



Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

Above-Average Activity Predicted for 2010 Hurricane Season

The Atlantic basin is anticipated to experience above-average activity in the 2010 hurricane season, according to an April report issued by the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University.

The study predicts 15 named tropical storms occurring throughout the season, which begins on June 1 and lasts through November 30. Eight are expected to develop into hurricanes, classified as major storms on the Saffir-Simpson scale of measurement. Major hurricanes have winds upwards of 111 miles per hour, and fall into categories three through five.

The CSU study also indicates a 44 percent probability that one of these major storms will strike the Gulf coast between the Florida panhandle and Brownsville,

TX, with a 69 percent probability that one will strike somewhere on the United States coastline.

An average Atlantic hurricane season produces 10 named storms, with six hurricanes, two of which turn into major hurricanes.

This year's above-average predictions, however, are comparable to those of 2008, in which the Texas Gulf Coast was hit by three hurricanes: Dolly, Gustav, and Ike.

Ike, the last and most devastating of the three, was a category two windstorm. However, the storm was so large in diameter that it produced a surge typical of a much stronger hurricane, flooding most of Galveston Island, Bolivar Peninsula and many towns along Galveston Bay.

Parish Emergency Planning is Essential Resources are Available

In an ideal world, emergency plans would not be necessary. Disasters would not happen, and life would be calm, day in and day out.

But we all know that this ideal is not realistic. Disasters occur and sometimes they strike in the heart of our own communities.

In the Diocese of Texas, we are at high risk for floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, chemical spills and explosions, technological emergencies and many other concerns that have the potential to disrupt our lives, our homes, churches and communities.

If, and when these events strike, we need to know how to react and respond. In addition to individuals having their personal emergency plans, each and every parish should as well. The parish plan should provide the steps necessary to secure your facilities, respond to the community and continue operations. These are best when created by your

parish, for your parish, in order to meet the needs of your specific congregation and community before, during and after an emergency.

Benefits of creating and utilizing a plan help you protect existing assets, support and ensure the safety of your congregation and, in some cases, even grow your parish membership.

Whether you're clergy, a vestry member or a regular attendee, you can play a critical part in the preparedness process. Start by asking questions – find out if your parish has an emergency plan, and, if not, start planning.

Because this task can be overwhelming, Texas Episcopal Disaster Relief and Development has created "The Parish Emergency Planning Guide" and made it available for download at www.epicenter.org/preparedness.

This easy-to-use guide will assist your parish in working through the topics important to emergency planning

Diocesan Emergency Preparedness Month

We will be hosting workshops in each region throughout the diocese to present Parish Emergency Preparedness. Be sure to join us at one of these gatherings for valuable information.

Austin - St. Michael's, 1500 North Capital of Texas Highway, Austin, 78746, 512.327.1474
May 5, 12 p.m., Emergency Planning for Parish Administrators (Brown Bag Lunch)
May 8, 1:30 p.m., Parish-wide Emergency Planning 2CEUs

Houston - Emmanuel, 15015 Memorial Drive, Houston, 77079, 281.493.3161
May 13, 12 p.m., Emergency Planning for Parish Administrators (Brown Bag Lunch)
May 15, 10 a.m., Parish-wide Emergency Planning 2CEUs

East Texas - St. Cyprian's, Lufkin, 919 South John Redditt Drive, Lufkin, Texas 75904
May 20, 12 p.m., Parish Administrator's Luncheon (Lunch Provided)
May 22, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Parish-wide Emergency Planning 2CEUs

Register for a workshop, or stay updated on this upcoming event and the work of Texas Episcopal Disaster Relief & Development, by visiting online at www.epicenter.org/tedrd.

-- assessing your risks, performing an insurance inventory and contacting parishioners.

In addition, TEDRD will be hosting two workshops in each region of the diocese in May to discuss the topic and provide an opportunity to ask questions. The first of the workshops will focus on parish administrators and others in similar roles, to equip them with preparedness

tools specific to their role in the church. The second workshop is open to all, and will provide an overview of creating a parish emergency plan. Two CEU credits are available for attending clergy.

See the box on this page for the dates and times of these workshops, or to register, visit the Texas Episcopal Disaster Relief and Development website at www.epicenter.org/tedrd.

Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

Storm Victims are Inspiration

By Luke Blount

Since November 2008 Texas Episcopal Disaster Relief and Development has used more than 35,000 hours of volunteer labor to gut or repair close to 150 homes, and the work continues on Galveston Island, one of the storm's hardest-hit areas.

Immediately following Hurricane Ike, the Episcopal Diocese of Texas began offering pastoral care to survivors as well as man-power to begin gutting flood-damaged homes. Relief Coordinator Maggie Immler was brought in to organize a comprehensive relief effort.

Thanks to generous donations from individuals and parishes as well as grants from groups like Episcopal Relief and Development, TEDRD soon was fielding dozens of volunteers a week through the William Temple Episcopal Center in Galveston.

"The initial outpouring of support was overwhelming," Immler said. "And it allowed for the program as it exists today to come into being."

By April, 2010, more than 2000 individuals had volunteered through TEDRD, and 40 percent of those have visited at least twice. Led by TEDRD's team of construction managers and crew chiefs, volunteers spend seven hours a day doing anything from sheet-rocking and mudding to painting and flooring.

TEDRD has fielded volunteers from 30 states and a few different countries, but Texans have been at the forefront of the relief effort.

"I was especially touched to see the amount of volunteers from Texas," Immler said. "Even before I got here, Texans were coming out of the woodwork to support the efforts in Galveston."

As volunteers learn new skills and work on houses in Galveston, they often become acquainted with the homeowners and their stories. TEDRD's homeowners are always incredibly gracious and emotional when they see their home begin to look new again.

"I loved being able to help Mr. Rodgers and learn about his story," said one volunteer from Kenyon College about a homeowner. "It was an amazing adventure and I

hope to experience it again."

Most of TEDRD's homeowners are elderly, and all of them are either poor or on a fixed income. Before Ike, most of them took pride in being able to provide for themselves. They always found a way to scrape by or just survive. But after such devastation, many of them had nowhere to turn.

TEDRD has gladly stepped in to lend a helping hand to the hopeless: people like 100-year-old Ms. Sallie, who lived alone and was certainly not in any shape physically or mentally to repair her home; or Mr. Keyes, an 83-year-old WWII veteran with a Purple Heart, and his 59-year-old disabled daughter who depends on him for survival; and Mr. Rodgers, who had to get his leg amputated after the storm in addition to losing his wife to Alzheimer's, and his dog to the flood waters.

Those are the kinds of people who will no longer have to worry about whether or not they have a safe place to sleep at night. And their resilience is an inspiration to every volunteer who comes into their homes.

TEDRD is committed to working in Galveston through at least 2010. The goal is to provide displaced homeowners with a fully repaired home in addition to providing volunteers with a quality mission experience.

Unlike some relief organizations, TEDRD provides construction supervisors on all of their sites in addition to providing volunteer housing, materials and tools. Volunteers also get ample free time to explore Galveston or lounge on the beach.

"This is the most organized group we have worked with, and it was very much appreciated," said a group leader from Virginia Tech University. "I liked that we got to do a lot on the house and could see the changes come along. We also got to talk to the homeowner, which was great."

With this summer already booked with volunteer groups, TEDRD continues to move forward with relief efforts on Galveston Island. To donate to TEDRD or schedule a volunteer trip, please visit www.epicenter.org/tedrd or contact Luke Blount, volunteer coordinator, at 713.252.9693 or by email at volunteer@epicenter.org.



A volunteer from Monroe, Washington, paints stairs for one of TEDRD's homeowners.

Important Numbers and Links for Texans

Emergencies: 9-1-1

Evacuation Assistance and Information: 2-1-1

Texas Department of Emergency Management
Public Information:
tiny.cc/txempublicinformation

FloodSmart: www.floodsmart.gov

US Fire Administration: www.usfa.dhs.gov

ASPCA (Pets):
www.aspcapetcare.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/

Citizen Corps: www.citizencorps.gov

Texas Prepares: www.texasprepares.org

Ready (Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.):
www.ready.gov

Texas Episcopal Disaster Relief and Development

Website: www.epicenter.org/tedrd

Preparedness & Planning Coordinator (Carolyn Gibbs): cjgibbs@epicenter.org; 734.474.9504

Volunteer Coordinator (Luke Blount):
volunteer@epicenter.org; 713.252.9693

Twitter

www.twitter.com/IkeRelief

Blog

ikerelief.blogspot.com

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Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

Be ready for a Hurricane Chances are High in 2010

The 2010 Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1st, and with the above-average activity predictions issued earlier this spring, both coastal and inland families must prepare for the possibility that a storm will strike our coastline.

