



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Cumberland County Emergency Services

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## Preparing for Hurricanes Looks Different During a Pandemic

FAYETTEVILLE – Cumberland County has seen its fair share of tropical storms with some areas still recovering from Hurricanes Matthew and Florence. This year, Emergency Services officials urge residents to begin making their storm preparations and plans now with the COVID-19 pandemic in mind.

The 2020 hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30 with peak season around mid-August. Tropical Storm Isaias has formed in the Atlantic and may impact North Carolina as soon as Monday.

“We are asking our residents to take extra steps this year during their hurricane preparation. COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Cumberland County, and we are taking that into consideration while we plan to provide emergency services to our residents. It’s more important than ever for our residents to plan and prepare for this hurricane season,” said Emergency Services Director Gene Booth.

Now is the time to answer these three questions: **Where will I go? What do I need? Who has reliable information?**

### **Where will I go?**

Sheltering and evacuation for this hurricane season will be different than in years past as the pandemic adds additional challenges. During Hurricane Florence, Cumberland County housed more than 500 individuals in the first 48 hours of operating the emergency shelters. More than 1,000 displaced residents would call these shelters home during the peak of the storm.

The capacity and availability of emergency shelters will drastically be reduced to protect against the spread of COVID-19. Staying at an emergency shelter should be your last resort. Plan now to stay with family or friends at a safe place, or at a hotel.

If you go to a shelter, you will be required to wear a face mask or covering at all times to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Be prepared to bring your own bedding if cots are not available.

“In light of the increasingly active tropics, now is the time to make alternate sheltering plans and use public shelters as a last resort. We are focused on citizen safety, not just from the storm but also from a public health standpoint,” Booth said.

### **What do you need?**

Build an emergency supply kit and create a family emergency plan. Your kit should include items that your

family may need during and after an emergency. Plan for enough water, food and supplies for three to seven days for each person and pet.

Be sure to include additional supplies to stay healthy during the pandemic: face coverings, hand sanitizer and cleaning products.

Visit [readync.org](http://readync.org) to learn more about creating a family emergency plan and building your emergency supplies kit.

**Who has reliable information?**

Get information about severe incidents by signing up for our Cumberland Alerts notification system. The Cumberland Alerts system enables us to provide you with critical information related to incidents such as severe weather, evacuations, protective actions, etc. You will receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify, such as your home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more. Sign-up now by visiting [co.cumberland.nc.us/alerts](http://co.cumberland.nc.us/alerts).

The County will also share important messaging on its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram account.

Although this hurricane season will have additional challenges combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, planning where you will go, what you need and where to go for information will help protect you and your family.

*A comprehensive Hurricane Guide is available from [Readync.org](http://Readync.org) in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).*