



NEWS from **SEMO**

NEW YORK STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 22, Albany, NY 12226-2251

Eliot Spitzer, Governor

John R. Gibb, Director

CONTACT:

Dennis Michalski
(518) 292-2310
CA@semo.state.ny.us

FOR RELEASE:

IMMEDIATE, Friday
May 18, 2007

SEMO DIRECTOR SAYS PREPARE NOW FOR HURRICANE SEASON

With the 2007 hurricane and coastal storm season just around the corner, the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) advised New Yorkers today to begin preparations by reviewing their family emergency plans and check their cache of home emergency supplies.

“Hurricanes and coastal storms are a threat not only to New York State’s coastal communities but the entire state,” said John R. Gibb, Director of SEMO. “We are reminded of the destructive force of these storms by April’s nor’easter which brought extensive floods throughout the Hudson Valley region and caused extensive damage to beaches on Long Island.”

Gibb urged residents across the State to begin taking simple, common-sense steps in advance of the observance of Hurricane Preparedness Week, which begins Sunday and runs through May 26. Traditionally, the Atlantic hurricane/coastal storm season in the Empire State is from June 1 through November 30. While predominantly coastal storms, in the past these devastating storms have impacted areas of the State hundreds of miles from the ocean.

“While State and local governments are continuing to work on their plans,” Gibb said, “each of us has a responsibility to develop and practice plans to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our property.”

Gibb said that a community’s level of preparedness begins with the individual.

“We encourage New Yorkers to know what they and their families should do in the event of a storm or an emergency and that includes having emergency supplies on hand such as flashlights and batteries, and water and canned goods. Don’t wait until the storm warnings are posted.”

SEMO, the emergency management offices of New York City, and Nassau and Suffolk counties, and the Long Island Power Authority and KeySpan Corp, are sponsoring the 14th annual Long Island-New York City emergency management conference. Scheduled May 30-31, the conference entitled “Together: Ready for Anything” will focus on partnerships communities and governments have forged through years to face the challenges that present themselves, sometimes without warning.

“We’re doing everything possible to ensure the State’s response capabilities are as robust as possible,” Gibb said.

Before the start of the hurricane season, the SEMO Director urged New Yorkers to:

- Develop or review a household disaster plan. Know how to contact all family members at all times. Identify an out-of-town friend or family member to be the “emergency family contact.” Then make certain all family members have that number. Designate a family emergency meeting point, some familiar location where the family can meet in the event the home is inaccessible.
- Prepare an emergency phone list of people and organizations that may need to be called. Include children’s schools, doctors, child/senior care providers, and insurance agents.
- Ensure that enough non-perishable food and water supplies are on hand. Make sure battery-operated radios and flashlights are available and have an ample supply of batteries. Have a first aid kit available and make sure there is an ample supply of medicines on hand for those who require it.
- Pay attention to the news. Know the local radio and television stations that will provide up-to-date official information during an emergency.
- Know the hurricane / storm risks in their areas, and learn the storm surge history and area’s elevation.
- Learn their community’s warning signals and evacuation plans.
- Learn safe routes inland and local sheltering plans.
- Make arrangements on where to relocate pets during a storm because most shelters will not allow pets.
- Store important documents – insurance policies, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc. – in a waterproof container. Also have cash (in small bills), checkbook, credit and ATM cards readily available.

The SEMO Director also advised individuals with special needs or requiring more information to contact their local emergency management office.

For more information on hurricane preparedness and what you can do to protect yourself and your family, visit the SEMO website at www.semo.state.ny.us.

#####