The Galveston County Office of Emergency management has certainly seen its share of hurricanes, and they offer the following recommendations for weathering a storm:

Before a hurricane

- Secure your home. Install permanent storm shutters or cut 5/8" marine plywood to fit windows.
- Install straps or clips to tightly fasten your roof to the frame of your home, reducing the likelihood of roof damage.
- Trim trees and shrubs around your home, removing dead branches that could come loose in high winds.
- Clean out rain gutters.
- If you own a boat, find out how and where to secure it.
- Keep your vehicle gas tank filled to at least half a tank at all times.
- Identify evacuation routes and destinations.

During a hurricane

- Listen to the radio or TV for up-to-date information. Many cities have an automated call-out system to share information, and some agencies are even utilizing social networking sites such as Twitter as well.
- Secure your home. Close storm shutters or put pre-cut plywood over the windows. Secure outdoor objects or bring them inside.
- Turn off utilities and propane tanks, following local officials' instructions.
- Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies, as emergency management agencies will need the signals and lines.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

Evacuating

- Evacuate the area immediately if instructed to do so by local authorities.
- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure, a high-rise building, on the coast, in a flood plain, or near another water source, you should evacuate as soon as you are able. These factors put you and your home in greater danger.
- If you do not have the resources to evacuate, you may register for local evacuation assistance. Simply dial 2-1-1 from any phone to get information and register.
- Take all pets, your emergency kit, and food with you. You cannot be sure how long it will take to evacuate, and what will be available along the way.

If you do not evacuate

- Stay indoors and away from doors and windows throughout the duration of the storm.
- Close and brace all exterior doors, and keep curtains and blinds closed.
- Go into a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level, and lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object.

Hurricanes are dangerous storms, and can change direction and strength very quickly. If a hurricane is approaching the coast, be on your guard and ready to respond at a moment's notice. Taking precautions and following instructions can help protect your family and home in a storm.

Floods

Floods are one of the most common natural disasters; they occur in all fifty states, can affect small communities or large regions, and could happen over a period of days or in a matter of minutes.

Any number of factors could cause flooding, including heavy rainfall, tidal surges, the failure of manmade structures such as dams, or even new developments that alter the environment, changing natural drainage systems.

Floods are one of the most destructive and dangerous natural events that can occur. As little as six inches of moving water can carry away homes, cars, and people. In addition, floodwaters often contain myriad unknown toxins collected as they move through buildings and storage facilities. Even as waters recede, waterlogged homes become prone to dangerous mold growth, and carpets, furniture, and other possessions are destroyed.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Texas alone has experienced more than 3,300 floods in the last five years, affecting all but seven of its 254 counties. The damages from these events totaled nearly \$5,000,000,000. Every county in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas was affected.

It is essential to both prepare for and to know how to respond to a flood.

First, know your risk. Obtain flood maps from FEMA or your insurance agent, and learn how to read them. Before buying or building a new home, study the maps to find out the flood risk. Avoid building new structures in flood zones, or elevate them to reduce the risk of water entering the building in a flood.

If your current home is located in a flood plain, take precautions to ensure the safety of your home and family. Raise the home to reduce the risk of water coming indoors. Seal basements with waterproofing compounds, and make sure that insurance policies are adequate and up-to-date.

If flooding is predicted for your area, and you have advance warning, take precautions as recommended by local authorities. These may include sandbagging your home to keep water out, moving essential items and furniture from lower levels, and even evacuating to higher areas. You may be advised to turn off any or all of your utilities. Make sure your emergency kit is accessible and out of the reach of predicted water levels.

Flash floods occur without advance warning, and can rise to dangerous levels in a matter of minutes. If a flash flood happens in your area, move immediately to higher ground or a higher floor in your home.



Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

A Church Community Can Help All to be Prepared



Though emergency preparedness is a need of every individual and family, not everyone has the resources to achieve it. Some lack finances, others, physical abilities. Some may simply not have family available to support them during a chaotic time, or the knowledge to understand what is necessary for their own situation.

