

ANNEX 4 TO BASIC PLAN

PUBLIC INFORMATION

I INTRODUCTION

To prevent or minimize hurricane-related loss of life, damage to property, and harm to the environment in South Carolina, government on all levels will provide consistent, coordinated, accurate, and timely information to the at-risk public. The information flow will begin long before the existence of an imminent hurricane threat, it will intensify as a hurricane approaches, and it will continue in the storm's aftermath. This plan focuses on pre-landfall and reentry issues.

A. Emergency Public Information.

1. Prior to and during initial hurricane threats, the public will be made aware of potential ill effects and of actions necessary to safeguard lives and property. As a hurricane approaches, the public will be advised of prudent protective actions. After a storm departs, evacuees will be informed of when and on what routes they can return home.
2. State agencies key to the successful coordination and conveyance of accurate information to the public during a large-scale coastal evacuation and reentry are the South Carolina Governor's Office, the SCEMD, the Department of Public Safety (SCDPS), the Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), the National Guard, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT), the SC Department of Commerce (SCDOC), the Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC, the Department of Insurance (SCDOI), the SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS), South Carolina Educational Television/Radio Network (SCETV), and, if the evacuation occurs when public schools are in session, the Department of Education (SCDOE). Also key are county emergency management agencies and volunteer organizations including the American Red Cross (ARC). All aforementioned agencies and organizations will provide mutual copies of all news releases issued during the approach of a tropical storm, during the evacuation process, and during reentry.
3. Upon the Declaration of a State of Emergency by the Governor, ESF-15, Public Information, led by SCEMD, will be the primary coordinating element in the dissemination of public information during emergency and disaster operations, with the advise and consent of the Governor's Press Secretary (ref. S.C. Emergency Operations Plan, Basic Plan (SCEOP), VII, E.), who reserves the authority to intervene, to assume control, or to disseminate supplementary public information at any time. The SEOC will request state-level activation of the Emergency Alert System when appropriate.
4. State government information of greatest public interest during evacuation and reentry includes, but is not limited to: voluntary and mandatory evacuation orders (primary source Governor's Office, SCEMD), road

closures (primary source SCDOT), traffic management (primary source SCDPS), law enforcement (primary source SLED), shelter locations and availability SCDSS, American Red Cross (ARC) Pre-Landfall Operations Team (ARCPLOT), school closures (SCDOE), water quality and nursing home issues (SCDHEC), bridge closures (SCDOT, SCDNR), boating restrictions (SCDNR), state office closings (Governor's Office), state park closures (SCPRT), and insurance issues (SCDOI). Private sector information of great public interest includes that regarding employers' hours and days of operation; insurance coverage; power outages; telephone service; nursing home, hospital, and other health-care facilities; accommodations for pets; and motel availability.

5. In general, state government news releases will be issued to the media statewide and to national and international media as appropriate, with priority consideration given to the media most able to effectively communicate with the at-risk population. Example press releases and EAS messages follow.

OPCON 5 Example News Releases

NEWS RELEASE: Hurricane Awareness Week and Family Preparedness Planning

COLUMBIA, SC (Date/Time) – Governor (Name) has issued a proclamation designating Hurricane Awareness Week (Dates) in South Carolina.

The week is designed to focus attention on the hurricane threat and to increase public awareness. It is sponsored by the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Division of the Adjutant General's Office.

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division is the state agency responsible for the statewide emergency management program. It supports the counties through training and planning assistance and coordinates the delivery of state resources during emergencies.

The Division sponsored the (Year) Hurricane Conference in (Location) in (Month).

Hurricane season will continue through Nov. 30.

People in potentially vulnerable areas should consider actions they would need to take if the storm threatened South Carolina directly. The public should monitor the storm on NOAA weather radio and through local news media, especially people in low-lying areas along the entire coast.

