

Preparedness Month Marks Call to Vigilance During Peak of Hurricane Season

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U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The arrival of peak activity in the Atlantic hurricane season and the recent passage of Tropical Storm Ernesto through the U.S. Virgin Islands both underscore the importance of being ready for cyclonic events that could affect you and your family. Virgin Islanders have showcased their resilience through multiple emergencies and a pandemic since the 2017 twin hurricanes, and this hurricane season provides another opportunity to mitigate your risk and better prepare your loved ones for any disaster.

Assess your needs today and see what items you might need to replenish in your disaster supply kit in the wake of Ernesto to give your household time to take the steps to prepare for the next weather event that forms in the Atlantic. You should prepare to be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a tropical storm or hurricane and take steps today to prepare your home or business.

To raise awareness about the importance of preparedness, FEMA and the USVI will join the nation in observing National Preparedness Month this September. This annual campaign encourages individuals, families, businesses, and communities to take proactive steps to ensure their readiness in the event of emergencies or natural disasters. Start a conversation today and take simple steps to strengthen your preparedness for the peak of hurricane season.

“Tropical Storm Ernesto’s path over the U.S. Virgin Islands earlier this month was a wake-up call for Virgin Islanders to assess how self-sufficient they might be in the immediate days after a storm makes landfall,” said FEMA Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office Acting Coordinator Aaron VanDoren. “National Preparedness Month provides an excellent opportunity for families and businesses to practice their emergency plans. Take steps today to replenish emergency supplies used during Ernesto and ask friends and neighbors if they need help with their preparedness plans.”



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The weekly themes for this year's Preparedness Month are:

1. **Know your risks.** Knowing the disasters and emergencies that can happen where you live is important to mitigate risk. Being aware of what could happen will help you understand the steps to take to have what is needed to stay safe.
2. **Have a plan.** Talk about the plans you've made and ask if family members need help doing so for themselves. Your plan can include contact information to stay in touch during a disaster, where you and your pets will stay if you must leave home and the latest safety info to share with friends and family.
3. **Community Preparedness.** Your friends and neighbors can help each other be ready no matter what happens. Share what's worked for you and your family on your preparedness journey.
4. **Protect what you love.** There are many ways to strengthen your home from disasters. You can protect important documents and heirlooms through proper storage. Consider other protections such as keeping your homeowner's insurance policy in force.

You can learn more about National Preparedness Month and hurricane preparedness at www.ready.gov/september.

According to VITEMA Director Daryl Jaschen, "For those who prepared early this Hurricane Season, both physically with their home survival kits and mentally with creating and sharing your emergency plan with your family and friends, thank you very much! For those choosing to procrastinate, please act now and follow our weekly themes to prepare yourself and your families, as we are now in the peak of Hurricane Season. Don't forget to Include your pet's needs in your survival kit and plans."

To support preparedness efforts, FEMA and VITEMA and other local agencies have organized a series of events and initiatives. These include workshops, emergency drills, public service announcements and training. Residents are encouraged to participate actively, assemble emergency supplies, and develop communication plans with their families.

FEMA and VITEMA remind residents of the key elements of emergency preparedness, including:



- Create an emergency supply kit with essential items such as non-perishable food, water, prescription medications, flashlights, batteries, and a first-aid kit.
- Develop a family emergency plan that includes communication methods, evacuation routes, and a designated meeting point.
- Stay informed by monitoring local weather forecasts, emergency alerts, and official announcements.
- Secure important documents and make digital copies of vital records.
- Protect your property by securing loose objects, trimming trees, and reinforcing doors and windows.
- Plan for an extended power outage. Make an inventory of the items you need that rely on electricity. Plan for batteries and other alternative power sources to meet your needs when the power goes out.
- Sign up for Alert VI at [VITEMA - Public - Sign In \(everbridge.net\)](https://everbridge.net/VITEMA-Public-Sign-In).

It is critical for everyone to remain vigilant not only during the peak of hurricane season, but for any weather or man-made events that may disrupt our lives and community.

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

