

## Introduction

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**Kirsten:** You're listening to the NCDPS Safety Scoop, a podcast that dives into the stories of the people, programs and resources within the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. Each episode, we'll give you the scoop from department personnel on how NCDPS enhances the safety of the people of North Carolina.

[Music]

## Season 2 Episode 10

**Kirsten:** Did you know that the Atlantic hurricane season began June 1st? At the time of this recording, North Carolina is already a third of the way through this season which officially ends on November 30th. But don't just take my word for it; here's a message from NC Emergency Management meteorologist Kevin Kalbaugh.

**Kevin Kalbaugh:** Hurricane season is here, and now is the time to prepare by making sure you, your family and friends have a plan and an emergency supply kit ready to go. You may have heard that forecasters are expecting a near normal season, but there's no way of knowing how many systems will impact North Carolina. On average, there are 14 named storms, seven hurricanes, and three major hurricanes in the Atlantic basin each season, but it only takes one storm to impact a community and for a season to be memorable.

**Kirsten:** This Safety Scoop episode is dedicated to helping North Carolina residents and visitors check up on their hurricane preparedness items and share helpful resources that can be used before, during and after a storm. You'll hear from several emergency management professionals as they share tips and advice on how to be weather ready throughout hurricane season. This is not our first episode about hurricanes and severe weather, so if you want to learn more, we recommend checking out the episode description where we list other episodes you may find helpful.

[Ding]

For the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA forecasters with the Climate Prediction Center predict near normal hurricane activity in the Atlantic. NOAA is forecasting a range of 12 to 17 total named storms. Of those, five to nine could become hurricanes which means they have winds of 74 miles per hour or higher. This includes one to four major hurricanes, defined by Category 3, 4 or 5. Even though this season is expected to be less active than previous years, North Carolinians know all too well that it only takes one storm to make an impact. It is also important to note that even though storms may be assigned a category, which is solely dependent on wind speed, these categories translate the risk of

other hazards associated with hurricanes to include storm surge, flooding and tornadoes.

**Laura Silver:**

Typically, tropical systems include impacts such as heavy rainfall, flooding from storm surge, damaging winds and—and we even sometimes see tornadoes. Just as a brief definition here of what storm surge is, is it is produced by water being pushed towards or over land, whether it be from the ocean, the sounds or the rivers. So, North Carolina has pretty unique geography, and this in itself presents some challenges, and the extent of storm surge depends really on where you are.

And the greatest threat for tornadoes is typically in the right front quadrant of the storm; however, it's really important not to focus on, you know, just that we've seen tornadoes in many other areas as a hurricane passes through. Really the important thing to remember with these tornadoes and tropical systems is that, while they're typically brief, they offer very little lead time, as they're typically very quick to spin up or spin down. This just brings, you know, the point up of it's very important to have several ways to receive your severe weather alerts during these times, so you want to be prepared when that one of those hit.

**Kirsten:**

That's meteorologist Laura Silver explaining some of the hazards that can form at any time during a hurricane. Because of the wide array of hazards, the first item on our checklist is to know your risk depending on your location.

[Ding]

Katie Webster, North Carolina Emergency Management Assistant Director for Planning, shares more about how North Carolina residents and visitors can prepare for hurricanes.

**Katie Webster:**

North Carolinians can take a few simple steps to help protect themselves, their families and their neighbors. It begins by making a family disaster plan, creating an emergency supply kit and staying informed. Preparedness begins by taking a personal responsibility and making the health of your community a priority. This includes looking out for your neighbors, especially the elderly and those who cannot help themselves, to ensure they can safely survive the storm or evacuate if needed. Residents should also include their safety of their pets or livestock into their emergency plans. Begin building your plan by thinking about the types of disasters that could affect your area. Know how you will contact each member of your family and have a plan to reconnect if separated. This could involve identifying a family meeting place that is familiar and easy to find. Be sure you understand the emergency plan for where you work and for your children's school or daycare.

One of the most important tasks is assembling an emergency preparedness kit. This kit should be done before a disaster strikes. Tailor your emergency kit to meet your family's needs. Be sure every family member knows where the kit is

kept. Being ready for an emergency helps you and your family to survive. It also allows police, firefighters and emergency medical workers to help those who need it most. Take time to discuss your shelter plan, evacuation route and communication plan for staying in touch with your family and friends. Ensure you can receive emergency alerts, especially if severe weather is expected overnight. When developing your plan, consider medical needs, including prescriptions and equipment and access and functional needs.

