

Special Missions Training Center Hurricane Preparedness Family Guide



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EVACUATION OF COAST GUARD MEMBERS AND DEPENDENTS FOR HURRICANES

Hurricane “season” runs from June 1 through November 30. This is the most likely time for hurricanes to develop in the Atlantic Ocean. North Carolina is most at risk later in the season when the waters off our coast have warmed up sufficiently to support a hurricane, although we have seen hurricanes here as early as early June and as late as December.

Coast Guard bases increase readiness for hurricanes by June 1 and practice for approaching hurricanes. You should do the same! This Guide provides numerous resources and recommendations for emergency preparedness and other information that might be helpful during and evacuation. **PLEASE KEEP THIS GUIDE FOR REFERENCE THROUGHOUT THE HURRICANE SEASON!**

Hurricanes are dangerous storms. The impact of each storm is unique and dependent, among other things, on wind speed, direction and speed of movement, height of tide at impact, and location of impact. Flooding may be sporadic, based not only on the storm itself, but also any storms that may have preceded a hurricane that could have saturated the soil. Wind and flood damage can be much more dangerous on the northeast quadrant of a storm than on the southwest quadrant of the very same storm. Do not assume that you are not at risk from the next hurricane because your house survived the last three hurricanes.

The safety and protection of Coast Guard members and their families is of paramount concern during preparations for an approaching hurricane. If an evacuation is authorized, Special Missions Training Center assists in facilitating the evacuation of Coast Guard members and dependents.

Although unit evacuations and cost reimbursement occur at the direction of the Coast Guard District Commander, it is paramount that you heed the warnings of local emergency management officials for the safety of yourself and family. An evacuation that is authorized by local authorities is highly likely to be supported by the District Commander, and therefore subject to cost reimbursement.

EVACUATION ELIGIBILITY

The following personnel are eligible for the evacuation entitlement in the event of evacuation:

- Active duty personnel (includes Reservists performing active duty of 30 days or more)
- Civilian employees
- Dependents of Active Duty and Civilian Employees

WHAT SHOULD I DO TODAY?

There are several steps that you can accomplish immediately to help you prepare for the hurricane season and ease the burden on your family in the event of an evacuation. For more information, visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s website www.ready.gov.

1. **Call your insurance company** – Flood insurance, homeowners insurance, and renters insurance differ from state to state. Call your insurance provider to discuss your coverage annually. **IF YOU DON’T HAVE INSURANCE, GET IT!** If you are a renter, the homeowner’s

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insurance plan likely does not cover your belongings; look into renter's insurance to cover your belongings. Also, inventory your property and take pictures of valuables to ease the claim process in the event of loss or damages.

2. **Get a buddy** – Find a companion who will be able to evacuate with you. Travel companions help to maintain accountability in the event of telephone and power failures and can assist with the little emergencies that arise during evacuations. You can always drive separately, but traveling together and staying in the same hotel will alleviate a number of problems.

3. **Have a plan** – Determine where you are going to go in an evacuation. This is critical if you have children or pets. The pre-designated evacuation location for all units is Raleigh, NC, Charlotte, NC or as directed by the Commanding Officer of SMTC. Ask yourself the following questions: How are you getting to the evacuation hotel? Do they accept pets? Who else can reach you in case your cell phone dies? How are you going to pay for expenses until you are reimbursed? What are you going to take with you? How will you secure your home? Make sure everyone in the family knows the plan!

4. **Save some money** – Later in this guide we will discuss how you are reimbursed for evacuation expenses, however, you will need to be able to pay these costs upfront. Plan on having room in your budget or on your credit card to pay for a few nights in a hotel, and a few days of meals.

5. **Prepare a disaster kit** – Go to www.ready.gov for information on how to prepare a disaster kit. Not all emergencies provide advance notice like a hurricane, so make sure you have a ready kit with flashlights, water, and other critical supplies.

6. **Read this guide** – There is some great information in this guide to help you through an evacuation. Become familiar with what is in it, and have it ready for reference during a storm.

7. **Update your contact information** – SMTC's administration office keeps track of your emergency contact data. Talk with your spouse and make sure they updated your contact data on the unit's recall roster. If they are unsure, you can contact the Admin Office directly at (910)-440-7234. Update this information in Direct Access and CGPAAS as well.

8. **Store these numbers in your phone:**

Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune – Information System, Current Weather Advisory and Hurricane Information: (910) 451-1717

SMTC Officer of the Day: (910) 376-0824

SMTC Training Support Cell: (910) 440-6678, D05-SMB-JMTC-TSC@uscg.mil

Hurricane Evacuation Assist Team (HEAT) located at the: (910) 581-8919

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN A STORM APPROACHES?

