

June 2019

THE SAFETY NET

HURRICANE EDITION

Eastern Virginia Medical School's *Environmental Health & Safety* Newsletter

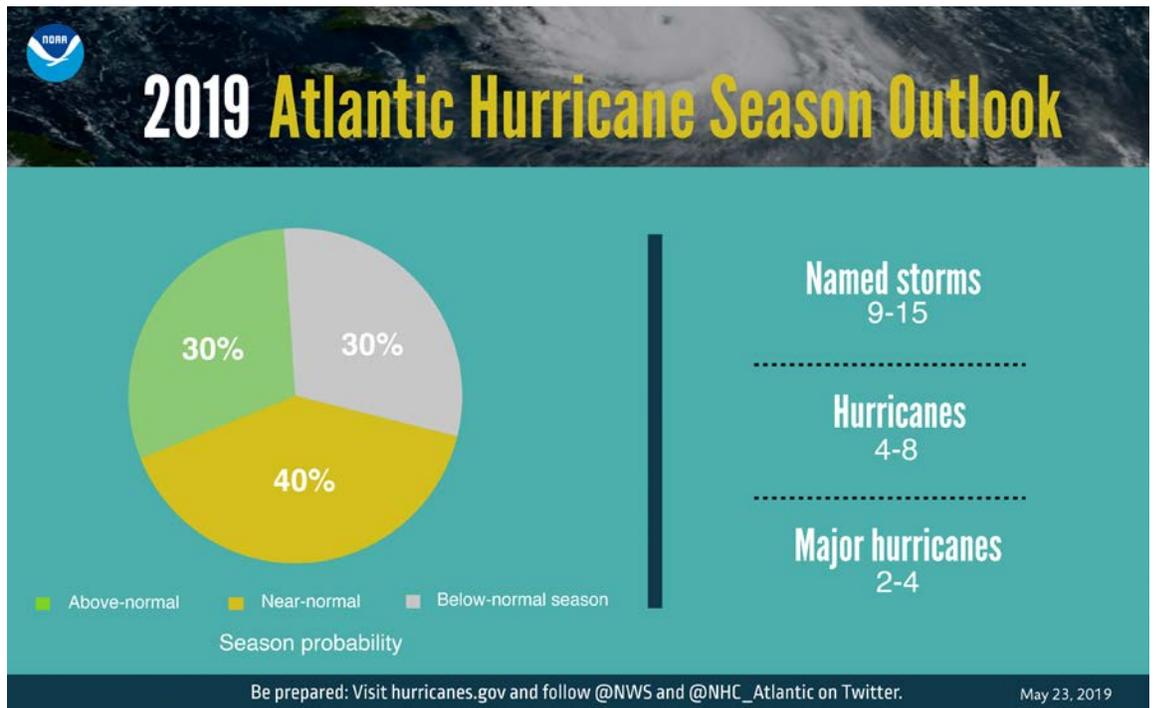
Hurricane Season is Here!

As part of the Atlantic Coast community, it is imperative that you understand what an approaching hurricane, or even tropical storm, could mean for you. It's never too early to start planning for emergencies! Preparedness is the key!

The 2019 [prediction for the Atlantic Basin](#) is 9-15 named storms, 4-8 of which will become hurricanes, with 2-4 becoming a major hurricane¹. You must think about emergency plans *before* a storm is lurking!

EVMS communicates with students, faculty and staff during severe weather

events through the methods described in the [EVMS Inclement Weather Policy](#). When weather conditions are so extreme that our President decides to close the school, he will instruct the Director of Physical Facilities to communicate the decision. The communication will be posted on the [EVMS homepage](#), on a recorded message on the main EVMS phone number (446-5600), on TV and radio announcements, and over the [Rave Alert](#) system.



Virginia Sales Tax Holidays

Save money on emergency preparedness supplies during Virginia's Sales Tax Holiday. This year's [Virginia Sales Tax holiday](#) will be August 2-4, 2019. Shop for products such as batteries, food storage containers, generators, first aid kits, bottled water, and radios to save on the 6% sales tax.

For more information, click:
<https://www.tax.virginia.gov/virginia-sales-tax-holiday>

To help you be better prepared this hurricane season, EH&S has included information in this newsletter on a variety of topics:

- Hurricane hazards
- How to prepare your work area for hurricanes
- Priming your household for the hurricane season
- Links to important websites for hurricane and emergency information

¹ NOAA predicts near-normal 2019 Atlantic hurricane season. U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 23 May 2019. <https://www.noaa.gov/media-release/noaa-predicts-near-normal-2019-atlantic-hurricane-season>

Emergency Planning for Your Home



Satellite image of Tropical Storm Andrea, June 5, 2013

Your family emergency plan should include:

- A contact card for each member.
- An emergency contact, preferably out of the region
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home.
- Choose multiple meeting places.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home.
- Don't Forget Pets!
- Review these plans with all members of your family.
- <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>

Contact your local emergency manager to learn about programs in your area. If you do not drive or have access to a vehicle, learn what your community's programs are for those without private transportation now, before an emergency.

Emergency Planning for Your Home

Make a visual or written record of your possessions to help you claim losses in the event of damage. Include photographs of cars, boats and recreational vehicles. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork or other items that might be difficult to evaluate. Also, photograph the exterior of your home. Include the landscaping that might not be insurable but does increase the value of your property for tax purposes. Store digital copies of receipts on a cloud server (Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.) or some other secure method.

Family Communication Tips

Identify a contact such as a friend or relative who lives out-of-state for household members to notify they are safe. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Save an "In Case of Emergency" person in your cellphone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings to get a hold of someone you know.

