

Ideas for covering a hurricane, or ... Let's Go Camping!

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IF YOU WANT TO STAY SAFE

- Stay indoors. You are covering the hurricane but not the weather.
- If you are assigned to cover a geographic area, cover what is affected:
 - In a city, that would be power outages, road closures and traffic
 - In a tourist area, it would be evacuations, damage to business and revenue
 - Rural coastal areas, it could be fishing, aquaculture and seafood marinas work processing houses
 - In rural inland areas it could be crops or livestock.

TREAT IT LIKE A CAMPING TRIP (purchase these items in advance from someone like REI or Amazon.com

- Bring quick nylon dry clothes, packable rain jackets and rain pants.
- Bring food and water for two or three days. Bring camping equipment including a cot, tent, sleeping bag, lantern, flashlight, extra batteries, weather radio.
- Towels, in a waterproof bag
- First Aid kit

BRING THEM IF YOU HAVE THEM

- Rope
- Canoe or kayak
- Lifejackets or personal floatation devices
- Extra coats and jackets

COVERING AN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Request a schedule of briefings and ask if you can listen

- If you are told no, ask if there is a legal citation for denial
- Ask if information presented in briefings is available in written form
- Ask if information presented can be redacted to exclude exempted information
- Try to listen through local officials' and their call ins

Get together a listing of contacts for hurricane agencies such as

- Highway Patrol
- State emergency management division
- Local emergency managers
- Local police and sheriffs
- State transportation department

IN ADVANCE OF A STORM

- Find out post-storm review process, ask for past reviews
- Find out requirements for gas stations, hospitals, clinics and assisted-living facilities for generator hookups, or ACTUAL generators
- Ask for what scenarios have been practiced, including traffic "contra-flow" where highway lanes are reversed to increase evacuations.
- Ask about the process for shutting down and restarting nuclear plants public notification
- Determine whether water releases through dams and dikes will be needed and how much storage may be available in reservoirs.
- Find out what agency will track power outages and the restoration of power. Make sure they are covering all utilities -- municipal, investor-owned and cooperatives. Make sure you know whether they are counting customers (residential and business) or PEOPLE. There is a difference.

RESOURCES:

Oct. 5, 2017: "Politicians looking at Hurricane Irma fuel issues, but answers may be elusive," by Bruce Ritchie of POLITICO Florida:

<https://www.politicopro.com/states/florida/story/2017/10/05/politicians-looking-at-hurricane-irma-fuel-issues-but-answers-may-be-elusive-114883>

Sept. 12, 2017: "Does Gov. Rick Scott's tight control of information matter in an emergency?," by the Tampa Bay Times/Miami Herald

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/weather/hurricane/article172865736.html#storylink=cpy>

Sept. 5, 2016 "Scott, Gillum blow a fuse in power struggle," by POLITICO Florida's Bruce Ritchie

<http://www.politico.com/states/florida/story/2016/09/gov-scott-mayor-gillum-blow-a-fuse-in-power-struggle-105188>

June 13, 2017 SEJ Hurricane Tipsheet Backgrounder

<http://www.sej.org/publications/backgrounders/hurricane-season-brings-surprises-and-surprising-depth>

SEJ Hurricane Toolbox

<http://www.sej.org/library/disasters/toolbox-hurricanes-and-tropical-storms>

May 30, 2017 TipSheet: Get Ready for Hurricanes

<http://www.sej.org/publications/tipsheet/get-ready-hurricanes>

NOAA Rivers Forecast Centers

<https://water.weather.gov/ahps/rfc/rfc.php>