



Hanover County Sheriff's Office
Colonel V. Stuart Cook, Sheriff



Public Safety Announcement

For more information call Lt. Doug Goodman at 365-6312

May 14, 2004

Governor Mark Warner has declared the week of May 16th thru 22nd as Hurricane and Flooding Preparedness Week. Last September, Hurricane Isabel caused 36 deaths and approximately \$1.9 billion in damages to property in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In Hanover County, damage was sustained on over 250 homes and 75 commercial structures. Many Hanover citizens went without power for over a week, which affected not only the comforts of home, but also impacted food stores and water supplies. In addition to the complications with utilities, many Hanover roads were impassable, leaving many citizens limited in their travels.

Hurricane season spans from June 1st to November 30th, 2004. As this season comes upon us we must be prepared for strong winds, heavy rain and floods that accompany these tropical events.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management, in cooperation with the National Weather Service, offers these safety tips to protect lives and reduce property damage:

Before the Storm:

- ⇒ If you live in a flood-prone area, identify where to go if you are told to evacuate and the safest route to get there. If there is a flood, you may only have minutes to get to safety. Choose several places – a friend's home in another area, a motel or a shelter. Also have a plan for you pets.
- ⇒ Get ready for a possible power outage by gathering a **minimum one-week supply of foods** that don't require refrigeration or cooking, such as canned goods, as well as **bottled water**, flashlights with extra batteries, a first-aid kit and battery-powered radio. If you need to evacuate, make sure you can consolidate these items into a portable "go" kit, like a backpack or duffel bag.
- ⇒ Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio for National Weather Service reports and severe weather warnings.
- ⇒ Cut dead trees and limbs that could fall on your home.
- ⇒ If your home or business is in a flood-prone area, make sure you have a current flood insurance policy (not typically part of a standard insurance policy). A 30-day waiting period is generally required to purchase flood insurance, so take time now to visit your insurance agent to learn more.
- ⇒ Take pictures of your property before the storm to help validate your claim and remember to take your policies with you if you need to evacuate.

When the Hurricane is Approaching

- ⇒ Listen to your local radio and TV stations for updated storm information. A hurricane or flood watch means possible danger. If the danger increases, a hurricane or flood warning will be issued.
- ⇒ If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, consider filling plastic containers with water, leaving about an inch of space inside each one. (Remember, water expands as it freezes, so it is important to leave room in the container for the expanded water). Place the containers in the refrigerator and freezer. This chilled or frozen water will help keep food cold for several hours if the power goes out.
- ⇒ Fill your bathtub with water to use for toilet flushing in case water services are unavailable following the storm.
- ⇒ Bring in garbage cans, lawn furniture and other items that could blow away.
- ⇒ Fill your car's gas tank. Functional gas stations will be in short supply in a power outage.

If Heavy Rains Occur

- ⇒ Be aware that floods are deceptive. Avoid already-flooded areas. Floodwaters that are above your knees are dangerous. Turn around and go back to higher ground.
- ⇒ If you find floodwaters on the road while driving, turn around and find an alternate route. The road could be washed out and rapidly rising water could lift your car and carry it away.

After the Storm

- ⇒ Listen to your local radio stations for official disaster relief information and instructions.
- ⇒ Prepare to be without power, telephone or any outside services for a week or more.
- ⇒ Watch out for downed power lines, weakened structures, rodents and snakes, and avoid standing water.
- ⇒ Avoid drinking tap water unless officials say it is safe to do so. Eat only foods you are absolutely sure are safe.
- ⇒ Be extra careful when handling power tools, gas lanterns and matches.
- ⇒ Operate generators outdoors only in a well-ventilated, dry area, away from air intakes to the home. Never use a generator indoors or in attached garages. Poor ventilation can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or death.
- ⇒ Avoid using candles as a light source. Deadly fires can result.

The key to keeping you and your family safe is preparedness. Now is the perfect time to create your own family emergency plan and building your family emergency kit. Although it appears to be a challenging task, you can assemble this kit over the course of several weeks without causing a financial burden.

Each week as you do your family grocery shopping, purchase a few extra items of non-perishable food stores and bottled water. Once you have your supplies, store them away in a plastic container to be used in the event of an emergency.

For more information, please log onto www.hanoversheriff.com and click the link “Emergency Preparedness.”

If you have any questions, please call the Lt. Doug Goodman at 365-6312.

Colonel V. Stuart Cook,
Sheriff