People in potentially vulnerable areas, especially areas near the coast, should:

- **Review evacuation plans:** Residents living in vulnerable areas and those living in mobile homes that might be in a tropical storm's path must make plans now should an evacuation later become necessary. Become familiar with evacuation routes, which are marked with special signs. Options include: a hotel, motel, or friend's home that is outside the vulnerable area or an American Red Cross shelter. Hotels and motels fill up quickly and out-of-county evacuations take time. The earlier you leave as a hurricane approaches, the less time you will spend on the road.
- **Fuel cars, keep supplies in vehicles, secure important documents:** If the storm approaches South Carolina, individuals and families should fill up their cars with gas. Road maps, nonperishable snack foods, a first-aid kit that includes a supply of your family's prescription medications, and convenience items such as diapers should be available in the car. Secure important documents in waterproof packaging.
- **Obtain supplies to protect the home:** If residents are ordered to evacuate, there will be little time to protect their homes for the storm. Boarding supplies such as wood and shutters should be purchased in advance. Make plans to clear property of outdoor furniture and debris that would damage the home during a hurricane.
- **Make plans to move or store boats:** If you live near the coast, make plans now if you are going to have to relocate your boat. In the event of an approaching hurricane, the SC

Department of Transportation will shut down the operation of swing bridges and draw bridges when sustained winds reach 25 mph.

- **Consider the safety of pets:** Pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters. Individuals and families should plan to board pets with veterinarians, kennels, or other facilities in non-vulnerable areas. Identification and rabies tags should be attached to the pets' collars
- **Register for special medical care:** Residents with special medical needs who may require transportation or medical care should contact their local emergency management office if they have not already done so. Special medical needs shelters require advance registration.
- **Understand the difference between a Hurricane Watch and a Hurricane Warning:** A Hurricane Watch means a hurricane is possible within 36 hours. Stay tuned for additional advisories. A Hurricane Warning means a hurricane is expected within 24 hours. If you are advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Residents who live well inland of the storm surge zone and not in highly vulnerable areas may not have to evacuate if the storm approaches South Carolina, but they should prepare to shelter inside their homes. They should consider what they would do to protect their homes and what supplies they would need to last themselves and their families for three days after the storm makes landfall. Recommended supplies include: bottled water (one gallon per person per day), non-perishable canned foods, flashlights, a battery-powered radio and a clock, ice, paper goods and a first-aid kit. For safety reasons, residents are reminded not to use candles during power outages.

OPCON 4 Example News Releases

NEWS RELEASE: SCEMD Monitors Tropical Storm (Name); Citizens Should Review Plans

COLUMBIA, SC (Date, Time) – The South Carolina Emergency Management Division is paying close attention to Tropical Storm (Name), and as a result of the storm’s projected movement, key agencies in South Carolina government have been notified to be ready to respond if the need arises.

People in potentially vulnerable areas should review their plans and consider actions they would need to take if the storm threatens South Carolina directly. The public should monitor the storm on NOAA weather radio and through local news media, especially people in low-lying areas along the entire South Carolina coast.

SCEMD is monitoring Tropical Storm (Name) closely, and the Division has increased its state of operational readiness to Operating Condition (OPCON) 4. OPCON 4 is the second lowest of five operational conditions, and it provides for key state agencies to review plans and procedures. The State Emergency Operations Center was staffed (Day) from (Time) to (Time). Personnel representing key state response agencies were notified and are on call if they are needed.

People in potentially vulnerable areas, especially areas near the coast, should:

- **Review evacuation plans:** Residents living in vulnerable areas and those living in mobile homes that might be in a tropical storm’s path must make plans now should an evacuation later become necessary. Become familiar with evacuation routes, which are marked with special signs. Options include: a hotel, motel, or friend’s home that is outside the vulnerable area or an American Red Cross shelter. Hotels and motels fill up quickly and out-of-county evacuations take time. The earlier you leave as a hurricane approaches, the less time you will spend on the road.
- **Fuel cars, keep supplies in vehicles, secure important documents:** If the storm approaches South Carolina, individuals and families should fill up their cars with gas. Road maps, nonperishable snack foods, a first-aid kit that includes a supply of your family’s prescription medications, and convenience items such as diapers should be available in the car. Secure important documents in waterproof packaging.
- **Obtain supplies to protect the home:** If residents are ordered to evacuate, there will be little time to protect their homes for the storm. Boarding supplies such as wood and shutters should be purchased in advance. Make plans to clear property of outdoor furniture and debris that would damage the home during a hurricane.
- **Make plans to move or store boats.** If you live near the coast, make plans now if you are going to have to relocate your boat. In the event of an approaching hurricane, the SC Department of Transportation will shut down the operation of swing bridges and draw bridges when sustained winds reach 25 mph.