The church is in a unique position to help. As a strong and cohesive community, a church has the opportunity to both identify and address the needs of its parishioners, ensuring that they have taken the precautions necessary to be safe in an emergency.

One of the most important things a church can do is share information. Though a wealth of preparedness guides, checklists and other information sources exist, not all persons may have access to or know where to look for these resources.

Simply raising awareness of the need is a benefit. By talking about how to prepare for emergencies and what assistance is available, parishioners are ensured access to that information. This can be done from the pulpit, through bulletin inserts and newsletters, or by having information readily available to parishioners and visitors to the church.

However, the sole responsibility for the preparedness of the parish should not fall on the clergy. Each member of the church, as a vital part of the community, should talk to friends, neighbors and family members about preparedness. As part of that conversation, church members can assess the

needs of those at risk and make sure they have what they need.

The adage, “many hands make light work,” is just as true in preparedness as it is in other aspects of life. When we come together to prepare our community as a whole, we can work quickly and effectively to see that goal realized.

- A canned food drive may be all it takes to ensure that each church member's pantry is adequately stocked with emergency stores.
- A phone tree with each church member and regular attendee's name and phone number listed distributes the task of contacting them before, during and after an event throughout the church community, making sure that nobody is missed and the process goes quickly.
- A group of handy persons who move throughout the community, boarding up windows and securing doors of their own homes and others as a hurricane approaches makes certain no home is left vulnerable to the high winds.

The people of the Diocese of Texas have proven themselves capable of this type of community effort, demonstrating the power of community after Hurricane Ike's landfall in September 2008. Episcopalians from our own diocese volunteered hundreds of hours providing spiritual care and physical labor for survivors of the storm throughout the coast.

Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

Proper Sheltering-in-place could Save Your Family in a Chemical Emergency

Chemical emergencies can occur suddenly, without advance warning. Because toxins spread quickly through air and water, the best way to protect your family may be to shelter in place. To stay safe in chemical emergencies, the Austin Department of Emergency Management recommends the following precautions:

Before a chemical emergency

- Cut plastic sheeting to fit your windows, doors and vent openings and store with your emergency kit.
- Stock your emergency kit with duct tape and chemical masks.
- Identify a room within your home for sheltering-in-place. It should be above ground and have few windows, if any.
- Learn how your community will alert you of a chemical emergency, and how to receive information during the event.

During a chemical emergency

- Go indoors to your shelter room with all family members, pets and your emergency kit. Do not leave your house to get your children if they are at school, as going outside may increase your danger of exposure to the toxins. Schools should have their own plans in place to protect students.
- Close, lock and seal all windows and doors. Close off storage, laundry, and other non-essential rooms.
- Prevent airflow from the outside as much as possible. Turn off fans, heating and cooling systems that draw in air from outside. Close the damper in the fireplace, if you have one.
- Close shutters, shades, blinds or curtains, and stay away from windows to minimize your danger in an explosion.
- Once you and your family are safe in your shelter room, cover windows, doors, exhaust fans, registers, outlets and vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Seal cracks and small openings where pipes come into the room with the duct tape.
- Monitor emergency information using a radio or television. Stay off the phone as much as possible, as emergency responders will need the lines and signals. Call 9-1-1 only to report an injury or other immediate emergency, never for information.
- Have your evacuation kit ready, but leave only if ordered to do so.

After a chemical emergency

- If public safety officials order an evacuation, follow their instructions immediately, taking your evacuation kit with you. Do not return until local officials give the “all clear.”
- If the “all clear” message is sounded without an evacuation, open up the house to clear the air of any chemicals that may have seeped in. Remove plastic sheeting and tape, open doors and windows, turn on heating or cooling systems, and go outside.

By following these precautions, you can help to ensure your family’s survival of a chemical emergency without injury or illness. Place instructions for your family, including identification of your shelter room, in your emergency kit and review them often.



