



## Gloucester Department of Community Engagement and Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Residents Urged to be Prepared for Threats from Hurricanes and other Natural Disasters

Gloucester County's Emergency Management department is urging residents to make sure that they are prepared for the threats that can come along with hurricane season, which will stretch into the fall. This week, the County's Emergency Management department, in coordination with Gloucester's Community Engagement and Public Information department, mailed out the 2020 Disaster Preparedness Quick Guide to all residential addresses in Gloucester – this guide is full of information on preparing for and recovering from a natural disaster.

"This tool is something residents can hold on to for reference when a storm is approaching," said Brett Major, Gloucester's Emergency Management Coordinator. "The Disaster Preparedness Quick Guide is a great starter for helping residents in the community consider key steps they should take as they prepare for various emergencies."

According to Major, one of the first steps in preparation is to follow checklists for emergency kits, as noted in the Guide, and develop them further to meet families' individual needs. "Understand that if a storm impacts the area, you may likely be without power, water and other utilities for an extended period of time," Major said.

He also recommends developing an individual / family / business evacuation plan, which includes knowing your evacuation zone, and having a place to temporarily relocate you and your family to, if the need should arise. He suggests having a plan for pets and to have "go-kits" ready with all the items essential to you or your family to last for several days.

Those with special requirements are encouraged to make extra preparations. "If you have special requirements such as medical accessibility or other functional need, make sure you consider those in preparation for storms and have plans in place for support," Major added.

Also, it's a good idea to review your insurance policies and make sure you have appropriate insurance, such as homeowners' and flood insurance, as applicable. Remember, most regular homeowners' insurance policies do not cover damage caused by floods and may also exclude the impacts of some other natural disasters.

It's important to understand and heed warnings and watches issued by the U.S. National Weather Service. These are often advertised on local media, however having a NOAA weather band radio with localized alerts in your homes and places of business is strongly recommended. Additionally, Gloucester residents can sign up for CodeRed Emergency Alerts by visiting <https://www.gloucesterva.info/409/CodeRed> or calling 804-693-1390.

Major also suggests that it's also a good idea to have a battery-operated AM/FM radio on hand in case power is out for a long period of time.

"Look out for your neighbors and loved ones," Major urged. "Check in with them and help them to prepare before a storm, and to recover after one." As a specific example, Major suggests preparing your home for high winds if a storm is coming – securing loose items, lawn furniture, etc.

Finally, if an evacuation order does occur, Major asks residents to be patient and follow instructions regarding re-entry as safety officials may have a lot to do to make storm-damaged areas safe for the public following a storm impact.

The Gloucester Emergency Management department is always happy to assist anyone with any questions and can be reached by calling 804-693-1390 or by e-mailing [DEM@gloucesterva.info](mailto:DEM@gloucesterva.info). More disaster preparedness information can be found by visiting <https://www.gloucesterva.info/365/Emergency-Management>.

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