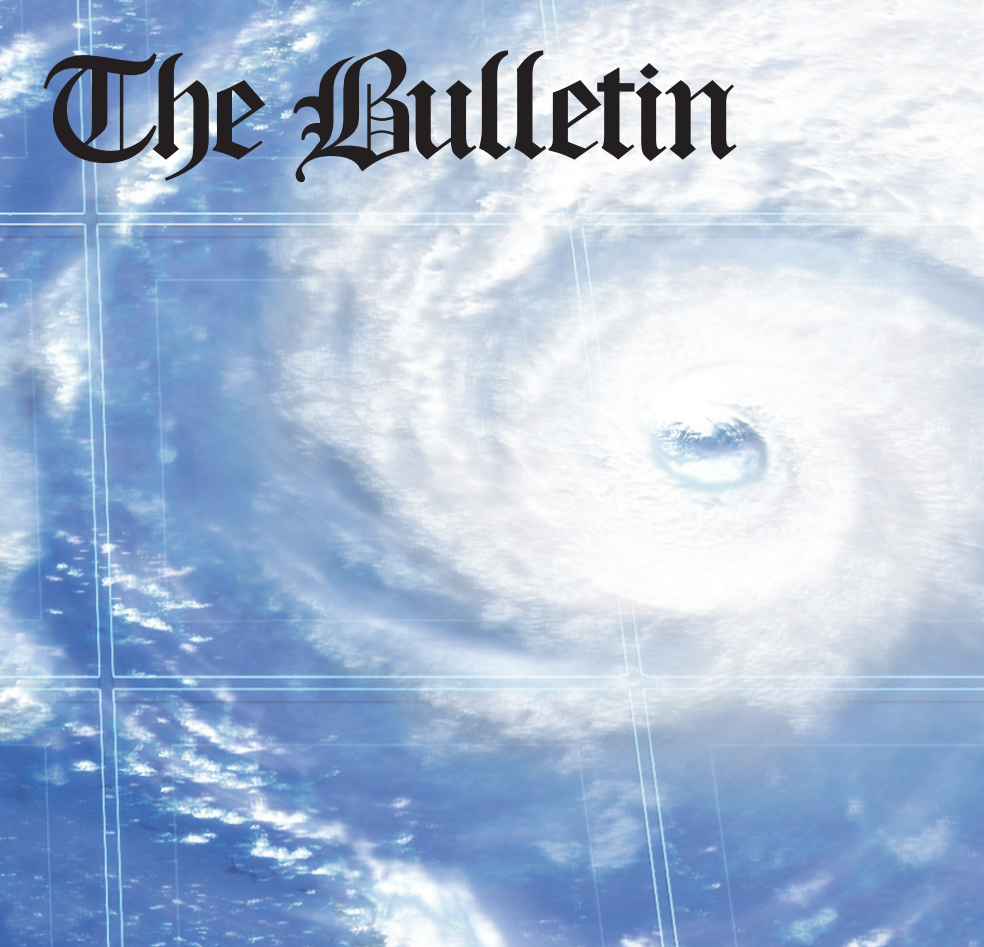


The Bulletin



2017 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

A Publication of The Bulletin Advertising Department



AUGUST 27, 2017

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Stay in The Know

Check with your neighbors to ensure they are aware of any emergency. Do not use the telephone unless absolutely necessary. This includes cell phones, as the cellular system can become overloaded and not available for emergency personnel responding to or handling the incident. Under no circumstances should you call 911 to inquire about the emergency, as emergency dispatchers and 911 operators will be unable to respond to request for emergency services. The Emergency Alert System has been established in cooperation with the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and broadcasters in the state. The EAS allows local and state officials to interrupt radio and television programming with emergency information.

In the event of an emergency, you should tune to your local EAS radio or TV station, state or local officials will provide specific information and instruction through this media.