WORD SEARCH Emergency Preparedness

T H E U E R K F X E L R E V W I
P S U T M C P R O E A G D T N L
T I S I E G N G B O N S G I O E
D R E L R H N A A I D N S N I I
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D I S A S T E R E T L E H S N B
F I R S T A I D A T G O E L R A

alarm
biological
church in a box
data backup
disaster
early warning
emergency
evacuation
first aid
food
geological
hazard
insurance
maintenance
mitigation
partner parish
phone tree
preparedness
risk
security
shelter
technological
TEDRD
utilities
VOAD
water

Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

They say everything's bigger in Texas. Unfortunately, when it comes to the number of emergencies and disasters experienced in the state each year, the adage is true. Even with these unique risks, a little foresight and planning can make living, working, and worshipping in Texas even better than it already is.

Black Swans: When the Unpredictable Happens

By Don Parker

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, a Lebanese Christian who, as a youth, saw his world destroyed by civil war, introduced the term "Black Swan" in a 2007 book of the same name. A Black Swan is a rare event, often unpredictable, that has enormous impact.

Though Taleb's book deals mostly with financial planning (he is a Wall Street analyst), he urges us to take typically unforeseen events into account in planning.

There are a lot of bad things that can happen to us, either individually or collectively: During the Christmas season of 2004, a tsunami in the Indian Ocean swept away 225,000 people; Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August of the following year, an event that killed hundreds and displaced hundreds of thousands. Then, in October, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake devastated mountainous parts of Pakistan and killed an estimated 80,000. In less than one year, we had seen three biblical-scale events.

The 2008 Hurricane Season saw 16 named storms, including three (Dolly, Gustav, and Ike) that struck Texas. Many of us probably have friends or family who were impacted by these storms. The city of Galveston was heavily damaged by Hurricane Ike, and if the storm had struck a few miles to the southwest, the entire city might have been destroyed.

More recently, we were shocked when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti on January 12 with a loss of 220,000 people and an even greater earthquake struck Chile on February 27.

Theologians have long debated the



nature of evil, and, especially, the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" St. Thomas Aquinas suggested that what we perceive as evil is either the work of man, or is inherent in nature. While hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis certainly are not the work of man, they are events that man can make better by offering material and spiritual aid to their victims.

Jesus said, "...I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes, and you clothed me..." (Matthew 25: 35-36).

Through the ministry of Texas Episcopal Disaster Relief & Development, Bishop Andy Doyle has asked parishes to develop Emergency Preparedness plans and to encourage individuals and families to do likewise. Begin thinking and praying about what might be effective measures that we could take in preparation for whatever events we might have to face in upcoming years.

Don Parker is a member of St. Richard's, Round Rock, and professor of geology at Baylor University.

Disaster Supply Kit Have It Ready To Go

Water (one gallon per person per day)

- ☐ 3 day supply of non-perishable food: tuna, jerky, peanut butter, dried milk
- ☐ Dried fruit, canned fruit, crackers, granola bars, trail mix, canned/boxed juice
- ☐ Baby food, diapers, and formula
- ☐ Can opener, eating utensils, mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- ☐ Propane tank for gas grill, matches in waterproof container
- ☐ Wet wipes, disinfectants, household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper
- ☐ Battery-operated radio
- ☐ Battery-operated telephone charger
- ☐ Flashlights
- ☐ Extra batteries including batteries for hearing aids
- ☐ First Aid Kit including sunscreen and mosquito repellent
- ☐ Eyeglasses
- ☐ Documents in water tight containers: back up on separate storage drive, CD's, or stored with money, traveler's checks, checks, change, deposit slips, credit cards
- ☐ Medical history, Insurance-health, life, homeowners, renters, car
- ☐ Birth certificates, green cards, social security cards, wills
- ☐ Titles—deeds, cars
- ☐ Licenses—drivers, marriage, professional papers
- ☐ Video or pictures of rooms & property
- ☐ Extra keys
- ☐ Extra prescription medicine or refill information
- ☐ 3 complete sets of clothing for each family member; rain protection (poncho) & warmth (blankets), sleeping bag
- ☐ Waterproof paper & pen/pencil
- ☐ Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- ☐ Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- ☐ 3 weeks worth of food & medicine
- ☐ Immunization records
- ☐ Recent photo of pet in case of separation
- ☐ Carrying crate
- ☐ Write phone number on pet's stomach with indelible marker
- ☐ Rabies & license tags

Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

Episcopal Relief & Development Continues to Work toward Recovery in Haiti



An acolyte at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Port-au-Prince brings the cross into the open-air cathedral for veneration during the Holy Friday liturgy April 2. The rubble of the earthquake-destroyed cathedral building is visible in the background. Photo by Mallory Holding

Episcopal Relief and Development had an active presence in Haiti, long before the devastating earthquake that struck on January 12. Just days after the event however, representatives from the national relief organization were on the ground in Port-Au-Prince to help provide relief and build a plan for recovery.

