



STATE OF FLORIDA

# DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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## FLORIDA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RELEASES 2010 HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS SURVEY RESULTS

*~Newly Released Survey Compares 2006 Household Preparedness Levels to 2010~*

**TALLAHASSEE** - The Florida Division of Emergency Management today released the results of a recent poll assessing hurricane preparedness among Florida's residents. The 2010 survey conducted by the Hazards Management Group, Inc. provides both an up-to-date measure of household preparedness in Florida and a comparison to preparedness indicators documented in 2006. The 2006 survey followed the unusually active hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005, which might reasonably have led to a heightened level of preparedness in advance of the 2006 hurricane season.

Key findings include:

- **Current Preparedness.** In general, Florida residents said they are well-prepared for the aftermath of a hurricane or other disaster. People were most likely to say they have emergency lighting, important papers, prescription medicines, battery-powered radios, and adequate gasoline in their cars. They were less likely to say they have sufficient water and ice currently on hand. Preparedness levels were very similar to those reported by residents in 2006. Age, homeownership, income, and race were more strongly related to preparedness than other factors.
- **Expectations about Disaster Relief.** Most Floridians believe it is reasonable for agencies and organizations to have relief supplies available within 48 hours of a hurricane. However, an even larger majority don't actually expect assistance that soon. They expect to be on their own for at least three days. Similar attitudes were expressed in 2006.
- **Sources of Information.** A large majority of residents said they've seen television programs and printed materials about hurricanes and how to prepare for them, but few have seen information in their telephone books or gone to public libraries for

hurricane information. Most respondents said they have access to the internet, but few have visited their county or state emergency management agency websites to look up hurricane information. Similar results were found in 2006.

- **Perceived Vulnerability.** Too few residents living in category 1-3 evacuation zones comprehend their vulnerability to category 3 hurricanes. In 2010 fewer inland residents said they would be unsafe, compared to 2006, and more category 1-3 residents said their homes would flood in 2010 than in 2006
- **Watches and Warnings.** Very few people know the lead times for watches and warnings (about the same as in 2006), and even fewer were aware the lead times are changing in 2010. Many residents expect to make earlier evacuation decisions if lead times are increased.
- **Obstacles to Evacuation.** Fewer than 10% of households have members who need assistance in order to evacuate, and only 6% report having anyone with a medical problem or disability that would require special assistance, similar to 2006 findings. Of those households, only 20% believe they require assistance from an agency or organization outside their home. Few of those needing assistance are registered with their counties as having special needs. Most people with pets say they plan to take their pets with them to their evacuation destinations, but the number of people citing pets as obstacles to evacuation is down from 2006. Financial costs of evacuation were mentioned as obstacles more often than in 2006.
- **Mitigation.** Most survey respondents said they have some sort of window protection for hurricanes, but most has to be put in place when a storm threatens. The reported amount of window protection was higher in 2010 than in 2006.
- **Having a Plan.** More than half of Florida residents said they have a definite evacuation plan, which is down slightly from 2006. Age, years lived in Florida, education, and type of housing are the best predictors of having a plan.

During April of 2010 telephone interviews were conducted with 876 Florida residents, dealing with eight preparedness subject areas. Most questions used precisely the same wording as used in the 2006 survey of household preparedness in Florida. A few new questions were added in 2010.

“While a large number of Floridians have taken the time to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season this survey still shows us we have much work to do,” said Florida Governor Charlie Crist. “I urge all Floridians to go to [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org) today and make sure their families are prepared for what could be a busy season in the tropical Atlantic. We must all do our part to ensure we can focus our efforts after a hurricane on our most vulnerable populations.”

“Many of the results in this survey are extremely encouraging,” said David Halstead, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. “It highlights that in the last four

years the level of preparedness has been maintained in the absence of a major hurricane impacting Florida. However, it also continues to make a point that many Floridians are not taking the necessary steps to prepare themselves and their families in for potential impacts.”

The Atlantic Hurricane Season runs from June 1 through November 30. For more information on the Florida Division of Emergency Management and to GET A PLAN!, please visit: [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org). Follow us on Twitter at [www.Twitter.com/flsertinfo](http://www.Twitter.com/flsertinfo) or join our blog at: <http://flsertinfo.blogspot.com/>.

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