



FEMA

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FEMA URGES CITIZENS TO STAY READY UNTIL HURRICANE SEASON ENDS

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is urging citizens to remain ready for the effects of hurricanes as Tropical Storm Paloma churns in the Gulf of Mexico. As with all threats to American lives and property, FEMA is monitoring Paloma's course and taking actions to ensure the Agency is prepared to respond.

Hurricane season officially ends November 30, 2008, but that doesn't always mean the threat of hurricane damage has passed. Storms have materialized well after that date in years past. Staying prepared and paying attention are the best bet to keeping safe in the event of an emergency.

Currently, Tropical Storm Paloma is slowly north-northwest in the Gulf of Mexico. Reports from an Air Force Reserve hurricane hunter aircraft indicate that maximum sustained winds have increased to near 40 miles per hour, with higher gusts. Additional strengthening is forecast during the next few hours, and Paloma could become a hurricane later this evening. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 25 miles from the center.

PREPARE NOW

Storms are expected to continue, bringing heavy rains, high winds and dangerous conditions. Tornado activity is possible in many of the communities, and potential flooding remains as evacuations are being ordered in localities already impacted or facing threats. Being prepared can save lives and property. While emergency officials are preparing for and responding to the storms, individuals also should take steps to plan for emergencies. The following are preparedness steps individuals can take now to protect their homes and families:

- Tune in to radio and television broadcasts that provide vital emergency information. Have a battery-powered radio on hand in case of power outages.
- Know the evacuation routes in your area. Stay informed and listen to local officials regarding emergency evacuations.
- Find out what you can do to be safe, such as creating family disaster plans. A wealth of information on preparing for a flood or other disasters is available online at www.ready.gov and www.fema.gov. These Websites have reading materials for families, pet owners, business and community leaders, plus checklists and practice exercises.

We will continue to be in close communication with the National Hurricane Center and will provide your offices with updates as Paloma progresses.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact FEMA's Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 646-4500.