You have limited time to prepare as a storm approaches. Your spouse may be unable to assist at home due to response operations at work. You can take these steps to prepare:

1. Review your Disaster Plan with your family. Determine a likely hotel or shelter for evacuation. At this time, the single designated "safe haven" evacuation site for all SMTC personnel and dependents is Raleigh, NC, Charlotte, NC, or as designated by Commanding Officer although this may change according to a particular storm's characteristics.

2. Check up on your disaster kit and purchase any needed items or replacement batteries, etc. Stock up on water and non-perishable food, particularly if you have children and pets. Aim to have at least 3 days worth of supplies.
3. Tune in to TV or Radio for information. Call the Sector North Carolina's Hurricane Hotline (252) 274-4548 for updated information on evacuations.
4. Secure your home, close storm shutters and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors. Protect windows and glass by drawing drapes and boarding up windows.
5. Move boats and trailers closer to the house.
6. Store valuables in a watertight container and place in a high point in your home in case flooding occurs.
7. Fill the car with gas.
8. Be ready to evacuate if directed by local authorities.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM DIRECTED TO EVACUATE?

1. Know where you are going and *leave early*. Evacuate in daylight if possible with a full tank of gas. Listen to your car radio for additional emergency information or evacuation routing problems.
2. Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going and maintain communications with them with updates as to your welfare.
3. Secure your home by unplugging appliances, turning off electricity, and locking all doors.
4. Take only your most valuable possessions with you; otherwise place them in high points away from flooding within your home. If time permits, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding or move it to a higher floor.
5. Bring pre-assembled emergency supplies and warm protective clothing. If staying at a local shelter, take blankets and sleeping bags.
- 6. Check in with the Hurricane Evacuation Assistance Team (HEAT). The HEAT will maintain accountability of family members during an evacuation, provide information on evacuations, and can assist with numerous issues that arise.**

HOW DO I GET REIMBURSED AFTER A STORM?

Coast Guard members and dependents will be eligible for reimbursement for the expenses associated with an evacuation (e.g. travel, lodging and per diem). The Coast Guard will reimburse dependents for expenses related to an evacuation the following conditions exist:

1. The evacuation or relocation was caused by an unusual or emergency circumstances such as a natural or national disaster; *and*,
2. The Fifth District Commander, in Portsmouth VA, authorizes the evacuation.

The Coast Guard will work closely with local emergency officials with regards to evacuation. That being said, you are strongly advised to follow the directions of local emergency officials, even if not specifically directed by the Coast Guard.

Whether the military member evacuates with his/her dependents depends on Command requirements. Military members are issued TDY orders, while dependents are separately issued evacuation orders. With or without the military member, dependents will be reimbursed for travel, lodging, and meals.

Some families choose to make separate evacuation arrangements and stay with family or friends. Please understand that these options may increase your expenses and are not reimbursable. If you stay with relatives or friends, whether in Raleigh, Charlotte, CO designated location, or another location of your choosing, you will not be reimbursed for lodging, but you are eligible for reimbursement of meals and mileage.

Reimbursement for mileage will only be provided for travel from your home to the authorized safe haven location and return. The maximum reimbursement you receive for lodging and meals cannot exceed the daily rates for the designated safe haven. Remember to save all your hotel and toll receipts.

Understand that the entitlement to evacuation orders will end if you depart the evacuation location.

Travel orders and travel claims will normally be completed upon the return to the home unit; however, if the duration of the evacuation is longer than a week, the HEAT may process travel claims to reduce the overall financial burden that may be placed upon member and dependents. This will be completed in a systematic way, by branch. Active Duty, their dependents, and civilian members will file their travel claim electronically in T-PAX. This will ensure 100 % accountability and accuracy.

Here is an example:

A member's spouse, one child age 12 and one child under age 12 were evacuated to the safe haven of Raleigh, NC. They shared one room at \$115 plus \$5.60 for lodging tax. (Lodging taxes are not counted against the \$115 daily lodging maximum). Below is a daily rate calculation:

<u>Dependent</u>	<u>Maximum Lodging</u>	<u>Meals and Incidentals</u>	<u>Total</u>
Spouse	\$115.00	\$59.00	\$174.
Child over 12		\$59.00	\$59.0
Child under 12		\$34.50	\$34.5

TOTAL REIMBURSABLE AMOUNT: \$267.50

Notes:

- If you evacuate to somewhere other than the designated safe haven, you will be reimbursed for your lodging at standard rate for meals and incidentals. If the area you go to has higher lodging, meals and incidentals costs than the standard rate, you will have greater unreimbursed expenses.
- If you stay with relatives or friends, you cannot be reimbursed for lodging, but you can be reimbursed for meals and incidental expenses, and mileage. Again, if you are not at the designated area, your reimbursement cannot exceed the standard per diem rate.
- ***Receipts for expenses of \$75.00 and above are required. Receipts for lodging in any amount are required. Receipts for meals are not required.***

WHAT IF I LIVE IN COAST GUARD HOUSING?

