

News Release

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Are You Ready for a Hurricane Part I

Tampa, Fla. (June, 2015). Hurricanes are severe tropical storms that form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists can now predict hurricanes so that those who live in coastal and other communities should plan what they will do if they are told to evacuate.

First, prepare a home emergency supply kit that includes items like:

- **Copies of prescriptions, medications and medical supplies**
- **Unperishable food supplies**
- **Bottled water**
- **Pet medications, food and supplies**
- **A battery-operated radio and extra batteries**
- **A first aid kit**
- **Flashlights (water proof)**
- **Paper copies of important documents: driver's license, Social Security card, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, family contact information etc. Pack them in a waterproof container that you can just "grab and go" with in case of evacuation**
- **Waterproof flash drives that have copies of all important documents and family contact information. Remember as long as computers and/or wi-fi are down, you will not be able to access data off of the flash drives.**

- **Make sure you have safely secured gasoline for your generator.**

You may also want to prepare a portable kit and keep it in your car especially if your residence is in an area prone to flooding. This portable kit should include:

- **Copies of prescriptions, medications and medical supplies**
- **Bedding and clothing (including sleeping bags and pillows)**
- **Unperishable food supplies**
- **Bottled water**
- **Pet medications, food, carriers and supplies**
- **A battery-operated radio and extra batteries**
- **A first aid kit**
- **Flashlights (water proof)**
- **Paper copies of important documents: driver's license, Social Security card, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, family contact information, pet health records etc.**
- **Waterproof flash drives that have copies of all important documents and family contact information. Remember as long as computers and/or wi-fi are down, you will not be able to access data off of the flash drives.**

Also, make sure you have a fully charged GPS and maps and a vehicle full of gas. It is a good idea early in the season to make sure your vehicle has been serviced, tire pressure is good, and spare has been checked. Have a "to go bag" ready in case you need to evacuate. If you have pets that are micro-chipped make sure that your contact information on the micro-chip website is up-to-date. If they are not micro-chipped, have it done now. Make sure all pets have secure collars, leads and that tags are up-to-date.

Second, make a family emergency plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will

contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency. Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood. Remember that normal means of communication may be down so it is important to set this plan up with that in mind. Identify several places you could go in an emergency, a friend's home in another town, a motel or public shelter. If you do not have a car, plan alternate means of evacuating. If you have a car, keep the tank full at all times in case you need to evacuate. Roads will be crowded and gas availability may be limited. Make plans for your pets.

Third, do not wait to the last minute because you are in denial about a storm ever hitting. Get your supplies in now especially if there is a tax free hurricane supply period. Get a generator if you can afford it. Pick up sand bags and tarps. Get plywood and have cut to size for windows and labeled as to which window they will cover. Reinforce doors and garage doors. Get your pets micro-chipped and registered. Pick up all medications – human and pet.

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing confidential free professional assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you or a dependent may contact the EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don't have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. And if you are impacted by a hurricane or other disaster, all you need to do is call your EAP. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively dealing with the major changes a hurricane can bring. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. So, if you are struggling with dealing with a critical incident, help is just a phone call away.

Sometimes dealing with letting go of old patterns can feel overwhelming because we've been responding in the same old way over and over. So if you are struggling with the question of what you

need to change or want to change and need some help in accomplishing your goal, help is a phone call away. The EAP can help you find a new path so that change is managed, relationships are healed, support systems are developed, and expectations are kept realistic.

About Wood & Associates

Wood & Associates is an Employee Assistance Program and behavioral health consulting firm that helps employers maintain productivity, safety and behavioral health in the workplace. Wood & Associates is a pioneer in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) industry and has served employers and employees in the greater Tampa Bay area and nationwide since 1982. The firm's diverse group of clients includes a number of major employers who also contract for its mental health and substance abuse services.

Gary L. Wood, Psy.D., founder of the Wood & Associates consulting practice, is a pioneer in the field of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Since 1979, his practice has centered on providing solutions to employee and organizational problems. Wood is a licensed clinical psychologist, a member of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and a graduate of Rutgers University, West Georgia College and Mercer University.

Patricia N. Alexander earned a Ph.D. in mental health counseling at the University of Florida. Trained in critical incident stress management through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, she is a Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselor and nationally certified counselor. Through her work experience she has addressed all types of critical incident situations, including explosions, multiple homicides, suicides, line-of-duty deaths, serious accidents and robberies. Alexander conducts training on stress management for law enforcement and businesses, and has developed peer support programs for law enforcement and industry. Alexander is an educator and consultant on a wide variety of behavioral health concerns.