

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: May 21, 2008

Contact: Beth Dozier
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY PROCLAIMS MAY 25-31 HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Urges Citizens To Prepare Now For Busy Storm Season

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley has proclaimed May 25-31 as “Hurricane Preparedness Week” and urged all citizens to prepare for this year’s predicted increase in storm activity by assembling disaster preparedness kits and updating and rehearsing emergency plans. Hurricane season officially begins June 1.

“We have been very fortunate in recent years to have suffered no significant damage from hurricanes, but we cannot afford to become complacent,” said Easley. “Our state’s vulnerability to hurricanes ranks second only to Florida, so every citizen must be prepared.”

Easley said state agencies are working with local and county governments to practice what they preach. More than a dozen state agencies are participating in a two-day exercise this week that simulates what they would do to prepare for a major hurricane making landfall in the state.

Working with local officials in the eastern part of the state, the state Emergency Management Division prepared a comprehensive evacuation and sheltering plan for the entire coastal region. The Coastal Region Evacuation and Sheltering Standard Operating Guide identifies counties which are at risk from storm surge flooding and those who will host evacuees by providing safe shelter from the storm. The guide includes the evacuation and sheltering of elderly and medically-fragile citizens in 20 coastal counties. It also addresses managing mass evacuations, assignment of resources, sheltering of the general population, sheltering of functionally and medically fragile populations, and coordinated dissemination of public information.

“State and local governments are taking the necessary steps to ensure we are ready before a storm hits and can quickly respond afterward, but each family must also do their part,” said Bryan Beatty, Secretary of the Department of Crime Control & Public Safety, which includes Emergency Management. “I encourage all citizens to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies so they can be safe on their own for the first few days after a storm. If those who are able to prepare will do so, then police officers, firefighters and emergency medical service crews will be able to help those in life threatening situations first.”

-- MORE --

Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166

Easley encouraged North Carolinians to review and update their homeowners' insurance policy to make sure it includes coverage for accidental damage and natural disasters and, if necessary, flood insurance.

Families should have an emergency plan and emergency preparedness kit ready to go at all times. The kit should contain enough non-perishable food and a gallon of water per person per day to last three to five days. The kit should also include the following essentials:

- Copies of insurance papers and identification sealed in a watertight plastic bag
- First aid kit
- Weather radio and batteries
- Supply of prescription medicines
- Bedding
- Changes of clothes
- Personal hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and deodorant
- Cash or checkbook
- Pet supplies including food, water, leashes, bedding, muzzle and vaccination records, for those with pets

Citizens should stay informed during a storm by keeping a battery-powered radio for weather and evacuation information and should know evacuation routes in their community. People also need to heed the warnings of state and local officials and evacuate quickly when told to do so.

People can evacuate their homes with their small, domestic pets to specially designated pet-friendly shelters. Pet shelters will be equipped with pet crates, but citizens should bring feeding dishes, food and water, immunization papers and other pet supplies.

For more information on how to prepare for any type of emergency, visit www.ReadyNC.org.

###