



Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5

Hurricane season 2006 is here and Broward County has been working diligently to improve its ability to prepare for and quickly recover from any type of destructive weather that may come our way. The Broward County Board of County Commissioners has developed plans that will enhance its ability to address issues before, during and after a storm. Prudent measures must be taken now before the hurricane season strikes.

This month you will be receiving a hurricane preparedness guide in the mail. The information will address some things that you already know and items that you may not have thought about. The more prepared you are prior to a hurricane, the better off you will be after the hurricane.

This year, WIOD-610 AM news radio will join us as a media partner. Once our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated, WIOD will be carrying all of our news conferences live. They will bring you up-to-date information throughout the duration of the storm. You should definitely have a portable radio and fresh batteries included in your hurricane preparation supplies. When a hurricane is imminent, it is of the utmost importance to stay informed.

Last year, power outages presented challenges for almost all Broward County residents. At one point, nearly 98% of the county was without electricity. Broward County is working closely with city leaders and business owners to expedite the permitting process in order to get more generators to those who can use them to better serve the public. Last year, some residents spent days (and in some cases weeks) without electricity. Businesses, unable to open, were not able to provide staples like food, water or gasoline. If we fast track the permitting process, we believe more businesses will install generators so when the power goes out they will be able to recover quickly and reopen.

County staff is also working to evaluate other procedures for permitting in order to expedite hurricane renovations and restoration efforts that are currently taking place. This will allow those seeking permits to finish any necessary repairs and improvements before June 1 when hurricane season officially begins.

We also want people to know ahead of time which businesses have taken the necessary steps to allow them to open quickly after a hurricane strikes. Broward County is designing signage that can be prominently displayed by local retailers identifying them as having emergency generator capacity. When you see the sign displayed in the window, you will know what businesses are planning to open to provide goods and services after a storm occurs.

Once a hurricane warning goes into effect, the Broward County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) opens and is staffed around the clock with personnel who keep the County up and running. Every city has a representative in the EOC to keep the lines of communication open. The cities keep the county informed about what is going on and alert us to the crucial areas that may need immediate assistance. There are people monitoring the need for police and firefighters, schools and hospitals, hurricane shelters, transportation services, road closures and human services such as providing food and water to the elderly, disabled, or shut-ins. We are prepared to face any storm but we need you to take responsibility for your family by developing a family hurricane plan. Plan for enough food and water to get you through 3-5 days and remember to plan for your pets, too.

The Broward County theme this hurricane season is “Ready, Set, Safe.” This means get ready for the hurricane season before it occurs, get set for the storm once it hits and develop a safety plan for the challenges that come after a hurricane.

If you have any questions or have not received your Hurricane Preparedness guide in the mail, please call my office at (954) 357-7005. There is also useful information available on our website at www.broward.org/hurricane.

Together we can weather any storm, if we prepare and plan in advance.

Sincerely,

Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5