

In Case You Missed it: FEMA Encourages Hurricane Preparedness Now in COVID-19 Environment

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WASHINGTON – FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor emphasized the importance of hurricane preparedness during an [exclusive](#) interview with AXIOS May 2 and The Weather Channel [today](#), as the nation continues its unprecedented COVID-19 response.

With National Hurricane Preparedness Week May 3-9, Gaynor said this season “will be a little more complicated, with social distancing and ensuring we keep hygiene at the top of our list.”

During the Axios interview, Gaynor elaborated on how the agency is adjusting its hurricane preparedness measures in the midst of fighting the COVID-19 virus. He introduced the agency’s “COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for 2020 Hurricane Season,” affirming that FEMA’s new ‘surge’ National Response Coordination Center will facilitate managing disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires, in addition to COVID-19.

"We're doing a lot of things that are not necessarily in any playbook that has existed," Gaynor told Axios. "How do you evacuate people from hurricane zones while maintaining 6 feet of social distancing? How much extra shelter space will be needed to house people who can no longer safely crowd into schools, auditoriums and community centers, and How do you protect the most vulnerable people such as the elderly and those with underlying conditions?"

When asked about preparation changes since 2019, he explained that over the last 30 days, FEMA is coordinating with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to strategize evacuation and sheltering protocols to account for social distancing.

Gaynor concluded by specifying that due to COVID-19, FEMA is examining how to virtually inspect damaged homes and ensuring agency employees' safety when



conduct field operations.

Communities are encouraged to prepare early and residents should download the FEMA app, which provides preparedness tips, disaster resources and localized weather alerts or visit ready.gov. For the latest on the whole-of-America COVID-19 response, visit fema.gov/coronavirus.



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