Refer to the following EAS radio and television stations:

Radio

- WTIC 1080 AM and 96.5 FM
- WCTY 97.7 FM
- WZMX 93.78
- WKNL 100.9 FM
- WICH 1310 AM
- WINY 1350 AM

Television

- WFSB Channel 3
- WTNH Channel 8
- WVIT Channel 30
- WTIC Channel 61

Important Websites to help you plan for an emergency

www.norwichbulletin.com

The Bulletin

www.fema.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.ready.gov

Ready America

www.cdc.gov

Center of Disease Control and Prevention

www.pandemicflu.gov

Understanding Pandemic Flu

www.usda.gov

United State Department of Agriculture

www.who.int

World Health Organization

www.cidrap.umn.edu

Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy

www.ct.gov/doag

State Department of Agriculture

www.areyouprepared.com

Emergency Preparedness Center

www.dpg.state.ct.us

State Department of Public Health

www.weather.gov

National Weather Service

www.avma.org/products/disaster/savingsfamily.asp

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Be prepared for extreme weather events

By Ryan Blessing

rblessing@norwichbulletin.com
(860) 425-4205

Getting people to prepare for an emergency is a tough sell, according to emergency management officials in Eastern Connecticut.

This summer's mostly calm and sunny weather locally has pushed the thought of terrible weather events to the back of people's minds. But officials want the public to be ready for disasters and emergencies that can happen at any time.

The start of September marks the traditional active period for hurricanes and other tropical weather to affect southern New England, including Connecticut. This year's string of heat waves could mean a worse time for us if a hurricane were to hit, Norwich Emergency Management Director Gene Arters said.

Water temperature is a key driver of hurricane development, he said.

"Hurricanes feed off of warm tropical water and usually weaken as they move north into cooler waters," Arters said.

That pattern could be broken this year, as water up the Eastern seaboard and in Long Island sound has had more time to warm up and stay warm.

"We're entering the peak part of hurricane season," Plainfield Emergency Management Director Paul Yellen said. "People become numbed a little bit after we haven't had a big storm in a few years."

Preparation for a big storm or other event is a daily activity for emergency management personnel. It usually involves a year-round regimen of training and of raising public awareness.

"We're getting more calls to visit housing complexes, more speaking engagements," Arters said. Recent wildfires this summer in California and flooding in Louisiana have made the public more aware of the severity of natural disasters, he said.

One challenge of the Norwich area is the sheer number of different languages spoken here - as many as 36, according to Arters.

"And you have people who have never experienced a hurricane or blizzard in their lives," he said.



Connecticut is heavily forested and when tropical storms or hurricanes hit the state trees come down, causing massive power outages, as in Tropical Storm Irene and the October snowstorm, both in 2011. BULLETIN FILE PHOTO

Officials recommend residents and homeowners have no less than 72 hours, or three days' worth, of emergency supplies to get through a power outage.

And of all the tips, checklists and advice for getting through a disaster such as a hurricane or blizzard, one is most important, Arters said.

"If you heed the directives of local officials, you'll get through it just fine," he said.

Connecticut also has another problem if a hurricane hits: it is well-forested.

Arters said a major Category 3 or higher hurricane would bring down more than 70 percent of Connecticut's trees. That's also the conclusion of a state panel formed to look at plans for responding

to storms in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

By comparison, 1-2 percent of Connecticut's trees came down in Irene in August 2011, causing 90 percent of the 800,000 power outages in that storm, according to the report. Trees have the potential to bring down power lines throughout the state for weeks, and not just in a hurricane. Winter ice and snow that's heavy enough could also do it, as it did on a smaller scale in the October 2011 snowstorm. Since then, the state Department of Transportation and major utilities such as Eversource have been proactive about clearing branches that hang over highways and roadsides.

"The cutting program has been extremely beneficial," Arters said. Yellen said it's not so much the hurricanes and blizzards — big storms with five or six days of advance notice — that concern him. Quick-moving and powerful localized storms are in some ways a greater threat because of their unpredictability.

"They can roll right through and bring tornado activity, and I could be in another town like Norwich and be completely unaware," he said.

That's why he and his colleagues take a broad planning approach to dealing with disasters, and then tailor their response as needed.

"You can't fully prepare for every single possible event," he said.

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When a major storm hits, keep in mind the following safety tips:

- Assume any downed utility wire is energized and dangerous - immediately call NPU at 860-887-2555 to report any downed wire.
- If you plan to use a generator, be sure to have it installed by a licensed electrician and always follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. Never operate a generator indoors.
- If you smell natural gas, suspect a gas leak or hear a hissing/blowing sound near your gas pipes, leave your home immediately and call 9-1-1.
- If you or someone in your home requires electricity for medical equipment, be sure to arrange for an alternate power source. Based on the severity of a storm, emergency shelter with electrical service in Norwich may be available.



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Stay safe during thunderstorms

Fireworks are not the only thing that light up the sky on warm evenings. Hot, humid weather often presents the ideal conditions for the formation of thunderstorms to form.

