

The 2017 hurricane season has been listed by The Weather Channel as one of the ten most active in history. Hurricane season is usually from June 1 to November 30. At the time of this writing, 5 tropical storms and 8 hurricanes have been named and, of the list for this year, there are still 7 names left; with more than a month left, some of them may still be used. The 2017 hurricane season has also been listed as the 17<sup>th</sup> worst for hurricane-related deaths since 1900.

Lives can be saved when hazardous weather events are forecasted by preplanning, preparation, and practicing an emergency. Advanced methods of weather forecasting, improved methods of informing the public of forecasted hazard weather conditions, and social media has help in notification. One should not only preplan or prepare for weather emergencies, but there are many other types of emergencies where these practices could be lifesaving. Such as a fire.

The winter of 2017-2018 will soon be upon us. If you do not already have a preplan or have prepared it is not too late.

There has been widely mixed forecasts for the 2017-2018 winter. The Old Farmer's Almanac of Dublin, New Hampshire and The Farmer's Almanac of Lewiston, Maine are the most popular winter weather forecasters. This year they are polar opposites in their predictions: The Old Farmer's Almanac is predicting a mild winter and the Farmer's Almanac is predicting a freezing, snowy winter.

The National Weather Service has already published a list of 26 names for the 2017-2018 winter storms. It has to date listed 2013 as one of the worst years for winter-and cold-related deaths. Of the top 10 most possible emergencies in Pennsylvania, winter storms are third, behind floods and fires

Whether the forecast prediction is for a hurricane, winter storm, or any other type of hazardous weather condition, one of the best rules to follow is to prepare in advance for whatever Mother Nature sends our way.

Preparation doesn't stop at having plenty of ice-melting product available, making sure the snow blower is ready, seeing if you have a good snow shovel, checking your heating system, and making sure that your vehicle has been winterized. Winter preparation also includes having all the necessary plans and supplies ready for a disruption of power, heating, drinking water, medication, and special equipment.

Pennsylvania's website, [www.readypa.org](http://www.readypa.org), has an excellent list of items needed to prepare your home, work and vehicle. The Federal website is [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

A rule of thumb in preparation is one should have enough supplies to last three to five days to meet the needs for everyone in the household. When it becomes necessary to use any type of temporary system, whether it is a generator, space heater, or candles always follow the manufactures directions and follow all safety procedures. Make sure all battery operated devices are fully charged, including spare batteries.

If you have pets, service animals, or livestock, you should also include them in your emergency preparation plans.

In the event sheltering in place is no longer an option and temporary shelter becomes necessary, you will be informed via news media or through Lehigh County's reverse 911 system.

Getting a preplan or preparation in place before an emergency weather event or any type of emergency situation is your best method for safety. Always remember that, during the time of a stressful situation or emergency event, staying calm has proven to give better results than panicking.

If you have been following any of the media coverage on the recent hurricanes, you will notice that those who failed to follow emergency directions ended up in unsafe conditions or environments. The weather or results of could hinder a timely response by emergency personnel or it would be a greater risk to the safety of the first responders to attempt any type of rescue. Emergency assistance is often delayed due to a backlog of emergency calls.

If you have any neighbors that are elderly or disabled, I ask that you check on them to ensure their safety.

Unless your winter preparation is heading to a warmer climate for the next several months, preparing now for what Mother Nature sends our way is the best defense. Waiting until the storm is forecasted is not the time to begin planning, preparing, and getting supplies, but should be the time to double check your planning, preparation, and supplies.

If a community wide or even a portion of the community evacuation or even you are advised to shelter in place due to an emergency event always follow the instructions completely. DO NOT attempt to alter them in any way!!! If you do you will either place yourself in an unsafe position or cause others to be affected and possible placing them or the first responders into an unsafe condition. You will either be requested to shelter in place or advised to either relocate to either an approved Red Cross shelter or if it is only for a very short time instructed to go to another location for your temporary safety. If you are requested to relocate to a shelter travel lightly. Do not pack like you were going on vacation. The above mention websites have information what would be required to help you plan.

Remember Fire, Medical, and Police are continuously training for many types of emergency, so I ask you always follow their directions during a time of emergency.