

Commissioner Sue Gunzburger

Broward County Commission, District 6

It's the time of year that most Floridians just dread thinking about! If you've lived here any length of time you know that our annual hurricane season begins on June 1st and continues through the end of November.

Fortunately for us we haven't experienced any damaging hurricane activity in several years, but we know that they're unpredictable and that's why it's so important to stay prepared throughout the hurricane season. Historically, August, September and October have been the most dangerous months for South Florida.

At the very least it's a good idea to begin purchasing non-perishable food items, bottled water, flashlights and batteries. A very useful and popular item is Broward County's Hurricane Kit Shopping Guide. The eight-week guide identifies the basic items required to comfortably sustain you and your family for 3-5 days following a storm that may leave you without power and potable water.

This allows you to take advantage of store specials and add a few items to your regular shopping list each week to complete your Hurricane Kit with minimal impact to your budget. This Guide also includes information for preparing a Hurricane Kit for infants, the elderly and your pet. A "how to" guide for creating a family plan and assembling a first aid kit are also included. You can find it by visiting www.broward.org/sue and clicking on the Hurricane Preparedness Guide link.

There are many things you can do in advance that can be of great assistance when and if a hurricane does come our way.

If you plan to evacuate to a shelter, pre-registration is not required; however, it is encouraged if you plan on going to a Special Medical Needs Shelter. Call Elderly and Veterans Services Division at 954-537-2888 (TTY 954-537-2882). If you pre-register, you are not obligated to go to the shelter; you can change your plans without notice if you make other arrangements.

Pre-registration for paratransit transportation, is also available if you think you may need it. As with shelter registration, you are not obligated to take advantage of the service if your plans change. To pre-register, call Broward County Elderly and Veterans Services Division at 954-537-2888 (TTY 954-537-2882).

I use every opportunity to get the word out about Broward County's Vulnerable Population Registry. The Vulnerable Population Registry allows people who are disabled, frail or have health issues to register in advance with their city so that emergency workers may plan a better response following a hurricane or other emergency. To register, call the Broward County Call Center at 954-831-4000, TTY 954-831-3940 or your city's emergency management agency.

Service animals are accommodated at all shelters. However, if you have a family pet you must stay at Broward County's pet-friendly shelter at Millennium Middle School in Tamarac, operated by the Humane Society of Broward County and the American Red Cross. Call 954-989-3977, and press 6, or visit www.humanebroward.com. Pre-registration is required, and owners are expected to stay at the shelter with their pets and care for them.

Broward County works throughout the year to improve our emergency services. I've just provided some basic hurricane preparedness information here, but again, if you visit www.broward.org/hurricane you'll find detailed information on what to do before, during and after a storm. You can also sign up to be notified via e-mail of important public safety information during a storm clicking on Hurricane Update Subscription. Please be prepared and remain safe this hurricane season!

If you have any questions or concerns please contact my staff at (954) 357-7006 or e-mail me at sgunzburger@broward.org. And, to all the Dads, I wish you a Happy Father's Day.