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19 March 2012

Dear Coast Guard Members and Families:

The **2012 Severe Weather / Hurricane Season** is rapidly approaching. It begins on June 1<sup>st</sup> and extends through November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The hurricane season is in its peak period from August through October, when most storms form whose tracklines historically have impacted Southeast Florida.

The Coast Guard has significant operational mission requirements related to hurricanes, as well as an important obligation to look out for the safety, security, and welfare of our members and families. This family includes Active Duty Military, Civilians, Reservists, and Auxiliarists. The following list provides you a better idea of the Coast Guard's responsibilities that Sector Miami must carry out in the event of a Tropical Storm/Hurricane.

- **Before / At the Outset of Hurricane Season**
  - Review our contingency plans for preparing for and responding to tropical storms.
  - Conduct exercises to ensure that all of our personnel, equipment, and units are ready.
  - Develop policy and provide references (such as this letter) with appropriate guidance.
  - Prepare our families / homes to be ready in the event a tropical storm strikes.
  
- **In Advance of an Approaching Tropical Storm**
  - Coordinate with our port partners (e.g., port authorities, pilots associations, etc.) and other stakeholders, so all can jointly prepare for the storm's arrival.
  - Safeguard Coast Guard resources (e.g. cutters, boats, aircraft, and facilities) by evacuating them and/or preparing them to weather the storm.
  - Prepare and review family plans for tropical storms.
  
- **During a Hurricane or Other Tropical Storm**
  - Constantly monitor the location, strength, size and projected path of the storm.
  - Remain safe and poised to begin rescue and recovery operations as soon as possible.
  - Send nonessential personnel home to help secure family/home and ensure an appropriate evacuation plan can be carried out by spouse.
  
- **In the Aftermath of a Hurricane or Other Tropical Storm**
  - Account for all Coast Guard members (i.e., Active Duty Military, Civilian, Reservists, and Auxiliarists) and their families.
  - Account for all Coast Guard assets and assess their mission readiness.
  - Perform Search and Rescue and other urgent assistance operations.
  - Survey damage to the impacted maritime realm, including the marine transportation system.
  - Plan and execute recovery operations, particularly the marine transportation system with our port partners to reestablish Port Operations.

Every Coast Guard member has an important role to play in ensuring that the Coast Guard is prepared for and executes all of its responsibilities when hurricanes or other tropical storms impact the Seventh Coast Guard District. In general terms, this important role has two key dimensions: **professional readiness** and **personal / family readiness**.

**Professional readiness** means that you and your shipmates have all the training, qualifications, assets, equipment, and reference materials needed to proficiently perform Coast Guard operational and mission support tasks before, during, and after a tropical storm.

**Personal / family readiness** means that you have carefully considered all of the available guidance and recommendations related to tropical storms – to include what impact storms of varying intensity will, or may, have in your neighborhood – and then take all reasonable measures to protect your family, pets, and home. This may also include evacuating the area without your military spouse who could be required to assist with Coast Guard operations.

We all must bear in mind that these **two readiness dimensions go hand-in-hand**: extensive experience has shown that professional readiness is not sufficient if personal / family readiness is lacking. Conversely, the Coast Guard will not be able to execute its critical missions related to tropical storms if members maintain personal / family readiness, but are not fully prepared to carry out assigned professional tasks.

While every tropical storm will present unique challenges that will require flexibility on our part in responding, there is much that all of us can and must do in advance. Our advance preparation is vital to achieving the best possible outcomes.

In terms of professional readiness, you must be prepared at all times to carry out duties, even in the event that your workplace is no longer accessible.

In terms of personal / family readiness, if you have not already done so, develop an Action Plan detailing the specific steps to take in protecting your family, home, and property. A hurricane may trigger mandatory evacuations by State and/or local authorities. Even if evacuation is not mandatory, it may still be wise to evacuate your family. You should know when to evacuate and what the evacuation options are – bearing in mind that tens of thousands of other people will likely be evacuating at the same time! Generally speaking, your evacuation options include: (1) a Coast Guard-designated safe haven (if one is declared); (2) a location of your own choosing; (3) a civilian shelter in your community; or (4) a military facility.

With respect to relocation expenses, the following applies:

- Reimbursement of expenses is available to active duty military and civilian employees only if the evacuation is authorized for your locale by the District Commander. The most significant input to the District Commander's decision is whether State and/or local officials have determined that evacuation is appropriate.
- If the District Commander does authorize evacuation for your locale, the following expenses will be covered within certain specified limits: travel to and from the

evacuation site; lodging while at the evacuation site; and meals and incidental expenses while at the evacuation site.

- The maximum dollar amount for reimbursement will be based on where the Coast Guard-designated safe haven is located. That information will be provided to all evacuating members when the evacuation order is issued by the District Commander.

Note, however, that evacuating members should ensure they have means to pay for living expenses, such as lodging and food, and that they are prepared to make their own travel and lodging arrangements. Coast Guard-authorized evacuation from areas impacted by tropical storms will involve reimbursement for travel, lodging, and food but these financial and other support processes take time to materialize post-storm and there may be delays.

While an evacuation may never be necessary this hurricane season, you must be prepared to conduct one! If evacuation is necessary, always keep your Coast Guard Supervisor informed: report in DAILY, providing your status, contact number, whereabouts, and any need for assistance.

There are three critical first steps you need to take now as part of your hurricane preparedness:

- Complete and return your 2012 EMERGENCY EVACUATION CONTACT INFORMATION Form to the Admin staff – see enclosure (1) – as soon as possible but no later than **16 April 2012**. This form helps us determine our eligible population for evacuation benefits and how we can contact you.
- Review the Hurricane Preparedness Policies:
  - (1) [http://www.uscg.mil/D7/d7dx/D7HurriPrep\\_Index.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/D7/d7dx/D7HurriPrep_Index.asp)
  - (2) <http://www.uscg.mil/BaseMiamiBeach/Hurricane.asp>
- Sit down as a family to discuss preparation and evacuation plans.

Any questions, suggestions, or concerns should be directed to Sector Miami Admin at (305) 535-4305. Thank you for your serious commitment to hurricane preparedness. A few hours of preparatory pre-storm planning is critical to every one's safety prior to the next storm's arrival. I greatly appreciate all of your efforts.



C. P. SCRABA  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commander, Coast Guard Sector Miami

Encl: (1) CG SECTOR Miami Member Emergency Evacuation Contact Form