Teach family members how to use text messaging. Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.

FEMA mobile app!

[Download the FEMA app](#). Receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States. You can also Sign up for FEMA text messages. Use your cell phone's text messaging capability to receive text message updates from FEMA.

Emergency Planning for Your Work

Before a storm or emergency is even on the horizon, there are steps to take to ensure you have a complete plan for your workspace.

Solar Chargers

Consumer solar chargers use solar energy to supply electricity to devices or batteries. Portable models are used to charge cell phones, iPods, and other small electronic devices. With the range of models and price points, a solar charger makes a great item for an emergency supply kit!

For more information and products:

- Outdoor GearLab - goo.gl/5XuuMs
- Backpacker - goo.gl/uyKncV
- REI - goo.gl/YQW3Yq
- The Wirecutter - goo.gl/XCQgVD
- Amazon - goo.gl/IYHt0z

In the Laboratory

Develop a plan for safely shutting down research. It should include securing chemical, biological and radioactive material; ensure that all personnel clearly understand the plan! Ensure critical research data is backed-up periodically, preferably both on an EVMS server and on a secure external drive. Plug essential equipment into emergency electrical outlets (the "red" outlets). Identify equipment that requires special restart procedures after a power outage, and make sure all staff are aware of it. Identify sources of dry ice and have procedures in place for obtaining it in quantities needed during an emergency situation. Purchase dry ice from the grocery stores or distributors such as [Atlantic Dominion](#) and [Airgas](#)®.

In the Office

Develop and continuously review your labs Emergency Response Plan. This Emergency Response Plan should include locations of safety equipment (fire extinguishers, and pull stations, emergency exits, safety shower/eye wash stations, etc.), lab shut-down procedures and emergency contact phone numbers. Prepare a detailed work/task plan and assign various tasks to different members of your staff. Ensure lab staff names and phone numbers are current and posted in the lab; make sure each lab member has a copy of this contact information for use during an emergency. Develop a plan for contacting staff during an emergency or planned closure.

During a Storm

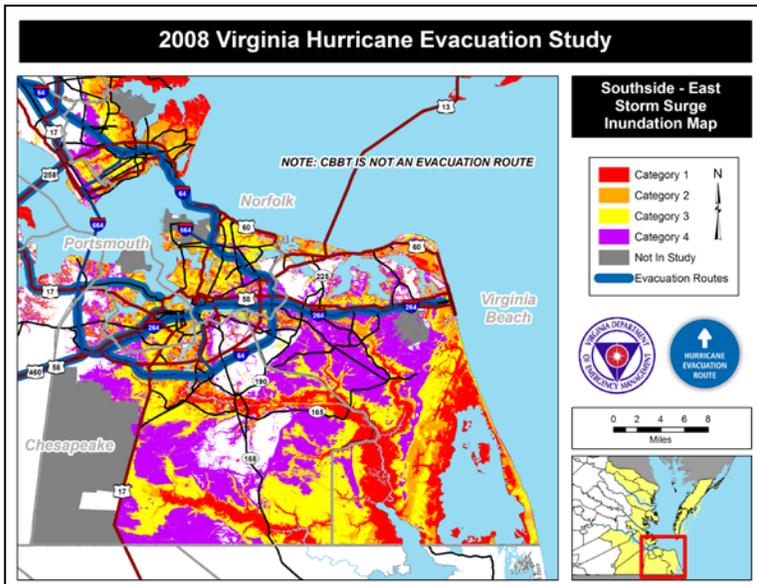


Hurricane Isabel Flooding, Norfolk, Virginia, 2003

- Go to an interior room without windows that is above ground level.
- Close all interior doors. Closed doors will help prevent damaging hurricane winds from entering rooms.
- Listen to your battery-operated radio or [NOAA Weather Radio](http://www.noaa.gov) for updates and instructions.
- Have a flashlight and extra batteries within reach. Flashlights provide the safest emergency lighting source.
- Do not go outside. If the eye of the storm passes over your area, there will be a short period of calm, but at the other side of the eye, the wind speed rapidly increases to hurricane force and will come from the opposite direction.
- Do not go outside to see "what the wind feels like." It is too easy to be hit by flying debris.
- Beware of lightning. Stay away from electrical equipment. Don't use the phone or take a bath/shower during the storm.

When the Storm is Over

- Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless in immediate danger of death or further injury.
- Try to make contact with all family and your coworkers.
- Stay mindful of potential flooding. Stay away from flood water and **do not** drive through flooded roads.



Southside (East) Storm Surge Map (click to enlarge)



VA DOT Hurricane Evacuation Routes (click to enlarge)

- Never return to your home or work unless it has been deemed safe to do so by local officials. When given the ok to return:
 - Wait until daylight.
 - If you discover conditions that pose a threat (such as fire, hazardous materials release, etc.), close the door, notify occupants in the area, activate the fire alarm, exit the building, and call EVMS Police (446-5199).
 - Do not use lab equipment such as chemical fume hoods or biosafety cabinets that are alarming or not working properly.
 - Check equipment that may have been affected by power disruptions. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed until temperature levels return to normal.

Links

For more information:

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management: <http://www.vaemergency.gov/>
- VA Hurricane Evacuation Guide: <http://www.vaemergency.gov/hurricanes/>
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): <http://www.noaa.gov/>
- FEMA's Ready Campaign: www.ready.gov/hurricanes
- Volunteer organizations: [American Red Cross](http://www.americanredcross.org), [Salvation Army](http://www.salvationarmy.org), or other [volunteer organizations](#)