FEMA Encourages Individual and Community Preparedness as 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins

Release Date: 6? 1, 2021

PHILADELPHIA – Recent years have not only shown that the east coast is susceptible to the damaging impacts of hurricanes and other tropical systems, but that hurricanes are also not just a coastal threat. The 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins today, June 1st, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) joins our state and local partners in encouraging individuals, families, businesses, and communities to begin preparing for hazardous weather that may result from hurricanes and other tropical systems. Disasters don't wait; we've already seen the first tropical cyclone of the Atlantic season - Tropical Storm Ana. The threat of hurricanes and other tropical systems has already arrived.

"It is not uncommon for residents of the Mid-Atlantic to think hurricanes and tropical systems are unlikely to impact them where they live… but that is not necessarily the case. Tropical weather systems can have severe impacts hundreds of miles inland from the coast. A storm does not need to be a major hurricane to cause damage, and it only takes one to change your life." said Janice Barlow, FEMA Region 3 Acting Regional Administrator. "Storms as recent as Hurricane Isaias, which impacted parts of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania in August 2020 are proof that residents and business owners in the Mid-Atlantic should take hurricane season seriously and begin preparing today."

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic is still an ongoing hazard that could influence your hazardous weather plans when it comes to evacuation and sheltering. This is something to strongly consider when preparing for hurricane season. For example, you may need to adjust your plans if you are unwilling to gather in a group setting such as a public emergency shelter.

FEMA has also taken steps to prepare ourselves and our partners to respond to disasters in a COVID-19 environment. In May 2021 FEMA released COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance. This updated document provides actionable

guidance to State, Local, Tribal & Territorial officials to prepare for response and recovery operations for all-hazards and encourages personal preparedness measures amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA is ready to respond to any hurricane or disaster.

Take action today to prepare for hurricanes and other tropical systems:

Know your risk. These storms are not just a coastal threat. Extreme flooding and damaging winds could occur hundreds of miles inland from the coast.

Begin planning. Know what you'll do if a storm is coming to your area, how to stay in touch with family and friends, and where you will go if your home is unsafe. Visit ready.gov for preparedness and planning tips.

Make a kit. Make sure you have non-perishable food items, water, essential documents, flashlights, a battery back or other means of charging your cell phone, NOAA weather radio, toys or comfort items for kids, and any supplies needed for your pet. Have enough supplies to last at least 72 hours but preparing to be on your own for up to a week is a good idea. Learn more at ready.gov/kit.

Download the FEMA app. By having the FEMA app installed on your smartphone you can receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service, share real-time notifications with loved ones, review emergency preparedness tips and checklists, locate emergency shelters, and more.

Stay informed. Enable Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on your mobile phone to receive emergency alerts from the National Weather Service. A NOAA Weather Radio can also provide these lifesaving emergency alerts.

- Pay attention to weather forecasts in your area provided by local news outlets or the National Weather Service. Many people also use weather apps on their mobile phones for this purpose.
- Always follow the guidance of local officials during an emergency. If your community has an emergency alert system you should consider signing up. Contact your local emergency manager for more information.

Purchase flood insurance. Talk to your insurance provider about your coverage and determine if you would be covered in the event of a flood.

- Most homeowner's policies do not cover flood damage.
- Flood insurance takes 30 days to become effective – don't wait until the last minute!
- Visit floodsmart.gov for more information.

Known your zone. If you live in a coastal area, become familiar with community evacuation plans, evacuation zones, and evacuation routes. Where will you go and how will you get there?

- Maryland: mema.maryland.gov/know-your-zone
- Virginia: knowyourzoneva.org

More information on how to prepare may be found at ready.gov/hurricanes.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

For questions about this release or hurricane preparedness, please contact FEMA Region 3 External Affairs by emailing FEMAR3NewsDesk@fema.dhs.gov.