



Stormy Weather



Semper Vigilans — Always Vigilant,

we say it. Do we practice it in our daily activities?

COMPLACENCY & PROCRASTINATION CAN BE KILLERS

The fear among weather professionals is that people with short memories, or newcomers to hurricane zones, will somehow believe that. It missed us last time, it will miss us again.

HURRICANE SEASON STARTS IN LESS THAN THIRTY DAYS

Before a hurricane

To prepare for a hurricane, you should take the following measures.

■ To begin preparing, you should build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan. Contact your local Emergency Management Agency or the American Red Cross for more information on emergency survival kits, or at the very least, use common sense..

■ **If you haven't done it**, now is a good time to document your homes contents, for insurance purposes. Today's digital cameras make this a simple project. An even better way of documentation is to use a video camera, with an assistant that walks through your home with you, talking to the cameras microphone, to describe various items as you record. Open up cabinet doors and drawers to show the contents. Do the same for your closets. Many times expensive items are stored in these places. Go into your garage and out-buildings to show additional items of worth such as mowers, power tools etc., they all add up value. Be sure to make several copies of your videos and store them in different and secure places.

■ **Know your surroundings.**

■ **Learn** the elevation of your property and whether or not it is flood prone. Especially, after the damaging torrential rains that damaged much of our island homes. This will also help you know how your property will be affected when storm surge or tidal flooding are forecasted.

■ **Identify** levees, streams, and dams in your area and determine whether they pose a hazard to you? (do you remember the Ka Loko disaster on Kauai?)

■ **Learn community hurricane and tsunami evacuation routes**, and how to find higher ground in a hurry, in case of flooding or Tsunami. Determine where you would go and how you would get there if you needed to evacuate. Be sure that all of your family is on the same page by having a Family Communications Plan.

■ **Make plans** to secure your property.

■ **Cover** all of your homes windows and doors that have glass panels. Outside of structural failure, *water intrusion caused by wind borne projectiles is one of the most prominent damaging factor in a hurricane.*

Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with ¾ inch exterior or marine grade plywood, pre-cut to fit and ready to install and be sure to label them so you know where they go. This is especially important if you have someone else put you hurricane panels for you. But plywood is very heavy and difficult to install especially on second floor openings. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking! So forget it! There are several alternatives to plywood for hurricane panels. Search the internet for information on various “plastic” materials.

A word of caution when using these materials. Be sure to research the deflection rates of all materials used for hurricane panels. Too much deflection upon impact will still break your windows, possibly allowing damaging rain to enter your house.

■ **Install** straps or additional clips, to securely fasten your roof, to the frame structure. If you are unsure of what is needed, contact your local Building and Safety Department. If you have existing straps that are exposed, examine them for rust and corrosion, and replace them as needed. This will reduce the possibility of your whole roof structure lifting off your house and slamming into your neighbor’s house.

■ **Be sure** that trees and shrubs around your house are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant. Remove anything that could cause damage.

■ **Clean** rain gutters and down spouts and check to insure that all fastenings are secure.

■ **Reinforce** your garage doors. If wind enters your garage it can cause dangerous and expensive structural damage. The garage is typically the weakest structure in a residence. A garage basically has only three structural walls. The fourth side has a very large opening (the door) and very small side walls.

If you see studs on each side of the garage door, when standing in your garage, looking out of the garage door, this area can be substantially strengthened by adding ½ to ¾ inch plywood, nailed every six (6) inches, to the studs. This is known as “shear paneling”. A search of the internet can produce several ways to reinforce your garage doors. Hurricane rated garage doors are also

available from some building supply centers. They are usually special order so if you are going to install them, do so well in advance of the storm season. Additionally, due to the substantial increase in weight, a heavy duty screw drive type garage door opener will probably be needed.

The installation costs of a wind rated garage door are notable, but it is a very important safety improvement to your home.

■**Plan** to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans, and anything else that is not tied down. This helps to reduce flying debris that may damage your, or your neighbor's house.

■**Consider** building a safe room. The best place to research a safe room is:
<http://www.fema.gov/safe-rooms>.

Many States, Counties and Federal tax benefits are available when you build a safe room for your residence. Check it out.

■**Consider water storage.** When the power goes out, our water companies pumps shut down. Some are on standby power sources, but this cannot be relied upon. Bathtubs make great reservoirs. Look for additional sources for storage. One of the simplest is to line an empty trashcan with clean new trash bags, and fill them with water. These should be stored in your garage or other places where access is protected and readily available. This stored water should be considered as gray water (non-potable) and used for utility purposes only (toilet flushing). Consider that if you have a toilet that uses 1½ gallons per flush, this stored water can be very useful. If stored water is to be used for drinking or cooking, it must be treated in accordance with reliable water treatment methods. When the emergency need is over, siphon the trash can with a water hose, instead of just trying to dump it over. A 40 gallon trashcan of water will weigh over 334 pounds. This is very difficult to control if you try to just dump it over.

Food: it goes without saying that food is needed. Only you can implement a food storage program for your family's particular needs. Just make sure that all food stored is as non-perishable as possible. AND, have at least a three week supply. And don't forget your pets.

Rotation: it is imperative that you rotate your stored food supply throughout your normal consumption. If you use a can of soup this week, put it on your grocery list and replenish it this week. In this manner your stored food supply will stay moderately refreshed.

Some final thoughts.

We all are skilled at the fine art of procrastination. This is counter to our motto of Civil Air Patrol, Semper Vigilans. We need to practice what we preach. We are ready to drop everything to respond to a CAP mission. We need to include that response in our everyday life. Protect

yourself, your family, and your home first, then you will have more time to serve and protect your neighbor or community when needed.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT! Will you?

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THIS BRIEFING BE GIVEN AT YOUR NEXT UNIT MEETING.

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