



disaster preparedness report

National Weather Service

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS!

First, we would like to thank each office who worked so hard to make the National Flash Flood Awareness Week (NFFAW) the success it was. I know it was a lot of extra work, but if it saved one life I'm sure you would agree it was worth the effort.

While there is not enough space to list every station who participated in the NFFAW, special recognition should be made of Rosalyn Ebenholtz, Eastern Region Headquarters, whose innovative planning and energetic follow through on various regional activities (with the help of Al Kachic, Regional Hydrologist) made NFFAW such a huge success in the Eastern Region. We also note very successful activities by Service Hydrologists, Larry Tunnell in Colorado and Ed May in Minnesota; Joe Ganser and staff, WSFO Reno; and Claire Jensen, Bob Behm, and Mike Franjevic, WSFO Phoenix.

Bert Goldenberg, Regional Headquarters, Anchorage, reports excellent awareness activities by Joe Petrovich and Reuben Eaton, WSFO Anchorage, and Pacific Region Focal Point, Dick Hiyane; with help from Bob Lee, WSFO Honolulu, carried on a vigorous awareness campaign. Major activities were also conducted at WSFO San Antonio, WPM, Cliff Brock; WSO Midland, MIC Jim Yates and staff, and WSFO Little Rock, Meteorologists, Bruce Terry and Nelson de Villiers.

We plan to publish the Eastern Region, Flood and Flash Flood Awareness Week activities as Warnings and Preparedness Handbook Chapter 27. This chapter will highlight some of the more notable efforts by people in the Eastern Region; for example, Rich Schwerdt, WPM, WSFO Washington, D. C.; Tim Sweeney, Flash Flood Hydrologist, River Forecast Center, Cincinnati; Phil Neff, WPM, River Forecast Center, Harrisburg; and MIC Chet Henricksen, Dave Sisk and Theresa Rossi, WSFO Pittsburg, to name only a few.

For all those field and regional offices which have been holding disaster preparedness films in need of repair, we now have a contract with Modern Talking Picture Service in Washington, D. C.

Films in need of repair should be sent to:

Modern Talking Picture Service, Inc.
711 4th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20001

Include a self-addressed franked mailing label (NOAA Form 61-23) inside each film container.

"Some Devastating North Atlantic Hurricanes of the 20th Century", NOAA/PA 77019, has been updated through 1980. We have a limited supply at CLSC, please use some discrimination in its distribution as it should not be considered a "publicity handout."

There have been printing delays for the new "Tornado Safety" with updated statistics thru 1980, NOAA/PA 82001, (which replaces "Tornado", NOAA/PA 77027, and "Severe Local Storm Warning Services and Tornado Statistics, 1953-1976", NOAA/PA 77018), and "Dust Storm", NOAA/PA 82002, a dust storm driving safety wallet card. Both should be available from CLSC by early August. "The Naming of Hurricanes", NOAA/PA 79017, has been updated thru 1987.

The Tornado Preparedness Slide Show and Commentary has been updated (13 new slides) and will be reproduced in its entirety and sent to each field office by fall 1982.

Several slides in the slide shows, "When Lightning Strikes" and "Flash Flood Preparedness" along with a major revision of "Hurricane Preparedness" are planned in early FY1983. Also, a new hurricane film is in production and a tornado film is planned.

Of the major natural hazards, tornadoes, hurricanes, lightning, flash floods/floods, and winter storms, only lightning does not have an individual brochure based on the subject. We would like to "beef-up" the "Thunderstorm" brochure NOAA/PA 75009, with expanded lightning data and statistics and bring up-to-date the Thunderstorm portion of the brochure early in FY1983.

Changes may be made in the Winter Storm Warnings WSOM Chapter C-42 this summer, thus we will hold off updating the "Winter Storm Brochure", NOAA/PA 79018, the "Winter Storm Poster", NOAA/PA 78022, and the winter storm wallet card, "Riding Out Winter Storms", NOAA/PA 80003, until we see if C-42 is revised. We will make necessary revisions before the next winter season. The Disaster Preparedness Catalog, NOAA/PA 76021, is being revised and should be available this fall.

Over the past decade, epidemiologic studies of natural disasters have emerged as an area of special interest. Some of these studies have been able to identify factors which contribute to increased risk of morbidity and mortality during specific types of disasters. For example, in a study of a tornado in Wichita Falls, Texas, conducted by Dr. Roger Glass of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, it was found that 26 of the 43 traumatic deaths and 30 of the 59 serious injuries occurred in people who, despite ample warning, went to their cars to drive out of the storm's path. These people had a risk of serious or fatal injury of 23 per 1000. People who remained indoors and in stationary homes were at relatively low risk (3 per 1000).