The National Severe Storms Laboratory estimates that 16 million thunderstorms occur across the globe each year. The NSSL says that, at any given moment, there are 2,000 thunderstorms in progress. In the United States, eight cities in Florida top the Farmer's Almanac list for the most thunderstorm-prone areas. The regions' average conditions can be highly favorable for producing thunderstorms.

Although thunderstorms can be exciting to watch from the safety of indoors, these storms can be strong and dangerous. Thunderstorms are often accompanied by damaging winds and large hail. Thunderstorms can move in very quickly and produce flash flooding conditions. The American Red Cross offers that every thunderstorm produces lightning, which kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes.

Despite advance warnings, people are killed or seriously injured by severe thunderstorms each year. Respecting the power of a thunderstorm can help keep people safe.

- Follow the 30/30 lightning safety rule. When lightning flashes, immediately go indoors if you cannot count to 30 before hearing a thunder clap. Remain indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last rumble of thunder.

- Upon hearing thunder, get out of boats, pools and other bodies of water.

- Unplug electronic equipment that may be susceptible to damage from power surges caused by lightning hitting power lines.

- Be sure to have a flashlight and extra batteries handy in the event of a power outage.

- Listen to the local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates.



- Get to higher ground if flash flooding is possible.

- Avoid contact with plumbing fixtures, as water conducts electricity.

- Do not try to drive during severe thunderstorms. Afterward, do not drive

through standing puddles. They may be too deep to gauge.

- Stay away from windows.

- If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter if possible. If shelter is not available, find a low area away from metal areas

or tall objects that can attract lightning. Curl into a ball and make yourself as small as possible.

- After the storm, stay away from downed power lines and report them immediately.

Safely avoid potential winter hazards

Winter can be a beautiful time of year, particularly when freshly fallen snow blankets the landscape. However, winter is also a time fraught with potential peril. The same winter weather that makes landscapes so pristine can make roads and walkways — and even being outside — dangerous.

The U.S. Department of Transportation says weather-related vehicle crashes killed 6,253 people last year and injure more than 480,000 per year. These accidents most often occur when roadways are wet, snowy or icy. Yet, winter driving is not the only seasonal hazard. Here are some common winter activities and how to avoid getting hurt when engaging in them.

Driving

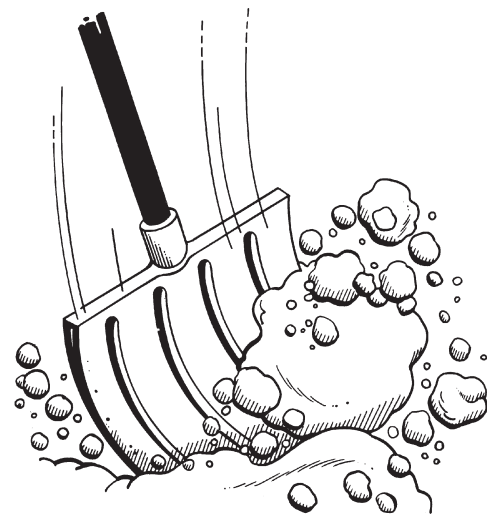
Exercise extra caution when driving on roadways during the winter, as they may contain ice or snow. All it takes is a small coating of precipitation on roadways to make driving treacherous. Wet-looking roadways may be wet, or they may be covered by ice, and it's difficult to tell the difference with the naked eye. Always slow down and assume you are driving on ice. Make every effort to improve visibility. This includes checking windshield washer fluid levels and ensuring windshield blades are in good working order.

Snow removal

Shoveling or removing snow by various methods can be strenuous work,

taking even those who feel they are in good shape by surprise. A 2011 study conducted by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital found that an average of 11,500 snow-shoveling-related injuries and medical emergencies were treated in U.S. emergency departments each year from 1990 to 2006.

Lower back injuries, falls, injuries to the arms and hands and cardiac-related injuries account for many of the incidents sustained while removing snow. There's also the risk of injury from collisions with pedestrians and snow plows. Plows and bobcat-type devices can cause serious injury. Exercise caution when operating such machines.



Roof snow removal

Removing snow from a roof can be a dangerous prospect. Always use the appropriate equipment, which includes telescoping poles, rather than climbing on slippery roofs. This may be a job best left for a professional, who will have fall-arrest systems and nonslip safety boots.

