EVACUEE

NEWSLETTER

Number 5 | Naval Air Station Meridian | September 5, 2005

Questions and Answers in Katrina's Aftermath

Days after Hurricane Katrina inundated much of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, massive aid is arriving, yet with people still clinging to dry areas hoping for rescue questions began to arise about the level of preparedness and response.

President Bush said Thursday he sympathized with hurricane victims frustrated that they have not received help yet.

"I can't imagine what it is like to be waving a sign saying 'come and get me now.' So there's frustration. But I want people to know there is a lot of help coming," Bush said.

Here, in question and answer form, is a look at the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

How well prepared was New Orleans for such a storm?

The city is especially vulnerable because much of it sits below sea level. Local, state and federal officials have worked for years preparing plans for evacuation and local shelter. The giant Superdome was first used as a shelter in 1998 when Hurricane Georges threatened the city. Just last summer, officials conducted an exercise to prepare for a major hurricane in New Orleans, concluding that as many as a million people might be forced from their homes and that some shelters would be needed for as long as 100 days.

Why wasn't everyone evacuated?

A mandatory evacuation was ordered when it became apparent the storm track would take it close to the city. Hundreds of thousands responded, but many didn't have the means to leave. Of those remaining behind, thousands sought shelter in the Superdome. "Sometimes people refuse to be taken away," Federal Emergency Management Agency director Michael Brown said.

Why wasn't aid available sooner?

Food, water and other supplies, as well as search and rescue teams, were brought in in advance of the storm. "In New Orleans we were ready to move in as soon as Katrina moved out," but levee failures then made it unsafe to move into many parts of the city, Brown said.

Why did the levees fail?

According to the Army Corps of Engineers, the levees were designed to withstand a Category 3 storm, the middle level in a system (1 to 5) that measures hurricane intensity. The force of Katrina was more than the levee could withstand, the Corps said.

How long will it take to drain the city?

It will depend on the weather and how soon repairs to levees are completed. The pumps can then begin sending the water into nearby waterways. The city has pumps but electricity is still out so generators will be needed. It's not like pulling the plug on a bathtub drain; much of the city is below sea level so the water will have to be pumped up and out.

Notes of interest for Hurricane evacuees

Sunday Church Services at NAS Community Chapel

Protestant Sunday School: 9 a.m.
Protestant Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
Catholic Mass: 5 p.m.

NAS Community Chapel Weekday Activities

Wednesday Prayer Luncheon: 11:15 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.
LDS Family Evening: 6 p.m.

Various Hours of Operation for on-base facilities

NEX:M-F, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun, 12:30-5 p.m.
Gas Station: 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily -- no after hours sales
Country Store: 9 a.m.-9 p.m. daily
Commissary: Sept. 4, 10 a.m.-3 pm.; Tues-Sat, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
NFCU: Sept. 3-5, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; M-F, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Citizen's Natl Bank: M-Th, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

The office is up and running in Bldg. 266, next door to the Fleet and Family Support Center.

Hours of operation are Mon, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Tue-Fri, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Services can be provided for active duty and retired Navy personnel and their families, and for all service personnel and their families. Services for reservists with less than 30 days active duty are authorized until Thursday.

If you would like to make a donation to NMCRS to support the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, go to www.nmcrs.org and click on the Hurricane Katrina link. One hundred percent of your donation will go to support military families.

Pharmacies

Winn Dixie: Closest to the base, 12 miles south of base along Hwy 39 on SE corner of Hwy 39 and North Hills Street (first light when traveling south on Hwy 39) -- on left when heading south. Open M-F, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Phone: 601-485-0818

Mr. Discount Pharmacy: Next the hospitals in downtown Meridian. Go south on Hwy 39 and as road forks, stay to the right and veer right as road forks again onto 14th St. Pharmacy is on left, across from Jeff Anderson Medical Center. Open every day from 8 a.m. until midnight. Phone: 601-693-1978

Hospitals

All three hospitals are with one to two block of each other in downtown Meridian -- travel south on Hwy 39 and as the highway moves back into the city, it will fork at one point and you will veer to the right fork. In approximately six blocks it will fork again, and you will veer off to the right and take a right onto 14th St. Anderson is on the right and Rush on the left. Riley is behind Rush on Constitution Ave. and 12th St. Phone: Anderson, 601-553-6111; Riley, 601-484-3357; Rush, 601-703-9260

TRICARE Authorization Number

1-800-444-5445. If you have an emergency and need to be seen at an ER, you will need to contact your PCM after you return home to have a consult placed for authorization of that visit. Only your PCM can place those consults for you.

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Branch Medical Clinic Meridian

The clinic is closed on weekends and holidays. We do have a duty crew who can take your calls for emergencies at 601-679-2633.

