



Charleston County News Release

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Hurricane Season Begins — Are YOU Ready?

Charleston County Government publishes official 2009 Hurricane Preparedness Guide and Disabilities and Special Needs Emergency Preparedness Guide

Most people know that June 1 marked the beginning of the 2009 hurricane season. And most people have probably heard the predictions for this year, so they realize that there is real potential for a storm to hit the East Coast. But are most people prepared? Are *you* prepared?

Cathy Haynes, Director of Charleston County's Emergency Preparedness Division, wants residents to get their family's emergency plan in place and put together their emergency supply kit prior to a storm.

Now is the time to get ready, and it's easy with the help of the new 2009 Charleston County Hurricane Guide available at www.charlestoncounty.org.

"Charleston County Government is always preparing for a storm and working with other local and state agencies to do so, but everyone has an individual responsibility to get prepared and make sure their family has a plan," Haynes said. "Churches and civic groups can also help by printing the small booklet guide for those who do not have access to the Internet. Our entire community needs to help spread the word."

Haynes also reminds the public that they should plan to leave town if at all possible and everyone along the coast is strongly encouraged to make travel arrangements in advance of an evacuation order.

"Because of the low-lying areas in our county, we will never have enough safe shelter space for all of the residents who live here. Therefore, we encourage everyone who has the means to leave town to do so and to consider shelters only as a last resort when they have nowhere else to go," Haynes said.

Also, those who have the ability to leave should do so as early as possible.

"You don't have to wait until a voluntary or mandatory evacuation order is issued," Haynes said. "If you can, leave as early as possible to make your trip easier and to help relieve the traffic congestion on our roads."

Charleston County encourages citizens who do not have transportation to know about their Evacuation Pick-Up Points, noted by blue signs. In the event of a mandatory evacuation, busses will transport citizens from 79 pick-up points across the county to the nearest available Red Cross shelter.

"It is vital for residents in our community who don't have transportation to know where their nearest pick-up point is before the next hurricane approaches our coast," Haynes said. "It takes all of us working together to make sure our citizens and neighbors are prepared and safe."

The public can go to www.charlestoncounty.org and click on the "Are You Ready?" banner on the front page of the County's Web site to download, print, and share:

- The 2009 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide (in English and Spanish)
- The 2009 Disabilities and Special Needs Emergency Preparedness Guide

Information in the 2009 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide includes:

- Evacuation information and routes out of Charleston County
- Shelters in Charleston County
- What to do if you don't have transportation – *look for pick-up point signs posted around the county!*
- Definitions and what you need to do during hurricane watches, warnings and tropical storms
- Rules to know and items to bring if you have to bring your pet to the pet shelter
- Preparations for your home and your family before the storm
- What you need to have in your emergency supplies kit
- What to do after a storm, including safety measures and handling debris
- A family communications plan form to fill out
- Important phone numbers

The guide will also run throughout hurricane season on the Comcast government-access channel 60.

Visit the Charleston County Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org for news, services and up-to-date information relating to Charleston County Government.