

INTRODUCTION

Living on the coast of South Carolina has many advantages. We enjoy mild winters and long summers. But there is a trade off that exists. That condition is an extended Atlantic Hurricane Season each year. The season begins on June 1 and ends on November 30. The most active part of the season for our area is between July and September.

Hurricanes are different from other natural disasters. While earthquakes and tornados can cause extensive damage, injury or death, they are usually short in duration. Hurricanes are very different. Depending on the size of the storm the continuing impact can last 8-12 hours. The majority of deaths occur after the hurricane has passed and usually from flooding or accidents. Flooding can last for days after the event has passed. Hurricanes do not cut a narrow path of destruction. The damage area can exceed a hundred miles in width and extend for hundreds of miles inland from the point of entry.

Preparation for each season should be an on going practice. In an emergency attempting to collect all of the important information or prepare your property can be taxing. It is easy to overlook or forget important items when under pressure.

Because the season is longer than other potential natural disasters you should include plans to have your property or vessel prepared for an approaching storm or hurricane for you during your absence during the season.

A major hurricane, category 3 or higher, will cause severe damage to all of Beaufort County. With few exceptions almost the entire county is on a flood plane. No public shelters are open in Beaufort County or Chatham County, Georgia during a hurricane. Emergency plans are in place for Beaufort County and Harbor Island. These plans are reviewed and changed each year or as needed.

Evacuating the area when a hurricane is approaching is the safest plan to follow. Each individual will have to make the decision to evacuate or remain. Decisions should be based on the best possible information. If you have never experienced the awesome destructive power of a major hurricane or have only experienced a minimal hurricane do not base your decision on a past experience or stories of others. Hurricanes are very dangerous and destructive. The information contained in these guidelines is provided to help when making these difficult decisions.