FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FEMA SUPPORTS FLORIDA STATE OFFICIALS IN URGING PREPAREDNESS AS HURRICANE WILMA APPROACHES

ORLANDO, Fla. – As Hurricane Wilma heads for the west coast of Florida, the State Emergency Response Team has activated its Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, where they are monitoring the storm and beginning to put response measures into place. State and local officials are working to implement evacuation orders as they are issued. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency supports state and local officials in their efforts, and stands ready to provide federal assistance should it be required.

“This is a dangerous storm and we urge all Floridians to review their family preparedness plans and be ready to take immediate action,” said Florida Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate. “As Florida faces another hurricane, the relationship we have developed with our partners on the local and federal levels will ensure the necessary steps are taken – yet again – to respond to the needs of our impacted communities.”

First and foremost, individuals are urged to pay attention to the latest storm information and follow all advisories issued by local emergency management officials.

“As always, we encourage families to listen to state and local officials and take the necessary precautionary measures for Wilma’s arrival,” said FEMA’s Long Term Recovery Director Scott R. Morris. “FEMA is ready to step up, once again, and assist our partners at the state and local levels.”

FEMA is preparing for Hurricane Wilma by pre-positioning supplies and commodities in areas surrounding potential landfall of the storm. Commodities of ice, water, meals, and tarps, as well as Disaster Medical Assistance Teams and Urban Search & Rescue Task Forces are pre-staging across the State of Florida. In addition, FEMA has offered its support to state and local officials in ensuring that families who are still living in temporary housing due to last year’s hurricanes receive information about any evacuation orders issued by local officials.

Following is a list of actions that individuals should undertake and supplies to gather before Wilma’s anticipated landfall.

Before a Hurricane Strikes:

[List of actions and supplies]

[End of document]
Plan a safe evacuation route and identify safe shelter space within your area. Those in storm surge zones, in flood zones, or in less-than-standard housing should be especially vigilant in preparing disaster plans.

Have disaster supplies on hand, including:
- Flashlight, portable battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Emergency food and water (including a non-electric can opener)
- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Sturdy shoes and a change of clothing
- Copies of important papers (bank statements, insurance records, deeds, etc.)

**When a Hurricane Watch or Warning is Issued:**
- Listen to hurricane progress reports. Follow instructions if ordered to evacuate.
- Check your emergency supplies. Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, bottles and available cooking pots.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools; anchor objects that cannot be brought inside but that could be wind-tossed.
- Secure your home by installing hurricane shutters or precut plywood.
- Trim dead branches from trees.
- Turn the refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings if not instructed by officials to turn off utilities.
- Fuel your car. Review evacuation routes and gather your disaster supply kit.
- Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container.
- Review your family disaster plan.

**If You Are Told To Evacuate:**
- If officials order evacuation, leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
- Secure your home. Unplug appliances and turn off electricity and the main water valve. If time permits, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding or move it to a higher floor.
- Take your pre-assembled emergency supplies and protective clothing.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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