

fyi preparing for the storm...

June/July 2000

Emergency Hotline: 875-2424

www.james-city.va.us

▼ hurricane watch

You should:

- listen to local radio and television stations
- review evacuation plans
- check survival kit (*see Survival Kit on back*) and emergency supplies
- fuel car
- arrange for transportation should evacuation become necessary and you don't have a vehicle or don't drive
- bring in outdoor objects such as garbage cans, lawn furniture, and toys
- anchor objects that can't be brought inside
- have supplies and tools needed to secure buildings or board up windows
- know where your main turn-off switches are for electricity, water, and gas
- make arrangements for pets
- moor boat securely or move it to a designated safe place
- sterilize bathtub, washing machine, and other containers with bleach and allow to dry should you need to fill them with water for drinking, cooking (*boil first*), or bathing

▼ hurricane warning

If you live on the coast or in a low-lying area, in a mobile home, or aboard a boat, you should plan to evacuate.

If you choose to stay at home:

- listen to local radio and television stations
- check your survival kit
- find the safest place in your home, by far, the basement. If you don't have one, seek protection in other places such as in the bathroom, or away from windows, doors, and objects that can fall such as bookshelves and hot-water tanks.
- avoid open flames, such as candles
- turn off major appliances if power is lost, to reduce power "surge" when electricity is restored

hurricanes

Hurricane season runs June through November. During this six-month period, tropical water temperatures can warm up to at least 80 degrees. Hurricanes can form when the heat energy of the tropics is converted into wind and waves.

A Hurricane **Watch** is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours (*see Hurricane Watch*).

A Hurricane **Warning** is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in 24 hours or less (*see Hurricane Warning*).

▼ how the county prepares

James City County monitors all Atlantic tropical storms for position, intensity, and storm effects. We receive the latest information from the National Weather Service with reports relative to the County and surrounding jurisdictions. The County's Public Information Officer coordinates with both print and electronic media to bring storm preparedness information to the public. The County's emergency hotline number—**875-2424**—is kept up to date with preparedness tips.

When a storm approaches, protective measures are implemented for the schools and other facilities throughout the County. Actions include activating the Emergency Operations Center (*EOC*) in Toano with partial staffing, contacting responding agencies, such as the Red Cross, to ensure they are staffed and prepared, and filling County vehicles with fuel.

As the storm continues to approach, the EOC is fully staffed and activated. School closing decisions are made. County agencies are mobilized to respond to citizen emergency calls. A public information officer is positioned in the EOC to ensure citizens have the latest information available. A State of Emergency may be declared in the County. Communications are established and maintained with the Virginia Department of Emergency Services and neighboring jurisdictions. In the event a particular area or community is threatened and the ability to reach them is compromised, door-to-door dissemination of information may be used.

▼ survival kit

Store essential items in an easy to carry, water-tight container. These items should include:

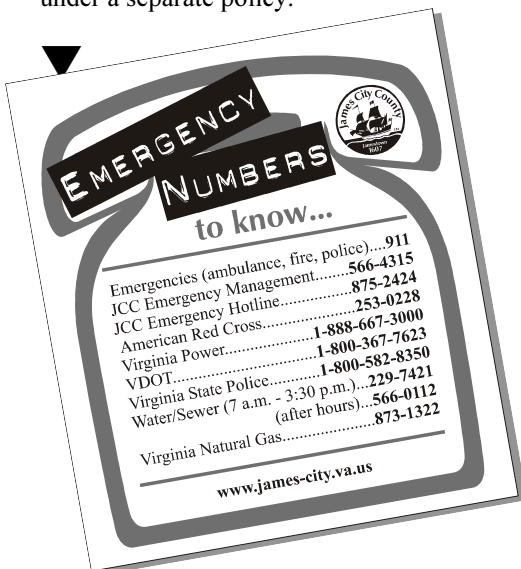
- flashlight and extra batteries
- battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- matches and candles
- first aid kit
- blankets
- nonperishable food
- drinking water
- plastic eating utensils
- manual can opener
- essential medicines
- cash and credit cards

▼ take inventory

Document personal property by listing descriptions, taking pictures or video of household belongings. Store important documents in waterproof containers or a safety deposit box on the highest level of your home.

▼ flood insurance

In addition to your homeowners insurance, do you have flood insurance? If you are within a flood plain and/or storm surge area, flood insurance must be purchased under a separate policy.



The important phone numbers listed above have been printed as a handy refrigerator magnet, available at any public County building, library, or community center. You may also get one by calling Neighborhood Connections at **229-7630**.

▼ how citizens can prepare

During a storm emergency, households and neighborhoods should be able to sustain themselves for at least 72 hours. It could take emergency crews that long just to clear fallen trees and debris in order to reach you. Stock a **survival kit** (see *Survival Kit*) which includes at least one gallon of water per person for at least three days.

Citizens should also work within their communities to develop **neighborhood emergency plans** that detail how to find, use, and distribute neighborhood resources. For more information, call **229-7630**.

Citizens with special needs or disabilities—such as hearing impaired or wheelchair bound—should sign up for **Heads Up**, a confidential database system that's only activated should County emergency personnel respond to a medical event at your address or during a community-wide disaster. For more information, call **566-0926**.

When a storm threatens our area, listen to your local radio or television stations for information. The County's **Emergency Hotline Number—875-2424**—will provide the latest information on the storm's progress and County evacuation recommendations, shelter instructions, and preparedness actions.

Have a **point-of-contact**, a plan for getting back together in case family members are separated from one another during a disaster. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "**family contact**."

Plan your potential **evacuation routes** to a safe destination now. Consider the number of hours it will take your family to evacuate to a safe area when traffic conditions are extremely congested.

▼ shelter from the storm

The James City/Williamsburg Community Center is now the primary designated shelter for community emergencies. Lessons learned during the December 1998 ice storm included finding a shelter that could be easily heated and cooled. The electrical system at the Community Center has been modified so the building can be powered by a large roll-up generator. Other factors, such as the public being more aware of the Center's location, plus more available and convenient parking added to the decision to move the shelter from its previous location.

When a storm is within 24 hours of landfall, the decision is made whether or not to open shelters. Emergency shelters are opened for the most vulnerable populations—those living in trailers, flood prone areas, and tourists. At a shelter, you are a refugee—not a guest. First sustain yourself and then try to help others. Pets, weapons, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs are not allowed. Smoking is not permitted.

If you seek shelter, bring with you sleeping bags and bedding, food if you have a special diet or need infant formula, several changes of clothes and sturdy shoes, battery powered radio/batteries, medications, reading materials/toys for children, and important documents such as checkbooks and insurance policies in a water-tight container.