

Get a Head Start on Readiness and Resilience During Hurricane Preparedness Week

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ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands – Hurricane Preparedness Week gives Virgin Islanders a chance to review and refine their emergency plans three weeks before Atlantic hurricane season starts June 1. Update your plans and practice them throughout the year with your family and neighbors.

Get informed, be alert and get a head start with preparedness. We have nearly three months before the season's peak when tropical waves form off the west coast of Africa and move through the Caribbean, but Virgin Islanders know hurricanes can spin up anytime.

“Even while we are still working on COVID-19 vaccinations throughout the Virgin Islands, FEMA and VITEMA are working together to make sure we are ready for hurricane season,” said Mark A. Walters, Coordinator of FEMA’s U.S. Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office. “It is not the time for Virgin Islanders to take preparedness for granted, take the time now to prepare for emergencies that may impact your home and family before the storm arrives.”

“June 1 through November 30 is hurricane season and we want you to be ready. Hurricane preparedness is for everyone. Start with a plan. Get ready by being informed. Sign up for [Alert VI](#) today. Be prepared. It’s not too early to buy supplies, do it now. Make sure your family has a plan for food and water and an evacuation plan if you have to leave your home. Have at least a one-week supply of water and nonperishable food items for each person in the household. Fill your vehicle with fuel. Place additional fuel in approved containers in a secure area. Park vehicles outside of areas prone to flooding. #MissionReady - Be Prepared, Stay Informed and Be Vigilant,” said Daryl Jaschen, Director of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA).



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Page 1 of 3

There are steps you could now take to ensure you and your family are better prepared for emergencies.

- Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands your hurricane plan. Discuss the latest [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance on COVID-19](#) and how it may affect your hurricane planning. Don't forget a plan for the office, kids' day care, and anywhere you frequent.
- If you or anyone in your household is elderly or an individual with a disability, access, or functional need, identify any additional help during an emergency. Virgin Islanders age 60 and older and persons with disabilities may register with the V.I. Department of Human Services' (DHS) Elder, Dependent Adult and Disabled Persons Disaster Registry.
 - To register, call 340-774-0930 ext. 4018 on St. Thomas, 340-776-6334 on St. John and 340-773-6630 on St. Croix. You can download and fill out a registry form at www.dhs.gov.vi.
- Have several ways to receive alerts. Sign up for [Alert VI](#) to receive emergency notifications in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Download the [FEMA app](#) on your smartphone and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. Check the settings on your mobile phones to make sure you can receive Wireless Emergency Alerts, which require no sign-up.
 - Have an emergency charging option for your phone and other devices.
- Protect your home against storms. Declutter drains and gutters, consider hurricane shutters and leave room in your home to bring in outside furniture during a storm.
- Learn your evacuation routes, practice with household, pets, and identify where you will stay during a hurricane. Follow the instructions from territorial agencies who will provide the latest recommendations based on the threat to your community and appropriate safety measures.
 - To lower your risk of COVID-19 while sheltering with family, friends or in a public shelter, take your best shot against COVID-19 and get the vaccine as the U.S. Virgin Islands progresses toward 50,000 first vaccine doses by July 1.



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Page 2 of 3

- Vaccination appointments are handled through the Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Gateway at <https://www.covid19.usvi.care/vaccines> or VITEMA's vaccine registration line at 340-777-8227. Get the facts about COVID-19 vaccines from the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health at www.covid19usvi.com/.
- Make sure your insurance policies and personal documents like ID are up to date. Make copies and keep them in a secure password protected digital space. You may need your documents to apply for and receive assistance after a disaster.
- Have enough supplies for your household, include medication, disinfectant supplies, masks, pet supplies in your go bag or car trunk. After a hurricane, you may not have access to these supplies for days or even weeks.
 - Replenish supplies in your emergency kit and replace expired items as needed.

Visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes for more information on how to prepare for hurricanes, stay safe during a hurricane and returning home after a hurricane. Review Hurricane Preparedness Week's themes, such as how to get an insurance checkup and how to strengthen your home, at www.weather.gov/wrn/hurricane-preparedness, and follow www.vitema.vi.gov for information on local events and outreach.

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



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Page 3 of 3