Dressing for conditions

Venturing outdoors for winter fun may be enticing, but never put your health at risk for the sake of fun. The Mayo Clinic says hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat, causing a dangerously low body temperature. Wear appropriate clothing to prevent hypothermia, which may not produce any initial symptoms. If shivering stops or confusion and slurred speech set in, severe hypothermia is in effect and a person should be moved indoors and gently warmed. Mild hypothermia is also possible indoors, typically when the elderly spend several hours in poorly heated homes.

Winter may be beautiful, but it also can be hazardous. Taking precautions and using common sense help avoid dangerous situations.



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What's in your 21st-century survival kit?

Of the 1,272 federal disaster declarations issued in the last decade, more than half were classified as major disasters. These include calamities such as floods, hurricanes and tropical storms, winter storms, and others. In the last 10 years, every state has had a least two events designated as a major federal disaster.

“Most major disasters displaced hundreds or thousands of people from home and work, and nearly all involved a temporary or prolonged loss of major services and necessities, including power, communications, and running water,” said Jonathan Bacon, director of marketing at Wilson Electronics, a maker of communications equipment in St. George, Utah.

“We began thinking about what has changed in technology and society, and how that would affect what we would want to have in an emergency ‘go-pack,’” Bacon said. “A lot of what we would take with us hasn’t changed, but some of what we’d desire today had not been invented 10 years ago. We came up with 6 items that were either invented or radically improved in the last 10 years. We call it the 21st Century Survival Kit.”

1. Cell phone signal booster: “We’re all extremely dependent on smartphones for voice and data communications. Already widely used by first responders and news crews when initially entering disaster zones, the Sleek 4G, a portable cell phone signal booster from Wilson Electronics, helps to transmit and receive calls and data via cell towers unaffected by a disaster. In a severe situation like a Hurricane where all communications could be compromised for several days, having a cell booster could save precious hours of driving time to find a strong cell signal.”

2. Batteries: Two portable lithium-ion batteries, each with a minimum capacity of 10,000mAh, is enough for one battery to fully charge at least three smartphones or to power a tablet, net-book, or cell booster for several hours.

3. Portable solar panel: These solar panels weigh only about a pound and are very practical for charging portable batteries and devices,” said Bacon. He recommended a panel capable of producing at least 10 Watts of power and



A cell phone signal booster can prove invaluable in the event of an emergency.

one amp of current.

4. LED headlamp: Also powered by rechargeable batteries, the latest generation of these types of lamps have adjustable brightness to maximize battery life and can be made bright enough to cast light more than 100 feet.

5. Two-way FRS/GMRS radios: “When even a Wilson booster can’t find a cell signal, these radios provide a communications range up to 30 miles,” said Bacon.

6. Microbial filter straw: This is used for drinking water that may be contaminated with bacteria, organic and water-borne chemicals, and other harmful elements. One filter straw can filter 30 gallons of water.

A lot has happened just in the last 10 years to make keeping in contact and avoiding health risks easier under adverse conditions,” said Bacon. All of these products are readily available, weigh less than five pounds total and take up little room in a backpack.


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How to disinfect water in the case of an emergency

When a weather emergency occurs, the effects can prove devastating. Natural disasters like hurricanes have turned cities upside down, floods have caused the deaths of thousands and snowstorms have shut communities down for days.

A weather emergency, be it a natural disaster or a heavy storm, can contaminate the local supply of drinking water and disrupt the wastewater disposal system. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, such a disruption or contamination can directly threaten a person's health. As a result, it's important for men and women to know how to disinfect their drinking water should an emergency occur and the supply be at risk.

The easiest way to avoid health issues that arise from a contaminated water supply is to keep plenty of bottled water on hand and use as drinking water and when cooking. So long as the bottled water has not been exposed to flood waters, it will be safe to drink.

If an emergency strikes and you don't have any bottled water at home, don't panic. Boiling water can help make the water safe, killing most types of disease-causing organisms that might be present. Boil water for one minute before allowing it cool and then store in containers for later use.

In an emergency situation, the water could very well be cloudy. This is also not a cause for panic. Instead, filter

the water through clean cloths or just allow it to settle. When allowed to settle, chances are the cloudy water will clear up within minutes. Once it does, use the clear water when boiling.

