the backside or enlisting the help of somebody else in the house.

"Once back in safety, you are then going to immobilize the extremity. Apply an ice pack on the area to help reduce the swelling and pain. If it doesn't cause further aggravation to the area, you can try head to the emergency room when it is safe, but you may find a lengthy wait as other people show up with storm-related injuries."

WATER-RELATED INCIDENTS

"First things first, if it's not safe for you to enter the water, don't get in the water. Rule number one," Correia says. "If somebody is in the water and something has gone horribly wrong, and they have been safely removed from the water, check them for responsiveness."

If the person is not breathing, start CPR, compressions and breathing.

HEART ATTACKS

"We have dealt with reports of people having heart attacks in the middle of a hurricane. It's never ideal because time is very much the essence," says Correia.

First, advise the victim to rest and stop whatever they are doing. "Try to reassure them. Keep as calm as possible," he says.

A single 325mg Aspirin tablet, or four 81mg tablets, can help reduce the worst outcomes. Make sure that they are not allergic to Aspirin, that they are not already taking blood thinners, and do not have other conditions such as a stomach ulcer.

Correia says: "Chew the tablets to get them into the circulation as soon as possible. That's not going to stop the heart attack, but it will get you a little bit more time to get to the emergency room for the appropriate attention."

Symptoms include crushing chest pains radiating to the arms, and becoming pale and sweaty. Many women feel no pain at all, and dia-



Joshua Correia

betics can feel lower levels of pain. Other symptoms include fatigue, unexplained nausea and vomiting. For women, it can be pain in the back that radiates round to the front.

STROKES

Stroke patients need to get to the emergency room as soon as the storm allows. "Help them stay calm as much as possible. As soon as you can, get on with 911. Time is very important. There's a very strict time window for some stroke treatment, 3.5 to four hours from what's called 'last seen normal.'"

Record the last time the patient seemed normal and relay that information to the doctors.

Correia says: "They need to go to the emergency room for a CAT scan to determine what kind of stroke it is. Once that is determined, they get the care or treatment they need."

Symptoms include facial droop, arm drift and slurring speech.

FEVER

Of course, there may be times when your children get seriously sick and it is not safe for you to take them to the hospital. Reduce the likelihood of fever by ensuring young children only wear one more layer of clothes than you feel comfortable wearing. "Especially infants and young kids, their body's ability to regulate the temperature has not yet fully developed," he says.

Give your child anti-fever medication, such as children's Tylenol. Measure the dose based on the weight of your child, not the age. You can give them Advil 30 or 40 minutes later because it is a different medication. "Give them a dose of each because they work very differently in the body to break the fever down," Correia says.

A lukewarm sponge bath in their underwear or diaper can also help reduce their temperature.

SEIZURE

"Seizures can be terrifying for a parent," Correia says. "The child will go limp and might be convulsing heavily."

The key at that point is to cool the child down and make sure their breathing is okay. "Once they come to, which can be relatively quickly, they tend to be a bit groggy and don't want to wake up. A gentle shoulder tap or pinch can help wake them up. When they do start to come round, if they haven't yet had medication, that would be the time to get a dose in."

If you are very concerned, try to get to the emergency room if you can or call your paediatrician.

To sign up for a first aid training course at St. John Ambulance, visit www.sjaberluda.org/first-aid-training

HURRICANE SEASON

2022

BY ERIN SILVER

WHAT DOES HURRICANE SEASON HAVE IN STORE FOR BERMUDA?

With Atlantic hurricane season beginning on June 1, it's only natural to wonder what this season could bring when it comes to Bermuda's weather forecast.

According to predictions from AccuWeather's top meteorologists, 2022 could be an active season for hurricanes in the Atlantic, especially following a busy 2021. Last year, there were 21 named storms and seven hurricanes. Normal is 14 named storms and seven hurricanes. This year, the forecast is expected to produce 16 to 20 named storms and six to eight hurricanes. There may even be three to five major hurricanes, which means a category three strength storm with winds of 111 miles per hour or more. Meanwhile, other experts are predicting a 65 percent chance for an above average or average season with at least 13 to 18 named storms, six to 11 hurricanes and two to five major hurricanes.

Even if these predictions differ slightly, experts seem to concur that this increase in activity could be attributed to a climate pattern called La Niña, a cooler weather phase, and higher-than-normal water temperatures. Experts also already know that the first three storms will be named Alex, Bonnie and Colin. But if more develop, you could hear about Danielle, Earl and Fiona, too. With storms starting earlier year after year, the National Hurricane Centre may even consider moving the start of hurricane season to May 15. The season officially ends on November 30.

When it comes to Bermuda, rest assured. Weather-watchers say that big hits are rare, with about one per decade. Paulette was the last big storm in Bermuda, a category 2 with 110-mile-an-hour winds, in September 2020. Residents can be confident in Bermuda's plans should a hurricane strike: hotels offer hurricane guarantees, so if a hurricane approaches and visitors' plans are cancelled, hotels offer refunds or future visits. Buildings are also well built to withstand strong winds and weather. As well, the island gets lots of advance notice and has plans in place to ensure people can be ready for adverse weather. Emergency services are also on hand and able to help.