One of only a handful of international dioceses within the Episcopal Church USA, the Diocese of Haiti is also the largest by membership, with more than 83,000 Episcopalians throughout a mere 11,000 square miles (roughly the size of Massachusetts).

These numbers lend both strength and difficulty in responding to the Haitian earthquake, explained Katie Mears, the program director for Domestic Disasters at Episcopal Relief and Development. Mears has traveled to Haiti several times in the past few months. The Diocese of Haiti is both invested and affected in nearly every community throughout the nation.

Working closely with Episcopal Relief & Development, the Diocese of the Dominican Republic and other partners, the Diocese of Haiti is providing food, water, shelter and medical care. More than 217 tons of food have been distributed since January, and 450 families were given the supplies and assistance to build temporary housing structures by ERD.

After treating thousands of local survivors in a tent camp, a mobile medical unit was established to provide care for survivors in outlying areas. The unit, which holds free clinics across the country, utilizes Haitian medical professionals, many of whom were trained at the Episcopal University of Haiti's School of Nursing. The doctor who leads the program was studying at the seminary when the earthquake occurred.

"He understands both the medical and church sides," Mears said. Though transportation between clinic locations is difficult – sometimes requiring hours in the car, foot travel or even a donkey ride – the mobile unit has treated

more than 7,000 patients.

As the Diocese of Haiti begins to move from emergency relief into long-term recovery, one of its primary focuses will be "cash-for-work" programs that create jobs for Haitians and help to rebuild the infrastructure of the nation.

Following the destruction of Port-Au-Prince, where as much as 50 percent of the population of Haiti lived before the earthquake, many citizens retreated to the rural areas where they had been born. Once there, they found that the situation is little better in the country than in the city, with little food and not enough jobs.

Cash-for-Work programs will establish projects run by local congregations, with staff and labor provided by local Haitian citizens. In a disaster-ravaged nation, the opportunities for projects are endless, and there is a large unemployed workforce from which to draw laborers, many of whom were victims of the poor economy long before the earthquake shook the country.

Describing this vision, Mears emphasizes the need for cash donations rather than volunteer labor. While funding will be the biggest determiner of the program's success, the standard daily wage for a worker in Haiti is just \$4.00 per day.

"You can hire two Haitians for a lot less than the cost of a plane ticket," Mears said. The effects of providing job opportunities for citizens will benefit the recovering nation for years to come.

For more information on Episcopal Relief & Development's role in Haiti's recovery, please visit the Haiti Crisis page at www.er-d.org/HaitiCrisis. To help, you can donate to the Haiti Earthquake Response fund by calling 800.334.7626, ext. 5129, mailing your gift (with "Haiti Earthquake Response Fund" written in the memo line) to Episcopal Relief & Development, PO Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058, or by submitting your donation online at www.er-d.org.

Fires Kill More
Americans than All
Natural Disasters Combined

Safety is Key

In 2008, 1.5 million fires burned across the nation, killing more Americans than all natural disasters combined, according to the U.S. Fire Administration, a subset of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Fires are caused by a number of factors, including appliance malfunction, faulty wiring and lightning strikes. They can spread quickly throughout a home and to nearby structures if not caught early. Fires occur without warning, and can devastate a family and a community. Thus, preparing for the possibility of a fire is essential for keeping your family safe. The following are several recommendations of the USFA:

Install smoke alarms. Installing smoke alarms is one of the simplest and most effective means of keeping your family safe. Alarms sound at the slightest hint of smoke, allowing your family to escape danger. Smoke alarms are inexpensive, and should be installed on every floor of the home, especially in or near sleeping areas. Test alarms monthly and replace batteries twice yearly to ensure that they will function properly when needed the most.

