Sagicor

There's Still Time To Prepare For Bad Weather

Richard Smith October 03, 2022

There is an old Caribbean phrase that says “A stitch in time saves nine.” It refers to preparation. If you prepare for situations, the impact is often more manageable. As we plan for and experience the hurricane Season each year, remember this phrase.

The Atlantic Hurricane season runs from May 1st to November 30th, yet many fail to make any preparation for possible impact, choosing to adopt a “wait and see” attitude.

Preparation should take many forms. For example:

Preparation of your physical dwelling
Preparation of your family
Community preparation

For the purpose of this blog, let’s focus on the preparation of your dwelling and family.

Prepare Your Dwelling

Preparation can be seen as a dish, perhaps best served in small portions and as such, we should start in early February by looking at any vulnerabilities which may be obvious. Check the seals of windows, ensure your doors are watertight, etc. You can use a garden hose with a shower head which allows for water pressure to build a bit and spray the doors from different angles, to simulate the wind-driven rains. If there are any leaks, adjust the door. The door can be removed, slightly raised and rehung, then a space sealer or door sweep added at the bottom.

You can also check the caulking around windows. Use a sharp knife to remove any loose caulk and replace it with fresh caulk, increasing the seal and making the window more watertight. This is done for all windows, regardless of their size. For window protection, to shutter each window could be a significant cost. If this is the case, it may be best to try to create a safe area in your home by shuttering some windows with plywood. If in close proximity, a

bathroom, the kitchen and living can create a good start.

Prepare Your Family

For family preparation, persons with mobility issues, medical conditions, advanced age, and young children should be specifically taken into consideration. Where possible, an additional supply of 3 weeks of medications should be secured. Plan with possible evacuation in mind. Where is your nearest shelter? What is the best high-water route there? These questions should engage us far in advance of any direct threat and our answers should not only be known but documented and shared with friends and loved ones. Sharing this information can reduce anxiety in others after a storm as they would be able to check with the shelter warden to confirm your presence at the shelter. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be a good idea to plan shelter with a friend or relative as your first option. This arrangement should be made well in advance of any threat. It would also be a good practice to travel with the same items you would have had if you were evacuating to a government facility.

When evacuating, you should have your Go bag close at hand and in it should be valuable documents in a watertight container, a change of clothes, a battery-powered flashlight or lantern, a radio, drinking water for a few days and food items that need little to no preparation.

Have you considered your pet? Government-run Emergency shelters do not allow pets and as such, you will need to plan for their safety in the event that an evacuation becomes necessary. Do not assume that if your friend or relative is willing to take you into their homes in the event you need to evacuate, that your pets would also be welcomed. Not everyone is comfortable around unfamiliar animals, even if they have similar animals of their own, so have that conversation in advance.

Above all, we should always be prepared.