



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Free workshops help residents get ready for hurricane season

GEORGETOWN COUNTY — As the start of the Atlantic hurricane season approaches, Georgetown County Emergency Management is increasing its preparedness efforts and wants to help county residents get ready too.

The county will host a series of free hurricane preparedness workshops at locations throughout the county during the first week of hurricane season, which begins June 1. All workshops will begin at 6 p.m. and last about an hour. The workshop schedule is as follows:

- June 3 — Beck Recreation Center, 2030 Church St., Georgetown
- June 4 — Murrells Inlet Community Center, 4450 Murrells Inlet Road
- June 5 — Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center, 83 Duncan Ave., Pawleys Island
- June 6 — North Santee Community Center, 1484 Mt. Zion Ave., Georgetown
- June 7 — Plantersville Community Center, 1458 Exodus Dr., Georgetown

The peak of the Atlantic hurricane season normally isn't until around September, but it's never too early to start preparing, said Sam Hodge, Georgetown County Emergency Manager. However, it can easily be too late.

"The last thing you want to do is wait until a storm is barreling toward our coastline to start thinking about things like what to do with pets during an evacuation or whether your home insurance policy will cover what you need it to if we get a hurricane."

Many residents don't realize the state has a 15-day waiting period for new wind or hail coverage to go into effect, and even longer for flood coverage. A homeowner who waits until a storm is on its way to change their insurance policy will be out of luck.

Those are the kinds of things that will be addressed at the workshop. Participants will also be given hurricane guides and other resources to help with their planning, Hodge will review recent changes to local evacuation zones and the state's evacuation procedure, and there will be a brief overview of forecasts for the 2013 hurricane season. Frank Johnson, chief meteorologist for WBTW News 13, will lend his expertise as a special guest speaker at the workshop in Murrells Inlet. Ed Piotrowski is tentatively scheduled to speak at the Pawleys Island event.

(More)

The workshops will be an excellent introduction to hurricane season for new residents in the area, but are also an excellent refresher for those who have been here longer. Even those who think they know everything they need to about getting ready for hurricane season are likely to learn something new, Hodge said.

Georgetown County Emergency Management has participated in similar hurricane workshops on the Waccamaw Neck in past years, but Hodge sees a need to offer this type of information in parts of the county that are farther inland, as well. While most people focus on areas east of Highway 17 during hurricane season, storm surge could affect areas well into Georgetown and flooding could pose life-threatening danger even in the western reaches of the county.

“Every family, individual, business and group in Georgetown County should have a disaster plan in place that includes what to do in a hurricane,” Hodge said.

Residents should also recall that South Carolina hasn’t been hit by a major storm since Hurricane Hugo, which made landfall near McClellanville on Sept. 21, 1989. Since then, the area hasn’t seen wind speeds over around 85 miles per hour.

“After that, life gets back to normal the very next day,” Hodge said. “When a major hurricane makes landfall here, life doesn’t get back to normal the next day, the next week, or even the next month.”

There’s no avoiding that sort of threat on the coast, so the best thing to do is be as prepared as possible, Hodge added.

For more information about the upcoming workshops, call 545-3273.

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