

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Sector Commander
United States Coast Guard

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3006

25 JUN 2012

Dear Sector New Orleans Family Member,

The 2012 Hurricane Season began on June 1st and ends November 30th. Hurricane season creates challenges and uncertainties for those living in hurricane prone areas. The challenges are greater for Coast Guard dependents whose spouses are called on to respond when hurricanes strike. I hope to reduce your stress and anxiety by providing information to help you plan and prepare for this season. This letter has suggestions on preparing your family and information on evacuations, including procedures, directions and claims afterwards. Particularly important are our procedures for personnel accountability - one of my top priorities is knowing you and your family are safe at all times during an incident. If you have any questions or need assistance, please see the contact information at the end of this letter. I encourage you to prepare early so that we can all have a safe hurricane season.

Preparation

New Orleans, Morgan City, Baton Rouge, Venice, Grand Isle and Houma are very prone to severe flooding and wind damage. You **must** be prepared to evacuate. The most important thing for you to understand is that Sector New Orleans personnel will be performing their duties before, during and after a hurricane. You need to establish a family plan to evacuate **without** your active duty spouse. Establishing a plan now that includes multiple evacuation options will reduce your confusion and stress in a real event. Also, I strongly encourage you to create an emergency supplies kit. This should include food, water, and medication for at least 72 hours. During the first 72 hours after a hurricane strike, emergency services may not be able to provide these items for you. The information, websites and checklists in this packet are designed to assist you in creating your plans and emergency kits. The websites FEMA.gov or DHS.gov are good places to start, as well as the State of Louisiana's website, www.getagameplan.org.

Another important part of preparation is having adequate insurance. As a result of the damage caused by hurricanes since 2005, Coast Guard members living in government housing filed over 650 personal property claims totaling almost \$700,000 in damages. The amount paid via the Coast Guard claims process is usually only a fraction of the actual cost to replace damaged or lost items. It is prudent for ALL Coast Guard members to purchase personal property insurance (also known as renters insurance), whether living in government leased/owned housing or living on the economy in rental housing. Your insurance should include full replacement coverage that provides enough money to exactly replace lost or damaged property at today's prices. Coast Guard members who already have renters insurance should be sure that their premiums are paid and that the type and amount of coverage is adequate.

Comprehensive vehicle insurance is also extremely beneficial. Members who only have liability insurance coverage are at some financial risk because current Coast Guard policy limits vehicle

claim payments to \$3,000. For example, if you don't have comprehensive insurance and your vehicle valued at \$10,000 is damaged while on board a Coast Guard installation, the most you can get from the Coast Guard is \$3,000. During past hurricanes, vehicles left aboard Coast Guard units at exposed locations like Galveston or Gulfport have been severely damaged or destroyed. In addition, they have caused damage to Coast Guard facilities and severely impacted our ability to recover the facilities after the storm. Therefore, I am asking Commanding Officers and Officers-in-Charge to reduce the numbers of vehicles left behind at their units in order to reduce the damage. I know this will place an additional burden on members to find a place to leave their vehicles, so it would be prudent to plan ahead of time. Some units have made arrangements with other federal facilities for vehicle storage. A multi-story parking garage is also a pretty good place to leave a vehicle in a storm.

Special Powers of Attorney are also useful. These are documents that allow a Coast Guard member to select an agent in writing to file an insurance claim on his or her behalf. If you'd like a Special Power of Attorney, please contact Mr. Crawford at District Legal for assistance, at 504-671-2038.

Evacuation

Hurricane evacuation preparations will begin when a storm is forecasted to impact the area. All Coast Guard members should register in the Emergency Notification System (ENS) prior to 1 June 2012. ENS allows members to receive updates to Sector New Orleans operational status through mobile phone text messages. Although the Coast Guard will not reimburse members for costs associated with text messaging from ENS, people should consider registering their mobile phones in ENS to receive timely notifications. Members can register *only on the Coast Guard computer network* at http://apps.mlca.uscg.mil/CG_ENS/index.cfm.

Another way to obtain the most up-to-date information on Sector's evacuation status is through our hotline. **The Sector New Orleans Hurricane Hotline number is 1-866-504-USCG (8724).** It will be updated and activated to receive voice messages when a storm threatens our area of responsibility. I also encourage you to pay attention to National Weather Service Forecasts, and state and local government warnings and advisories.

Many highways exiting the New Orleans area will become congested very quickly once an evacuation order is given (often *before* the order is given). I urge you to consider leaving early. However, reimbursement is not authorized until the evacuation order for Coast Guard dependents is given by the District Commander. Usually, this is at the same time as the parish or city evacuation order, but not always. The District Commander will be proactive and I will ask for an evacuation order based on conditions at the local unit, not the parish or city order. Families living in base housing are expected to follow the evacuation orders of the base commander. For many of you who are employed in the local economy, your employers may wait until the last minute before granting you leave to evacuate. You should ask your employer about their policy. In any case, fill up your gas tank, pack your bags, get your medication supplies together, get some cash and be ready to go!

Safe Havens

Safe havens are pre-designated locations, usually military bases, where we have made prior arrangements to house people during hurricane evacuations. Some units have pre-designated safe havens, and some do not. Please consult with your active duty family member to ensure you know which, if any, safe haven is designated for you. The primary designated safe haven evacuation sites for dependents and personnel assigned to Coast Guard Sector New Orleans sub-units are Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, MS; and Barksdale Air Force Base, Shreveport, LA.