There will be no forced evacuations from homes owned or leased on the economy. However, families residing in Government owned or leased housing will be required to evacuate if the order is issued. Military members can also be ordered to evacuate. A military member may evacuate elsewhere if he/she takes annual leave, which is subject to the approval of the Executive Officer, SMTC.

For those occupying government owned or leased housing, the Coast Guard provides up to \$40,000.00 gratuitous payment of damage you might suffer to property. This coverage is ONLY available for those families either in Coast Guard owned or leased housing. Please remember that your possessions might be worth more than that amount and it still is wise to have renter's insurance to cover damage above that amount or under other circumstances.

EVACUATION TO A SHELTER

Another option you and your family have is evacuation to a local shelter. If you have to evacuate, but you don't want to drive out of the area (or can't), there are a large number of shelters in the area that will open in the event of a hurricane. Shelters may be used when large- scale evacuations are not officially ordered or as an alternative to evacuation. It is important to note that shelters do not open or close at the same time. Monitor TV, Radio, and County web sites for locations of local shelters that will be open in the event of a hurricane. There are no Hurricane shelters in Dare County on the Outer Banks.

Going to a Shelter

Take blankets, sleeping bags, flashlights, special dietary foods, infant needs, games, lightweight folding chairs and water. Do not take pets, alcoholic beverages or weapons of any kind to the shelter. Be prepared to offer assistance to shelter workers if necessary, and advise all family members of their obligations to keep the shelter clean and orderly.

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY PETS?

Before deciding on a hotel, determine if they accept pets. Most hotels charge pet fees; you will not be permitted to claim this fee on your evacuation travel claim so be prudent when you shop for a hotel that allows pets. Many internet search engines can be used to determine if a hotel accepts pets, such as:

www.Hotels.com (or 800-246-8357)

www.orbitz.com (or 800-254-8123)

www.Officialpethotels.com

ALWAYS ASK ABOUT THE PET FEE BEFORE BOOKING! Fees can range anywhere between \$5 to over \$100.

Don't forget to include pet food and water in your Family Go-Kit. You will not be allowed to bring your pets to public shelters. Make arrangements with your veterinarian, humane society or private shelter outside the normal hurricane impact areas. Your military spouse should include pet information on the hurricane recall roster at his/her unit.

Animal Kennels

If you have a pet, you may want to find a kennel instead of keeping them with you. It is important that you don't forget to make special arrangements and plans for a place that will safely house, feed and care for your pets.

IF YOU STAY AT HOME

You may not be directed to evacuate, but there are still precautions you should take if you stay at home during a hurricane. For guidance, visit www.Ready.gov, and stay informed with local television and radio. You should also:

- Stay indoors within an inner room on the lowest level away from doors and windows. Do not go out in the brief calm during passage of the hurricane eye. The lull sometimes ends suddenly and winds return from the opposite direction. Winds can increase in seconds to 75 mph or more.

- Stay away from windows and glass doors; move furniture away from exposed doors and windows.
- Keep a continuous communications watch: keep radio or television tuned to receive information from official sources. Unexpected changes can sometimes call for last minute relocations.
- Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light.
- If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is restored.
- Protect your property from damage without taking any unnecessary risks. Temporary repairs may reduce further losses from wind and water, *but be careful!*
- **Remain calm!** Your ability to cope with emergencies will help other members of your family. Stay calm, reassuring and use common sense. *Use the telephone or cellular phones only in the event of an emergency or life-threatening situation.*
- In an emergency, call 911.

WHEN TO RETURN

If you evacuated, delay return until authorized or when recommended by local authorities or the District Commander. Telephone services within the evacuation zone may be overloaded or non-existent for an extended period of time. For guidance you can call the SMTC Officer of the Day at (910) 376-0824 or contact the HEAT team. For information on road conditions call the North Carolina Department of Transportation at (800) DOT4YOU or check conditions on-line at www.ncsmartlink.org.

Beware of outside hazards and watch out for loose or dangling power lines. Walk or drive cautiously as debris-filled streets are dangerous; washouts may weaken roads and bridge structures that may collapse under vehicle weight. Guard against spoiled food; food may spoil if refrigerator power is off for more than a few hours. Use your emergency supply or boil water before drinking until officials declare the water safe.