

Emergency Plan: Hurricane Sandy

Written by Armstrong County
Monday, 29 October 2012 00:00

Kittanning – As Hurricane Sandy approaches, everyone needs to be as prepared as possible. With a storm of this magnitude, we need to anticipate power outages due to high winds, flooding to roads, streets, bridges, private homes and businesses due to the excessive rains Hurricane Sandy may provide. Road closures, community public safety delays, property damage, and other issues may arise. When a roadway is flooded do not drive through the flooded roadway, turn around. If there is a power outage and the traffic lights do not work, treat it as a 4 way stop sign.

Armstrong county residents should call 911 in an emergency such as sparking wires, water getting into an electricity supply box, anyone who is ventilator dependent with no power, and all other non-storm related emergencies. Situations and concerns such as basement flooding that is not life threatening should be referred to your local fire department. Power outages should be reported to the local power company unless it is life threatening. All other resources that you many need, roof leaking or repairs, need of emergency heating oil, hot water and furnace issues and shelter information should be directed to call **Armstrong County Community Action at 724-548-3408**. If you are in doubt, call 911.

There are many things you can do now to be prepared in an emergency situations.

- If you are using a generator make sure it is not in a garage connected to your house where the carbon monoxide fumes may be hazardous. Gas stations may not have back up generators and gas pumps may be inoperable.
- Phones that are internet based may not work so make sure the battery back up is working and make sure your cell phone is fully charged.
- Make sure you have key access to your house if your electric garage door opener is inoperable.
- In case of a flooding situation, safeguard all important documents and uncover your sewer drains.
- Freeze gallon jugs and when the power goes out place them in the fridge, when they thaw, you can use them as drinking water.
- Set solar lights outside during the day and bring them in after sunset for safer lighting than candles.
- Clear gutters and exterior drains from debris and leaves.
- Remove window air conditioners.
- Remove all valuable items from your basement, if it is not practical to move some items, elevate them on pallets or concrete blocks.
- Secure all outdoor objects.

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- Review how to shut off your utilities in case the need arises.
- Power off and unplug all electronics and appliances.

Families should prepare for two scenarios in the event of severe weather: to remain in their homes during the duration of a storm, or to evacuate if it is recommended or ordered by local authorities.

Residents should always have enough provisions in their homes to last at least 72 hours because help from emergency responders may not be immediately available when severe weather strikes.

Other disaster preparedness supplies to have at the ready include:

- Flashlights and extra batteries;
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries;
- First aid kit and manual;
- Emergency food and water;
- Non-electric can opener;
- Essential medicines/prescriptions;
- Cash, credit cards and important legal documents; and
- Sturdy shoes.
- Diapers and baby formula for anyone with small children
- Food and supplies for any animals you care for

If residents are ordered by local officials to evacuate, they should do so without hesitating and should take important documents with them, including:

- Checkbooks;
- Driver's license;
- Credit card information;
- Birth certificates;
- Social Security cards; and
- Other forms and documents proving ownership/identity.

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For more information on how to make a disaster supply kit and how to prepare for all kinds of emergencies, visit www.readypa.org or call 1-888-9-READYPA (1-888-973-2397).

If you are prepared make sure your animals are ready and as comfortable for this storm as well. Shelters do not accept animals at their facilities. And if you can, safely check on your neighbor if they would need anything.

If you have planned on using any non-essential service at the courthouse please reconsider doing so at another time when this emergency situation subsides. The Armstrong County Courthouse wants to service as many people as we can but during an emergency this may become difficult.