NAS Meridian will be available as a safe haven for evacuating Coast Guard personnel and families. Personnel and families from Station Venice, ANT Venice, Station Grand Isle, ANT Dulac, CGC STURGEON and CGC PAMLICO will receive priority. Print the evacuation forms, and have them ready to present at NAS Meridian's "Welcome Center" upon arrival (use referenced "Hurricane Evacuation Support Guide, NAS Meridian" link provided). In advance of arriving at NAS Meridian (to be included on NAS Meridian's roster), notify your Command of your safe evacuation plans. If you will be traveling with pets to NAS Meridian, identification collar, kennel, shot records, food, a cat box and litter for each pet will be required. No exotic animals will be allowed on base (i.e. snakes, birds, etc). There is a list of local veterinary hospitals and boarding facilities in the attached guide. Don't forget prescriptions; supplies are limited at the base clinic but can be stocked with advance notice. Remember, all weapons must be surrendered to the security building on base. There are no RV facilities/storage on base. If personnel evacuate elsewhere and upon Command approval, they will be reimbursed up to the distance/cost of Memphis, TN. For questions or concerns related to safe haven at NAS Meridian contact MKCM Eric Engle (504) 365-2213 or eric.c.Engle@uscg.mil.

Some families choose to make separate evacuation arrangements. They might stay with family, friends or in hotels. There is no requirement to attain a statement of non-availability from NAS Meridian if you chose to make separate evacuation arrangements. Please understand that if you are designated to proceed to a Coast Guard safe haven these options may increase your expenses, some of which may not be reimbursed. Reimbursement for mileage will only be provided for distance from your home to the authorized safe haven and back. During Hurricane Katrina, hotels as far away as Houston, Memphis and Atlanta were filled to capacity. If you choose to evacuate to a location other than the authorized safe haven, you should consider making your hotel reservations early.

MSU Morgan City, MSU Houma, MSU Baton Rouge, CGC AXE, and ANT Morgan City should go to safe haven at Barksdale Air Force Base, since it is closer to you. Memphis, TN is the primary safe haven for all other Sector New Orleans dependents and personnel. Dependents will be responsible for evacuating themselves to hotels or established hurricane shelters in Memphis. You may choose to go to another safe haven, but mileage will not be reimbursed for travel beyond the range of Memphis from your starting point. Meals, incidentals, and lodging will not be paid at a rate exceeding that of Memphis, TN. Unless you are stationed at one of the units with a required safe haven, you DO NOT have to go to NAS Meridian or Barksdale to get a statement of non-availability before you seek shelter elsewhere. I encourage you to visit the appropriate evacuation web site and familiarize yourself with the drive and location specifics.

Once you have evacuated, dependents may not return to their homes until the local government will allow you to return; make sure to plan for this and pack accordingly. Active duty, reserve, auxiliary and civilian employees who are ordered to return to their units may do so with proper credentials and identification. Those returning should be prepared for the worst case conditions.

Provided are links to directions and maps for the mentioned safe havens. Additionally, a link is available to help families develop a severe weather plan.

Naval Air Station Meridian Hurricane Evacuation Support Guide with maps
http://cnic.navy.mil/navycni/groups/public/documents/document/cnicp_a130317.pdf

Driving Directions to Barksdale Air Force Base
<http://www.mapquest.com/maps?zipcode=71110>

Map and Directions to Fort Polk Army Post
<http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil/drive.htm>

Louisiana Hurricane Awareness and Planning Website
<http://www.getagameplan.org/>

Personnel Accountability

The safety of every member of the Coast Guard team and family is our top priority. This year I have ordered all active duty, reserve and civilian personnel not assigned to an incident command post to use their chain of command **to report their status, status of family members, location, call back number, and special needs if any by using secnolaevac@uscg.mil**. If members cannot reach their chain of command, as a secondary source **call our automated system at 1-866-504-USCG (8724)**. This report must be made as soon as members arrive at their safe haven location but no later than 12 hours after the hurricane makes landfall. This information requirement is extremely important, as it will be submitted to our senior commands at Coast Guard Headquarters. And even more importantly, it lets us know who might need our help! Please be aware that you could experience delays when calling **1-866-504-USCG** due to the large number of people simultaneously trying to access the system. To reduce reporting delays use the following personnel accountability e-mail: secnolaevac@uscg.mil. If the contact methods above are unsuccessful, members should contact the Eighth District Resource Division at 1-866-378-1981/1982/1983. In the event that Eighth District evacuates, units can contact the Eighth District Resource Division by calling 1-800-USCGWLS and selecting extension 302. If members cannot reach the Eighth District Resource Division, they must call the LANT/D5 Command Center at (757) 398-6000.

Your safety is extremely important to me. Please take the time to review the enclosed information and plan for your evacuation. The details are complicated and each storm is different. Pay attention to the forecasts. If you have ANY questions or need ANY assistance, please contact the appropriate Hurricane Officers as listed on the following page:

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MSU Morgan City	LT Jay Michalczak	(985) 380-5334
MSU Houma	Mr. John Knapp	(985) 851-1692 X-240
MSU Baton Rouge	LT Victoria Saxon	(225) 298-5400 X-241
New Orleans and all other sub-units	LT Evelyn Bruno	(504) 365-2107

Let's make sure that we're all prepared for the possibility of a hurricane strike.

Sincerely,



P.W. GAUTIER