A check of a number of Federal and non-Federal agencies revealed that no statistics were available on how people are killed or seriously injured by flash floods. This type of information would have been quite useful during the recent National Flash Flood Awareness Week. We met with members of the CDC staff to discuss the feasibility of developing such a statistic. Following these discussions, we entered into a cooperative agreement under which CDC will:

1. Use available national mortality data and information from NOAA survey reports, storm data, etc., on flash flood occurrence, to assess patterns and estimate incidence of mortality related to flash flooding over the past 23 years;
2. Review the scientific literature for existing knowledge of mortality risk factors associated with flash flooding;
3. Conduct epidemiologic studies to further delineate, in a systematic and rigorous fashion, mortality risk factors associated with flash flooding; and,
4. Produce, in collaboration with NOAA, joint report in the form of a monograph or other appropriate document summarizing findings from 1, 2, and 3 above; along with recommendations for preventing or minimizing deaths and injuries caused by flash flooding.

The statistical study is to be completed by June 1983.

o For a number of years, WSO Houston area has obtained unprecedented support from private industry for the publication and distribution of hurricane awareness and safety publications. On an annual basis, hundreds of thousands of handouts have been disseminated at no cost to the National Weather Service.

This year's effort has expanded to include several storm evacuation maps for the entire Texas coast. It was published by the Texas Catastrophe Property Insurance Association (TCPPIA) and edited by Cecil Palmer, MIC, WSO Houston, at no cost to the NWS. A half-a-million copies have been furnished to our Texas coastal WSOs by TCPPIA. In order to tailor the information to specific sections of the coast, local inserts have been developed to cover local evacuation problems. Also, published is an evacuation map sponsored by DOW Chemicals for Brazoria County. In addition to inserts for WSO Houston area counties, MICs at Victoria, Corpus Christi, and Brownsville have obtained local sponsors for inserts for their areas. The inserts for the Houston/Galveston area contain information from the Texas A&M Evacuation Study which was partly funded by NOAA and in which Cecil Palmer played a major role.

The basic publication and inserts represent the most comprehensive hurricane awareness package ever published for the public. This major preparedness project was accomplished at no cost to the NWS. Furthermore, it represents an unprecedented level of cooperation between a government agency and private industry in the promotion of hurricane safety. While many people contributed to this effort, no one made a greater contribution than Houston's MIC, Cecil Palmer. Great job, Cecil, Keep Up The Good Work!

o Jack Schnable, MIC, WSO Jacksonville, working with the American Red Cross and the Jacksonville Civil Defense, has produced an excellent pamphlet on the NOAA Weather Radio and about 100,000 pamphlets have been distributed. The pamphlet has been reproduced into three 2½' by 7' displays with 3 sides; and will be viewed in shopping centers, downtown office lobbies, in front of city hall, along the ocean, etc.

o Guy Tucker, MIC, WSFO St. Louis, got some interesting statistics from a survey of statewide drill results. Of 653 responding schools, 46 percent use NWR to get warnings, 22 percent get phone calls from local civil defense or police, 12 percent from commercial radio (AM & FM) and 10 percent rely on outdoor sirens. It was also found that schools, in general, are responding better to

the drills and most agreed it was better to not publicize the exact time the drill will be held. This was the first time that there was no advance notification of the time of Missouri's drill.

o Owatonna City Hospital's participation in the Minnesota statewide drill this year came in handy when a tornado skipped through the town on May 17. The tornado plan worked and everybody was in a safe place shortly after a warning was issued and before the storm hit town. Even though the hospital wasn't hit, it was a close call. Everyone was satisfied that the safety precautions were warranted.

o Ron Kuhn, OIC, WSO Charlotte, North Carolina, recently hit the jackpot on free publicity for one of our Preparedness Programs with a letter to Ann Landers. Ron's letter on "Tornado Safety Tips" that "could mean the difference between life and death" was published nationally on April 11, and in several newspapers afterwards. Since then, the mail has been pouring in at the Charlotte WSO. Notes Ron, "This has been an interesting experience and apparently worthwhile. Just a few minutes of writing a letter resulted in safety tips getting into the homes of perhaps millions of people." (It is estimated that as many as 60 million people may read Ann Landers' column.)

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ROSTER

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