

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



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11 JUN 2010

Dear Sector New Orleans Family Member,

The 2010 Hurricane Season begins on June 1st and ends November 30th. I realize that the hurricane season creates challenges and uncertainties. I hope to reduce your stress and anxiety by providing information to help you plan and prepare for this season. In this letter, there are suggestions on preparing you and 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. Therefore, 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. Therefore, you need to establish a family plan to evacuate **without** your active duty spouse. Establishing a plan that includes multiple evacuation options now will reduce your confusion and stress in a real event. Also, create an emergency supplies kit. This should include items such as food, water, and medication for at least the first 72 hours. During this time, 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 a good place to start, as well as the State of Louisiana's website, [getagameplan.org](http://getagameplan.org).

Another important part of preparation is having adequate insurance. As a result of the damages caused by hurricanes since 2005, Coast Guard members living in government housing filed over 650 personal property claims totaling almost \$700,000 in damages. Unfortunately, the amount paid via the Coast Guard claims process is usually only a fraction of the actual cost to replace damaged or lost items. Therefore, it is prudent for ALL Coast Guard members to purchase personal property insurance (also known as renters insurance), whether living in government-leased or 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.

Coast Guard members stationed in hurricane-prone areas should also consider purchasing comprehensive vehicle insurance. Coast Guard members who only have liability insurance coverage are at some financial risk because current Coast Guard policy limits vehicle claim payments to \$3,000. Therefore, 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 have severely

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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 determine ahead of time what you will do with your vehicles. Some units have made arrangements with other Federal facilities for vehicle storage. I have found that a multi-story parking garage is a pretty good place to leave a vehicle in a storm.

Special Powers of Attorney can also be useful to those members. These documents 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

Once a storm is forecasted to impact the area, hurricane evacuation preparations will begin. One way to obtain the most up-to-date information on the unit's evacuation status is through our hotline. **The Sector New Orleans Hurricane Hotline number is (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 her 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 (JRB or NSA). 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, with which 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 Coast Guard Sector New Orleans dependents and personnel are Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, MS; Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama; and Barksdale Air Force Base, Barksdale, LA.

Personnel and families from Coast Guard Station Venice, ANT Venice, Station Grand Isle, ANT Dulac, and PAMLICO will receive priority for the 175 spaces allocated to Sector NOLA at Meridian because we anticipate that those areas will be under mandatory evacuation first. NAS Meridian will run on a first-come, first-served basis. Occupancy is very limited so it is highly encouraged that commands ensure their members who must choose or are considering NAS Meridian as their "Primary" evacuation site **PRE-REGISTER** soon as possible during an event. Pre-registering is essential for anyone planning to evacuate to Meridian this year. Pre-registering electronically will not only guarantee space, but you will have the room assignment and keys waiting for you upon checking in. Included in this packet is NAS Meridian's updated Evacuation

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Guide which includes hardcopy versions of the Evacuation and Pet Registration forms, along with other pertinent information that everyone should review prior to their arrival to NAS Meridian. These forms are available electronically at NAS Meridian's website: <http://www.cnic.navy.mil/meridian/index.htm>. Their homepage has a link to a pdf version of their Hurricane Evacuation Support Guide. You may fill out registrations directly in this pdf and submit them using the embedded "submit" buttons. All persons, including the sponsor, should be listed on the form. If you are unsure if your active duty member will accompany your family, include everyone, as it is better to ensure you have adequate space. Once you click on the "submit" button, it will be automatically emailed to Command Master Chief (CMC) Torres. CMC Torres will be the Coast Guard liaison located at NAS Meridian during evacuation. Alternatively, once you have located the forms, you may save each one as a PDF file and attach the file to an e-mail to [richard.torres@uscg.mil](mailto:richard.torres@uscg.mil). Some families choose to make separate evacuation arrangements. They might stay with family, friends, or in hotels. 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 travel from your home to the authorized safe haven and from the authorized safe haven to your home. 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 closest to you. Memphis, TN has been identified as the primary safe haven for all other SECNOLA 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, Barksdale, or Maxwell 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 conditions.

For those traveling with pets, please ensure they have identification collars, a travel kennel, shot records, pet food, a cat box and litter. Pets are not allowed at the bases' living quarters. Previously, pets were lodged together in two vacant homes at NAS Meridian and Coast Guard families assisted with their care. If this option is not acceptable to you, please make plans to lodge your pet elsewhere. AAA has a guidebook listing hotels which accept pets across the country.

### Personnel Accountability

The safety of every member of the Coast Guard team and family is a top priority for me. This year I have ordered all active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel not attached to our 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**. If you cannot reach your 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,

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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. If you cannot reach your supervisor or our automated system after several attempts, pass your personnel status report to 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 MLCLANT CDO/DCMS watchstander in the LANT/D5 Command Center at (757) 398-6000. I encourage members and families to read and familiarize themselves with the Personnel Accountability Instruction.

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, make sure you contact the appropriate Hurricane Officer at MSU Morgan City, LT Russel Pickering at (985) 380-3252; MSU Houma, ENS Ryan Kilgo at (985) 851-1692; MSU Baton Rouge, LT Nicholas Parham at (225) 298-5400 X-230; and New Orleans and all other sub-units, LT Louis Dering at (504) 565-5058.

Sincerely,



Edwin M. Stanton  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard

- Enclosures: (1) Map and Directions to NAS Meridian  
(2) Map and Directions to Barksdale Air Force Base  
(3) Map and Directions to Fort Hood Army Post  
(4) Map and Directions to Fort Polk Army Post  
(5) Map and Directions to Fort Sam Houston Army Post  
(6) Hurricane Awareness Websites  
(7) Personnel Accountability Instruction  
(8) NAS Meridian's Evacuation Guide