



NEWS from **SEMO**

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SEMO DIRECTOR SAYS BE PREPARED FOR HURRICANE SEASON

The New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) today urged New Yorkers to begin preparing for the upcoming hurricane and coastal storm season by reviewing their family emergency plans and checking on emergency supplies they have at home and at work.

“While our State has been spared the fury of these coastal storms over the last few years, we know it’s only a matter of time. That’s why it’s best to take the time to make preparations now rather than wait until a storm is just over the horizon. Everyone needs to be prepared,” said John R. Gibb, Director of SEMO.

Governor David A. Paterson also encouraged residents across the State to begin taking simple, common-sense steps and proclaimed Sunday, May 24, through Saturday, May 30, as Hurricane Preparedness Week in the Empire State.

“The chief responsibility of government is to protect the citizens, communities and economic vitality of our State and Nation – and individuals must share a burden of that responsibility,” Governor Paterson said. “Therefore, it is imperative that citizens take the time now to be prepared before storm warnings are posted by reviewing their emergency plans at home and at work to ensure their safety and that over their loved ones.”

Traditionally, the Atlantic hurricane/coastal storm season in the Empire State runs from June 1 through November 30. While predominantly coastal storms, in the past these devastating storms have impacted areas of the State hundreds of miles from the ocean such as Tropical Storms Agnes (1972) in the Southern Tier and Floyd (1999) in the Hudson Valley.

“We are doing everything possible as a State to ensure that our response capabilities are as robust as possible,” Gibb said. “While local and State agencies continue to hone those capabilities, every resident in this State has a responsibility to develop and practice plans to protect themselves and their loved ones and property.”

A community’s level of preparedness begins with the individual.

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“We encourage New Yorkers to know what they and their families should do in the event of a storm or an emergency, and that includes having emergency supplies on hand such as flashlights and batteries, and water and canned goods,” Gibb said.

New Yorkers also should be aware of current weather conditions by monitoring broadcasts from their local radio and television stations or NOAA Weather Radio.

“You need to have accurate information to protect yourself and your loved ones, and the best way to get emergency information is by subscribing to NY-ALERT, the State’s all-hazards alert and notification system,” Gibb said. To subscribe to this free, web-based system, visit www.nyalert.gov.

SEMO, the emergency management offices of New York City and Nassau and Suffolk counties, the Long Island Power Authority and National Grid, are sponsoring the 16th annual Long Island-New York City Emergency Management Conference. Scheduled May 27-28 at the Hilton Long Island hotel in Melville, the conference entitled “What’s New – What’s Next: The Status of Emergency Management in 2009” will explore a wide range of topics including lessons learned from the response to hurricanes of the past, school safety, emergency communications and a review of the response to the crash of Flight 3407 in Erie County in February of this year. .

Before the start of the hurricane season, the SEMO Director urged New Yorkers to:

- Develop or review a household disaster plan. Know how to contact all family members at all times. Identify an out-of-town friend or family member to be the “emergency family contact.” Then make certain all family members have that number. Designate a family emergency meeting point, some familiar location where the family can meet in the event the home is inaccessible.
- Prepare an emergency phone list of people and organizations that may need to be called, including schools, doctors, child/senior care providers, and insurance agents.
- Ensure that enough non-perishable food and water supplies are on hand for each member of the family. Make sure battery-operated radios and flashlights are available and have an ample supply of batteries. Have a first aid kit available and an ample supply of medicines on hand for those who require it.
- Know the hurricane / storm risks in their areas, and learn the storm surge history.
- Learn their community’s warning signals and evacuation plans.
- Make arrangements on where to relocate pets during a storm.

Individuals with special needs or requiring more information should contact their local emergency management office.

For more information on hurricane preparedness and what you can do to protect yourself and your family, visit the SEMO website at www.semo.state.ny.us.

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