Have fire extinguishers available. Store fire extinguishers around the house in easy-to-access locations. Not all extinguishers are the same – learn about the different classifications and the uses for each. What works to put out an electrical fire may feed a grease fire. Teach family members how and when to properly use each extinguisher.

Extinguishers should be used only if the fire is small and within a single container, such as a wastebasket or pan. Keep local fire department numbers with the extinguishers and by the phone; call the fire department before attempting to extinguish a fire on your own. If the fire is too large to handle, vacate the home or building immediately.

Check fire extinguishers regularly, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance. Keep the exterior clean of dirt and grease, and make sure that they are not blocked by furniture, doorways or any other obstruction. Replace it immediately if it becomes damaged or needs to be recharged. Extinguishers can be purchased at most hardware stores and many department stores.

Make an escape plan. It only takes a few minutes for an entire house to fill with smoke and become engulfed in flames. Having a good escape plan can make the difference between life and death. Each room in the home should have two escape routes, in case one becomes blocked by fire. Draw out a layout of your home, and identify the exits in each. Install collapsible ladders or find alternate means to get out upper-level windows safely. Make sure security bars have a quick-release device.

Coordinate a meeting point outside the home and practice meeting there. Once you are out, do not go back inside for any reason. If someone is left in the home, allow the fire department to perform a rescue.

For any fire, large or small, do not reenter the building until the fire department rules it safe.

For more information on fire safety, visit the United States Fire Administration website at www.usfa.dhs.gov. The website includes helpful tips on staying safe in fires, and even includes a website for children to learn about fire safety.

Are you ready?

Special Emergency Preparedness Section

Disaster Planning for You and Your Pet(s)

By Abby Harrison

Disaster planning is more than just having a bag of food and an extra gallon of water. Start with:

Identification

- Pictures - (front, both sides). Keep the back up with you in case you evacuate.
- Tags – Just your phone numbers and that you offer a reward (why make it easy to keep your pet). Add a second tag with your vet’s address, phone and a comment that the pet can be boarded there.
- Microchip – Cheap back up but contact information must be kept current.

Vet information

- Vaccination records – Keep the most recent copy in your glove box and or evacuation bag. The vet may not have access and you will not wish to pay for it again.
- Medications – Have at least a month’s worth on hand as this will not be viewed as necessary as that for humans.

Packing

- Lists – Write out everything you will take and where it is.
- Dry run – Try a test packing of the car. Pets in crates can easily overheat so don’t stack belongings so they block air flow. Add a water bottle. The best crate fans have slots for ice cubes to cool.
- Bring – Food and bowls. Also a couple of special treats and a few favorite toys.

Travel Information

- Transport – in a crate. Loose pets can become a flying objects in an accident (30 mph crash, 13 pound dummy dog = 390 pounds hitting something). Crates also give your pet a safe place to be in strange places. So teach your pet how to be calm in a crate and keep it up before hurricane season starts. Location – Have a destination to go to. Make sure they know what pets you are bringing and are comfortable with it. You won’t want to be asked to move on after a long trip.
- Location – Know where the nearest emergency clinic will be before leaving. Your pet may be dehydrated or overheated.

Staying Put

- Crate - keep your pet safe during the storm in a crate in an inside room (protected from broken glass, etc.).
- Harness and leash - cats as they usually have breakaway collars.

After the Storm

- Drop cloths - have old vinyl tablecloths (or similar) to place on the floor for a clean spot to put crates and other objects.
- Check - your perimeters several times a day as animals may move in or limbs drop post-storm.

Family Pets Require Special Considerations

Any pet owner knows that their furry, feathery or scaled companions are just as much a part of the family as any human relative. It only makes sense, then, to make sure that our pets are prepared for emergencies as well. Whether evacuating or sheltering-in-place, make sure that you have a plan and supplies ready to keep your pets safe and healthy in a disaster.



Know your risks. Just as you would look at possible emergencies affecting your family, consider how they will also impact your pet. Think about the specific needs your pets will have in each, such as waste disposal for sheltering-in-place or a harness for evacuations. Remember that emergencies impact many pets psychologically as well as physically; think about ways to comfort and reduce the anxiety of your pet.

For more information on pet safety and preparedness and to order a “Pet Alert Sticker” to let emergency personnel know there is a pet in your home, visit <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/>.