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Fast Facts for our Valued Friends and Clients

June 2007

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN). In this issue, we update our information on hurricanes. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Hurricanes

Did you know...

- The Atlantic hurricane season officially begins June 1 and runs until November 30.
- Philip Klotzbach, a research associate at Colorado State University, is forecasting a "very active" hurricane season for 2007 with 17 named storms, including 9 hurricanes and 5 intense hurricanes. He said there is a 74% chance of a major hurricane striking the United States, with a 49% chance it will hit along the Gulf Coast between the Florida Panhandle and Brownsville.
- Last year, there were 10 named storms in the Atlantic, of which five became hurricanes. None of the hurricanes made landfall in the United States, the first time since 2001 that has happened. Last year was forecasted to be a very active year for hurricanes, but meteorologists believe an El Niño climate pattern blunted the results. This year, the El Niño climate pattern is gone.
- Forty percent of all U.S. hurricanes hit Florida. All five of the costliest hurricanes in history hit Florida, in some cases along with other states. Five of the 10 most intense U.S. hurricanes hit Florida. Since reliable record-keeping began in 1851, a major hurricane has blasted or approached Miami-Dade County an average of once every nine years, Broward County once every 10 years, Tampa once every 23 years, the Bradenton-Sarasota area once every 19 years, and the Jacksonville area once every 28 years.
- In 1938, a hurricane struck New England, killing 10 people in New York City. In the region, 600 people died in incidents related to the storm. Moving north at 60 mph, the storm came ashore in New Jersey with wind gusts exceeding 200 mph. The eye passed 55 miles east of Manhattan.
- Broadcaster associations in Alabama and Florida have joined the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters in supporting deployment of an FM-based digital alert and messaging platform with ALERT FM. This new system allows emergency managers to push lifesaving information to first responders and citizens before, during, and after an emergency. Targeted alerts and messages are delivered by satellite to FM transmission towers and can be

received on any device equipped with an FM chip. In the future, a wide variety of devices including cell phones, pagers and specialized receivers, will be able to receive the emergency alerts.

- When Hurricane Katrina left New Orleans under water, conventional road maps became almost useless tools to locate those in distress. Using GPS, satellite, and other remotely obtained geospatial information, proved crucial for search and rescue operations. The USGS has established a Geospatial Information Response Team whose purpose is to ensure timely availability of geospatial information for effective Gulf and East coast storm response for emergency responders, land and resource managers, and scientific analysis. During national emergencies, this team provides FEMA with post-event airborne imagery within 24 hours.
- Officials in the Houston area have established storm surge zones by zip code. Should a major hurricane strike, the 300,000 people who live in these zip code areas will be required to evacuate. People who live in other areas will be told to shelter in place, thereby reducing the traffic snarls that occurred during the evacuation for Hurricane Rita.
- A billboard campaign in Houston during May urged people with special needs to register for evacuation assistance in case a hurricane threatens Harris County.
- Seventy-eight percent of Houston businesses have plans designed to keep operations running seamlessly in the event of a hurricane, power outage, or some other problem, according to a poll of 100 Houston-area companies. That number is up from 71 percent in 2005, the last time AT&T did the survey - notably, before that year's hurricanes hit.

Brain Teasers

True or False:

1. In most of the country, property insurance rates for homeowners and businesses are actually lower than they were before Katrina.
2. Preparing for a hurricane is like preparing for six hazards rolled into one.
3. A weak hurricane is more likely to produce more rain than a strong hurricane.
4. A gymnasium is usually a good hurricane shelter facility.
5. In 2003, Hurricane Isabel devastated Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. *True.* In a world of abundant liquidity, traditional insurance companies and new investors alike are trying to make a buck by underwriting risk, and the competition is pushing down rates.
2. *True.* Hurricanes are usually thought of as high winds, but they may also include power outage, storm surge, flooding, tornadoes, and possibly collapse of the local economy. An organization in harm's way must be ready to respond to all of these.
3. *True.* Intense rainfall is not directly related to wind speed. In fact, some of the greatest rainfall amounts occur from weaker storms that drift slowly or stall over an area.
4. *False.* Gymnasiums tend to have long span roofs which can be vulnerable in high winds.
5. *True.* More than 40 deaths are attributed to the storm in the region.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. How specifically does your insurance policy define water damage? Does the definition include damage caused by a plumbing break? Rising water? Wind-driven water? Strom surge? Many Katrina victims are still litigating imprecise water damage definitions.
2. Do you have enough generator capacity and fuel to manage a power outage that lasts for a week or more?
3. If you operate from your alternate work locations for an extended period, are the suppliers you will need located in that area as well?
4. Is the water for drinking fountains and toilets dependent on having electrical power in your building?
5. Have you pre-defined pay policies for your employees who you will ask to stay home during a hurricane?

New from DSPN

Check these out on our website:

- Its not too late to sign up for one of our [Mock Disasters](#) coming to California in June. Find out what it is like to be at work when a major earthquake strikes. These events are sponsored by the local professional organizations, including ACP, ASAP, and BRMA. Your local association could sponsor one, too!
- [Pandemic Experience for Executives](#) is a new tabletop exercise from DSPN that is customized for your situation at your site.

Comments and Contributions

Tell us what you think...



Thanks to all of you have have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share with our readers? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

[Paul Klier](#)

Popular Services from DSPN

- [Mock Disasters](#) Simulated disasters to educate your response team.
- [How to Create Drills and Exercises...That Work!](#) is a one-day workshop designed for experienced business continuity coordinators who are looking for best practices in created tests and exercises.
- [How to Benchmark and Sustain Your Program](#) is a one-day workshop focusing on emerging standards for building business continuity programs.