**Kirsten:** So, the next two items on our checklist are: one, make an emergency plan.

[Ding]

And two, create a family communication plan.

[Ding]

Katie mentioned that building an emergency kit is one of the most important aspects of hurricane preparedness, but what is an emergency kit? Human Services Branch Manager Sandy Bridges shares more on this.

**Sandy Bridges:** When you start building your kit, it's important to remember that you need supplies for three to seven days for each person and pet in your family. Your kit should contain at least one gallon of water per person and pet per day, personal hygiene items such as moist towelettes, sanitary wipes, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Be sure to have spare sets of clothes and blankets to keep warm and dry. You should definitely include cell phone chargers, a flashlight, and extra batteries. Have a battery-powered or hand-crank radio. A multipurpose or multifunctional tool may also be useful when you shelter at home or have to evacuate.

After a storm, ATMs and credit or debit card machines may be down, so be sure to have cash available to make purchases. You also want to consider your medical needs. You want to have at least a week's worth supply of any prescription and non-prescription medications you or your family might need. You also want to have a first aid kit. If your kit is going to contain canned foods, don't forget a manual can opener. You may also need things like utensils, cups, Tupperware, napkins, garbage bags and disinfectant wipes, and of course, don't forget to plan for the needs of your pets. Along with the food and water we've already talked about, consider other supplies like food and water bowls, leashes, crates and carriers and medications.

**Kirsten:** As Sandy stated, be sure your emergency kit includes necessities for yourself and others in your household, including pets. Let's check that off our list.

[Ding]

Part of an emergency plan is knowing what to do if you need to evacuate due to a hurricane. In North Carolina, the areas most likely to be issued evacuation

orders include counties along the coast. The Know Your Zone initiative acts as a resource for coastal residents and visitors to know when they need to evacuate during severe weather. Katie shares more.

**Katie:** Know Your Zone is a cooperative effort between North Carolina Emergency Management and County Emergency Management. This tiered evacuation system highlights areas most vulnerable to impacts from storm surge and flooding. If it becomes necessary, local officials will determine which areas should be evacuated and order those evacuations using the predetermined zones. For more information on North Carolina's Know Your Zone initiative, visit [knowyourzone.nc.gov](http://knowyourzone.nc.gov).

**Kirsten:** Next item on our checklist is to not only know your zone, but also know where to go if you need to evacuate.

[Ding]

Making sure you and your family are weather ready is important whether or not it is hurricane season, but you also need to make sure your home is prepared for severe weather. Kevin explains.

**Kevin:** I think it's always important to complete a regular insurance checkup, and I will note that there's typically a 30-day waiting period for flood insurance for that to become effective. So, if you're near the coast, you may want to consider tested and improved window coverings. And it's also important before a storm arrives to move loose items that are outside. Move them indoors, whether it's a kid's toys or trampolines or any furniture, move them inside so they're not a flying object during strong winds. And you also may want to move your car inside a garage or another safe location to prevent that from being damaged from falling trees or tree branches.

I think preparedness can be a practice all year round. It's never too soon. I will say, well, when a hurricane is approaching, you don't want to wait until the last minute until a hurricane or tropical storm watches are—issued because if you need to make a last-minute trip to a store to get some supplies, there most likely will be a lot of other people also out there. So, you may be finding limited resources, so it's never too early. Now is a great time, but again, it's never too soon for preparedness activities.

**Kirsten:** So, check up on your insurance...

[Ding]

...and prepare your home now before a storm hits.

[Ding]

We've completed our preparedness checklist for hurricane season. You can find all of this information and more at [readync.gov](http://readync.gov). Planning ahead and being prepared, even if severe weather never comes, is the best way to make sure you and those in your household are weather ready. It really can make all the difference. Thanks for listening and stay safe.

[Pause]

[Music]

### **Conclusion**

**Kirsten:**

This is the Safety Scoop, a podcast written, produced and edited by the NCDPS communications team. The mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety is to safeguard and preserve the lives and property of the people of North Carolina through preparation, prevention and protection. Follow the department on social media for a closer look at ongoing initiatives and resources. We're on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at NC Public Safety. If you enjoyed today's episode, subscribe to the Safety Scoop on your favorite podcast app. I'm your host, Kirsten Barber. Thanks for listening.

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