

CERT Prepares for the 2018 Hurricane Season

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) can, and do, improve their neighborhood's ability to protect against, respond to, and recover from disasters. Did you know CERT programs can have a national impact, too?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leads national-level exercises every two years. National Level Exercise (NLE) 2018 will examine the ability of all levels of government, private industry, and nongovernmental organizations to protect against, respond to, and recover from a major Mid-Atlantic hurricane. The scenario involves a major hurricane that makes landfall near Hampton Roads, Virginia, causing severe damage to residences, businesses, and critical infrastructure throughout the Mid-Atlantic. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria last fall reinforced our need to prepare for hurricanes, and NLE 2018 provides a well-timed opportunity to apply lessons from those storms before the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season, which begins on June 1.

We invite you, as a member of the CERT community, to take part in NLE 2018. FEMA has many tools that you can use to examine your readiness for hurricanes and other disasters. While the most active portion of the exercise occurs from April 30 to May 11, organizations across the nation will be examining their response and recovery plans for hurricanes and other disasters throughout the spring and early summer. Here is how you can get involved:

Help spread the word to your family, coworkers, and neighbors.

- Share hurricane preparedness resources, like the NLE How to Get Involved [Fact Sheet](#), which covers how to get alerts, insure property, strengthen your financial preparedness, and more.
- A CERT program cannot be effective during a disaster if team members and their families aren't prepared as well! Share this [When the Waves Swell](#) video with team members so they can better understand their hurricane risk and then learn how to take action

Ensure Your Organization is Hurricane Ready

Significant portions of the United States are at risk for the effects of tropical storms and hurricanes. It is important that organizations throughout the country understand the risks and potential impacts and prepare.

- The [Hurricane Playbook](#) assists community leaders with holding a preparedness discussion. Consider using this playbook to organize an event with your CERT Team.
- Share the information on www.ready.gov/hurricanes with others, so they can play a larger role in their own preparedness.

Attend a Hurricane Preparedness Webinar

Organizations of all sizes, as well as community volunteers, can attend a national webinar on Hurricane Preparedness on Tuesday, May 8, 2018 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EDT.

- To RSVP for the webinar, e-mail Partnerships@fema.dhs.gov with "Hurricane Webinar" in the subject line.

Get Alerts and Warnings

Receiving timely information about adverse weather or other emergency events can make all the difference in knowing when to act to be safe.

- Download the [FEMA App](#) to learn what to do before, during, and after emergencies, and receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.
- Read the [Know Your Alerts and Warnings](#) guide.
- Visit your local county emergency management website to learn more about what notifications are available in your community.

Create and Test a Family Communication Plan

Make a plan today. It is important to understand which types of disasters could affect your area. Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes. Know how you will communicate and reconnect if separated. Establish a family meeting place that is familiar and easy to find.

- Get started on your plan at www.ready.gov/make-a-plan.
- Use FEMA's [Family Communication Plan](#) to help your family practice and remember your plan.
- Print [Family Emergency Communication Plan Wallet Cards](#) to put in your child's backpack, your CERT bag, and in your car.

Document and Insure Property

When a disaster strikes, having the right insurance for your home or business property is needed to help you repair, rebuild, or replace what has been damaged.

- Get started with the [Document and Insure Your Property](#) Guide.
- Consider buying flood insurance. If your insurance agent does not sell flood insurance, you can contact the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at **1-800-427-4661** to request an agent referral.
- Visit www.floodsmart.gov to learn more about purchasing flood insurance and the National Flood Insurance Program.

Strengthen Your Financial Preparedness

Know your disaster costs. Taking the time now to collect and secure personal financial, insurance, medical, and other records will give you peace of mind and, in the event of an emergency, will ensure that you have the documentation needed to start the recovery process without delay.

- Download the [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#) for more information.
- Visit www.mymoney.gov to learn how to save, invest, and get insured for your financial future.

Get Trained

Minutes matter in a disaster, and if emergency responders aren't nearby, you can be the help until help arrives. There are many ways to get involved in your community.

- Visit www.ready.gov/until-help-arrives for online training to learn how to care for the injured until professional responders arrive.
- Consider taking an advanced CERT training or refresher course offered in your community.
- Contact your local emergency management office to find additional training, discussions, and events in your community.

We hope that you will take advantage of these events and resources as you examine the hurricane readiness of your CERT programs, families, coworkers, and neighbors. Even if hurricanes are not a threat in your area, many of the resources provided here, and more products available at www.ready.gov, will help you be ready for the hazards that may impact you!

Yours in preparedness,

FEMA Citizen Responder Programs Team