

## **Hurricane Preps**

**By Joseph Parish**

With the hurricane season kicking off this month, we are reminded that they are unpredictable and having the possibility of traveling up the eastern seaboard. I thought it would be a good time to take a break from our normal house conditioning and concentrate for a moment on hurricane preparations. Being a prepper and survivalist, I refuse to take any unnecessary chance with my family's lives and plan accordingly.

The National Hurricane Center has listed two major factors which contribute to the safety of people during hurricanes. First there is preparing in advance for the risks and secondly, acting upon those preparations when the emergency officials alert them of a hazard. Far too many times people decide to stay in their homes after being advised to evacuate to a safer location. This tends to place the rescue people's lives in danger as they attempt to save those who were foolish enough not to leave. I am one of the last people who would want to go to a public shelter therefore I anticipate what is going to happen and I essentially will "Get out of Dodge" before being instructed to. My thoughts are that a little vacation for a day or two won't hurt the family at all. Therefore, the first item on my list is having an evacuation plan.

Storm surges resulting from 20 plus feet rises in water levels represent the prime reason people must evacuate a location. This is especially critical and of utmost important to keep in mind in the event that you reside along the coast. Every one of us should investigate and find out if we live in an evacuation zone. Local governments often provide the public with valuable information regarding evacuation areas and the plans associated with them. These documents should be reviewed by all the people in the area prior to the arrival of a hurricane. I recommend that you test these routes in good weather to become familiar with them. The last thing you will want to do is to be caught on the crowded roads when evacuating your area.

Mobile homes are particularly dangerous during these times. I have lived in the southern portion of the United States during my military career and never could figure out why mobile homes were so predominating in those hurricane infested areas.

If you own a pet be sure to setup some sort of evaluation plan well before the danger arrives. Many motels, hotels and shelters will not allow pets into them. Some shelters have now been incorporating places for your pets. Last year I participated in a sheltering exercise with DEMA (Delaware Emergency Management Agency) and was in the role of a victim. The shelter would not allow pets into the primary areas but had setup a room or two for the animals. Be sure to check in advance to see what you will need to bring and make certain that your animal's shots are current and up to date.

Buying emergency supplies is next on the list. These should be purchased well in advance of the hurricane arriving. Keep your supplies on hand in the event that you must evacuate the area. I can guarantee that if you wait too long until the day before the

hurricane hits your location the stores will be completely empty of any supplies what so ever. During an emergency like this, go into a grocery store and look at the shelves. They are just about empty of everything. In reality hurricanes are the grocery store owner's best friend. Keep a handy hurricane kit readily available near your door where all you have to do is grab it on your way out. Turn on your television and you will see how the shelters were extremely limited on their supplies when hurricane Harvey hit Texas. Shelters are often overrun and may not have enough supplies to go around.

Important papers are next. Have your insurance policies, birth certificates, marriage papers, social security cards, titles to your vehicles, etc. readily available. I keep all my important documents in one folder that I can quickly grab and take with me in an emergency.

Next take whatever precautions you can to protect your home from added damage. If you have loose shingles get them fixed before the hurricane strikes. Any compromise to your roof becomes an open invitation for the strong winds accompanying the hurricane. Look closely at your yard and secure anything that could take flight in the gusty winds. If you are able to you should purchase wood to put on your windows and add some extra security to the doors of your home.

Lastly, keep extra batteries readily available and obtain a wind-up radio. You want to keep abreast of everything that is taking place in your area. Before the storm hits backup all your electronic information from your computer and store it at some off-location site. When I worked at the computer room of a major Chicken Processing Company, they would periodically back up all their data and ship it to the mountains of New York. The key here is be prepared.

This is merely a quick review of some items which are often overlooked as a hurricane approaches an area. Take all necessary safety reports seriously and good luck.