

PHYSICAL PLANT OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

Well, believe it or not hurricane season is here. The 2011 hurricane season started June 1st and runs through November 30th, 2011. AccuWeather Hurricane Center meteorologists and Hurricane forecaster Paul Pastelok are predicting an active season for 2011 with more impact on the U.S. coastline than last year. The team is forecasting a total of 15 named tropical storms, eight of which will attain hurricane status and four of which will attain major hurricane status (Category 3 or higher). In a normal year, there are 10 tropical storms, six of which become hurricanes and two of which become major hurricanes, or attain winds that exceed 110 mph.

To get prepared for such an active hurricane season we conducted our annual hurricane drill on May 19th through May 22nd. The reason our drill runs for four days is we want be sure all staff and shifts participate and get the training they will need in a real emergency. During the hurricane drill we conduct complete building evacuations for all shifts. We also inventory our hurricane supplies to ensure we can be self sufficient until help arrives.

National Hurricane Preparedness Week was May23rd through May28th. We also participated by having a hurricane meeting with all supervisory positions. To get the meeting started we showed an old video of the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and all the hardship the facilities endured in the weeks after the storm. We also had a power point presentation covering the key points of our emergency management manual. We ended the meeting by watching a set of new video announcements from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration covering hurricane basics, storm surge, high winds, inland flooding, and disaster prevention featuring NOAA experts.

I would like to thank all the administrators and staff involved in our annual hurricane drill and making it as realistic as possible. With this kind of preparation and practice our facilities will be ready god forbid a hurricane does come our way.

“IF YOU FAIL TO PREPARE, YOU PREPARE TO FAIL”