If there's no means to boiling the water, you can use household bleach as a disinfectant. Bleach is effective at killing some, but not all, disease-causing organisms that might be in the water. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle before attempting to disinfect it. Once the water is clear, use this clear water for disinfection. When ready to disinfect the water, the EPA recommends adding 1/8 teaspoon (or roughly eight drops) of regular, unscented liquid household bleach for each gallon of water. Do not use non-chlorine bleach to disinfect water. Once added, stir the bleach and water mixture well, then let it stand for 30 minutes before use. Once disinfected, store the water in clean containers with covers.

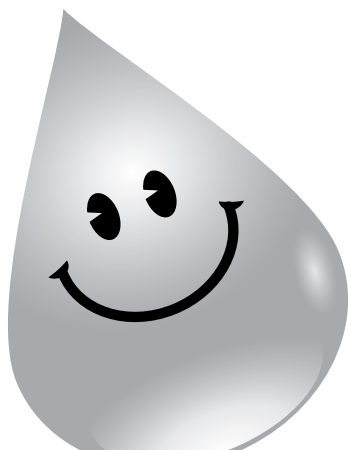
The treated water should have a slight odor of chlorine. If it does not, repeat the process and allow the water to stand for an additional 15 minutes. After this step, if the treated water exhibits a strong odor of chlorine or tastes strongly of chlorine, allow the water to stand exposed to the air for a few hours or pour the water from one clean container to another several times.

For those who rely on well water, in the case of a flood have the water tested and disinfected once the flood waters have receded.

Should a weather emergency occur and the water supply be disrupted or contaminated, heed the advice of local health departments or public water systems. More information about disinfecting water and surviving a weather emergency is available at www.epa.gov.



A disruption or contamination of the water supply can threaten a person's health.



Keep pets in mind when disaster planning

Strong storms can barrel through a location with tremendous force, obliterating homes in the process. The prospect of a natural disaster often forces people to take inventory of their lives and make decisions about what items to protect and how to prepare for the inevitability of an approaching threat. When making disaster preparedness plans, pet owners need to factor in care of their companion animals.

Many people refuse to leave pets behind. However, faced with the prospect of an impending storm or other calamity, pet owners may not know where to turn when it comes to caring for pets. Some inevitably stay behind after disaster evacuations have been issued with the fear pets may not be allowed in shelters or could be turned away from hotels. This can put homeowners, pets and rescue workers at risk for greater injury. Knowing how to behave during a disaster, and caring for a pet in the process, can assist with keeping everyone safe.

• Know your options.

People who live in particularly vulnerable areas, like those prone to wildfires or coastal flooding, should map out a disaster plan. This plan will spell out what everyone in the home will do in the event an evacuation is needed or if you need to stay put with the potential for utility interruption. While some shelters are not pet-friendly, many are. The Red Cross has a network of Pet Disaster Shelters where pet owners can turn. Finding one may require a bit more travel, but it could offer peace of mind.

• Keep medical records handy.

Have an extra copy of pets' veterinary records in case of disaster. Keep important papers in a waterproof container. Should you need to go to a shelter, staff may request proof of vaccinations. Dogs usually need to be up-to-date on distemper/parovirus, rabies and bordetella (kennel cough) vaccines. Cats will need distemper, feline leukemia and rabies shots in most cases.

• Create an emergency supply kit.

Have extra food and water on hand for pets just in case you are stranded at home or need to go to a shelter. Store three to four days' worth of food and water in sealed containers. Take stock of any medications that pets take on a routine basis. Pack comfort items, such as toys or blankets, that have a familiar smell so that pets will be less skittish. Place these items with your own emergency supplies.

• Find pet-friendly lodging options.

Many hotels allow pets overnight stays for a nominal security fee. Know which hotels will accept companion animals and include their contact information in your preparedness kit. Should the moment arise when you need to vacate

to a hotel, you will know which motels to call first.

• Ensure your pet's identification is current.

Dogs and cats should wear identification tags that include a mobile telephone number. Should the animal become lost, anyone can reach you regardless of your current location. Also, update contact information on the on-line database that corresponds to a pet's imbedded microchip if it has one.

• Take a first-aid class.

It is important to know how to treat pet injuries during natural disasters. By learning CPR for a dog or cat, you may be able to save the life of your pet should disaster strike. Similarly, stock a first aid kit with necessary pet supplies.

• Have a contingency plan.

Speak with friends and family members and make arrangements for someone to care for your pet if you will be displaced for quite some time. It can relieve stress for the animal and also give you peace of mind that your cherished companion is being well cared for.

More information is available at www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/pets.



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