Now is the time to prepare so residents aren't caught off guard by potential pre-season storms that may develop. Make sure to have a family plan in place in the event of a storm. Do you have emergency contacts handy? Start purchasing essentials for your hurricane emergency kit. As the season gets nearer, keep an eye on sites like Bermuda Weather Service (weather.bm) or AccuWeather.com and the Bermuda Government Alert page at www.gov.bm/alerts.

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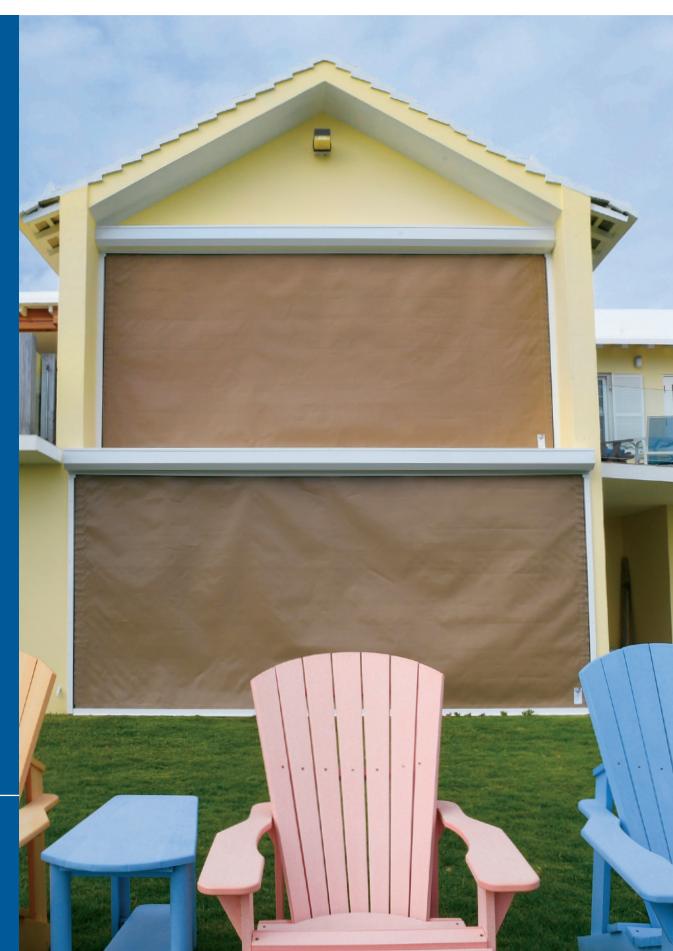
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JUNE 1-NOV 30

Are you ready?

During hurricane season, your emergency plan should include a list of items that you can keep stocked in your home. This hurricane preparedness grocery list should include a first aid kit, water, non-perishable foods and other supplies you may need if you evacuate or stay home during a storm. Check out this emergency supply list to prepare yourself and your family.

HURRICANE SEASON PREP

FOOD

Plan on stocking at least a five-day supply of non-perishable food that requires no refrigeration and little preparation. This includes:

- Dry cereal
- Canned goods: fruit, vegetables, juice, soups, meats, pasta, beans
- Nuts, dried fruits
- Peanut butter
- Bread
- Crackers, potato chips
- Granola and energy bars
- Un-refrigerated fruit: bananas, apples, oranges
- Pet food
- Baby food and bottles
- Rice and pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Seasoning
- Granulated sugar, honey
- Oats
- Tea bags, coffee
- Pancake mix

KEY SUPPLIES

Water – 1 gallon per 1 person per day. For a family of 4 for 5 days, you need 20 gallons. Save water in a bathtub for basic sanitation and dishwashing, but do not drink this water.

First Aid Kit – Band-Aids, bandages, antibiotic ointment, bleach and a medicine dropper so you can create water disinfectant (6 drops of bleach for every 1 gallon of water), hand sanitizer, any necessary medications, hygiene products, and baby products.

Flashlight – 1 flashlight per family member and the correct size of extra batteries.

Tool Kit – A basic set of tools: hammer, nails, screws, screwdriver, pliers, and knife.

Sanitation Products – Toilet paper, moist towelettes, and plastic garbage bags in different sizes.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Paper towels • Garbage bags • Aluminum foil • Mosquito repellent • Charcoal Lighter • Lighter fluid • Manual can opener • Large sealable bags to store important documents • Strike anywhere matches • Resealable sandwich bags Hand sanitizer • Dish soap • Paper plates and cups • Plastic utensils • Baby diapers, wipes and rash ointment • Insulated coolers • Ice Packs • Bags of ice.

Rain gear • Plastic sheeting • Rope • Duct Tape • Grill • Cash • At least ONE fully-charged cellular phone • Pet leash, collar, food bowls and carrier.

Never taste food to determine its safety!

Food Safety

IF YOU LOSE POWER, FOLLOW THIS THREE-STEP PROCEDURE

- 1 Eat perishable items in your pantry, refrigerator, etc. as soon as possible, and as long as fridge temperature is below 40°F.
- 2 Eat perishable items in your freezer. As long as food contains ice crystals in the center, that means it's still safe to eat.
- 3 Eat your stock of non-perishable items.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

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