School uniform donations requested

Registration for children evacuated from the coast is planned for sometime next week. With school children in the local area now wearing uniforms to school, a need exists for uniform clothing for the children. Items requested are: khaki or navy blue pants; red, white and blue polo shirts. School uniform donations can be taken to the Fleet and Family Support Center.

Evacuees with friends in Navy Family Housing

All evacuees who are staying in Navy Family Housing with friends or family who have not registered with the co-located Housing and Evacuation Offices should go to the Housing Office and do so.

What about school for the children?

School registration for evacuated children is tentatively scheduled for Friday, Sept. 9. See newsletter next week for more information.

Can I get a job while I'm here?

Temporary employment opportunities may be available if you are interested in working while you are here. Please check with the Fleet and Family Service Center for job information.

Can I volunteer to help while I'm here

The American Red Cross needs helpers for various tasks in several locations. Please call 601-485-5151.

Donations needed by Red Cross and Others

Donations of food, drinks, diapers, formula, and personal hygiene items should go to Frank Cochran Center.

How do I register for WIC?

You can contact the WIC office at 601-693-2451. It is located at 5224 Valley Street behind the Mississippi Highway Patrol Office on Highway 19N in the College Park area.

You also can contact the Greater Meridian Health Clinic at 601-693-0118. It is located at 2701 Davis St., which is near St. Patrick's Church.

Navy College

If you are unable to attend classes because of command obligations or a lack of internet access, a letter from your command, signed by your CO will allow you a TA waiver.All on-base classes will be moved off base. Call 601-679-2671 or your local college for more info.

Housing Residents

Please pile all yard debris at the curb for pickup. Do not place vinyl siding at curb. Notify Housing Maintenance for pickup. If you see a snake call Security at ext.2958 For maintenance emergencies call 601-938-7701.Regular calls dial601-679-7001.

Military Family Locator Service

This service will be used to track and assist in locating affected families. Call 888-777-7731 or go to www.militaryfamilylocator.org You will need the individual's last name last four digits of their SSN.

Prayer Luncheon

Wednesday prayer luncheon has been opened to all faiths as a time designated to prayer reflection and fellowship. Call NAS Chapel at ext.3635 for details.

EMEPA Progress

Crews from across the U.S. have been arriving daily to assist with power restoration. EMEPA estimates the remaining outage to last two or more weeks.

Federal Disaster Aid available for those suffering losses in designated areas

Designated Areas

Alabama: Baldwin, Mobile and Washington Counties

Louisiana: Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Palquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Parishes

Mississippi: Amite, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pea River, Perry, Pike, Stone, Walthall and Wilkinson Counties

Call FEMA to apply for assistance at 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585 for the hearing impaired.

These numbers are for people in the designated federal disaster areas only.

Be prepared to give your Social Security number, describe your losses, provide financial information, and give directions to the damaged property.

If you get a busy signal, try to call after 6 p.m. or on the weekend.

The information provided gets you in the system. An inspector will schedule an appointment and visit the property. You should be there. A housing assistance check will arrive in 7-10 days, if you are eligible. There may be an SBA application enclosed. You MUST fill out and return to be eligible for any further assistance.

Family info or for help, call Red Cross 1-866-GET-INFO

Navy 24-hour help line for family info & muster 1-877-414-5358

The Daily Coastie News

Coastie News is provided by the coasties for the coasties

Donations: Food, clothing, toys and diapers are coming to the Family Support Center. Contact 601-679-2358/2360. Or contact Gail Meyers at 601-679-4090.

Coast Guard Housing Support: contact Gloria Cokel at 601-679-5551 or 604-483-3968. Also contact Cindy Vasquez at 601-679-9726.

Credit Union: The Navy Federal Credit Union is open from 0900-1400. For all pay, travel and evacuation questions call the "People Cell" at 314-539-3900 EXT. 2337,2338,2340.

Legal: Legal assistance is available for setting up wills and powers of attorney at the CBQ.

Belle Chase Academy: The Business Manager of BCA needs to contact MKCS Myers at 601-679-2530.

1. The Navy Relief Society has authority for evacuees that have lost household goods on a case by case basis. Contact Kelli Dickman at 2504
2. BellSouth 1-888-757-6500
3. Galaxy Cablevision 1-800-365-6988
4. Housing zip code is 39305.
5. On base address for shipment of uniforms:
   US Coast Guard
   Naval Air Station
   1155 Rosenbaum Ave
   Coast Guard Group
   Meridian, MS 39309-5062
6. UDC phone number is 1-800-874-6841
   Have sizes ready and state you have lost all your uniforms in New Orleans.
7. Coast Guard Ombudsman is Gail Myers at 809 Hull Street.