- **Consider the safety of pets:** Pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters. Individuals and families should plan to board pets with veterinarians, kennels, or other facilities in non-vulnerable areas. Identification and rabies tags should be attached to the pets' collars.
- **Register for special medical care:** Residents with special medical needs who may require transportation or medical care should contact their local emergency management office if they have not already done so. Special medical needs shelters require advance registration.
- **Understand the difference between a Hurricane Watch and a Hurricane Warning.** A Hurricane Watch means a hurricane is possible within 36 hours. Stay tuned for additional advisories. A Hurricane Warning means a hurricane is expected within 24 hours. If you are advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Residents who live well inland of the storm surge zone and not in highly vulnerable areas may not have to evacuate if the storm approaches South Carolina, but they should prepare to shelter inside their homes. They should consider what they would do to protect their homes and what supplies they would need to last themselves and their families for three days after the storm makes landfall. Recommended supplies include: bottled water (one gallon per person per day), non-perishable canned foods, flashlights, a battery-powered radio and a clock, ice, paper goods and a first-aid kit. For safety reasons, residents are reminded not to use candles during power outages.

NEWS RELEASE: With Hurricane (name) Approaching, Keep Fuel Topped Off In Vehicles COLUMBIA, SC (Date, Time) - With Hurricane (Name) posing a potential threat to South Carolina, the public is being urged to top off the fuel in their vehicles as a precautionary measure.

Should an evacuation become necessary, the public should have ample fuel in their cars to move to safety, particularly people in coastal areas subject to storm surge?

The public should monitor the storm on NOAA weather radio and through local news media, especially people in low-lying areas along the entire South Carolina coast. In addition to checking fuel in their vehicles, people should also prepare their homes, gather supplies and review their plans.

Forecasters currently show the storm on a track that could cause heavy rainfall on coastal areas of South Carolina.

As a precautionary measure in anticipation of possible effects on South Carolina from (Name), the state Emergency Management Division began 24-hour staffing of the State Emergency Operations Center with Emergency Management Division personnel today at (Time). Personnel representing key state response agencies were notified and are on call if they are needed to staff the SEOC at a full-scale level.

Currently, (Name) is expected to affect South Carolina beginning (Day).

If the National Hurricane Center issues a hurricane watch, a hurricane will be possible within 36 hours, and residents who live in vulnerable areas should stay tuned. If a hurricane warning is issued, a hurricane is expected within 24 hours. If you live in a vulnerable area and are advised to evacuate, be prepared to leave immediately. The state urges individuals and families to do the following:

- **Prepare to evacuate if ordered to do so:** Residents living in vulnerable areas and those living in mobile homes that are in the storm's path must plan their evacuation now. Become familiar with evacuation routes, which are marked with special signs. Options include: a hotel, motel, or friend's home that is outside the vulnerable area or an American Red Cross shelter. Hotels and motels fill up quickly and out-of county evacuations take time.
- **Fuel cars, keep supplies in vehicles, secure important documents:** If the storm approaches South Carolina, individuals and families should fill up their cars with gas. Road maps, nonperishable snack foods, a first-aid kit that includes a supply of your family's prescription medications, and convenience items such as diapers should be available in the car. Secure important documents in waterproof packaging.

OPCON 3 Example News Releases

NEWS RELEASE: Citizens Should Prepare For Possible Effects From Hurricane (Name)

COLUMBIA, SC (Date, Time) – People in coastal and flood-prone areas of South Carolina should pay close attention to Hurricane (Name).

The public should monitor the storm on NOAA weather radio and through local news media, especially people in low-lying areas along the entire South Carolina coast. Now is the time for people to prepare their homes, gather supplies, review their plans, and prepare for possible evacuation.

Forecasters currently show the storm on a track that could cause heavy rainfall on coastal areas of South Carolina.

As a precautionary measure in anticipation of possible effects on South Carolina from (Name), the State Emergency Management Division began 24-hour staffing of the State Emergency Operations Center with Emergency Management Division personnel today at (Time). Personnel representing key state response agencies were notified and are on call if they are needed to staff the SEOC at a full-scale level.

Currently, (Name) is expected to affect South Carolina beginning (Day).

If the National Hurricane Center issues a hurricane watch, a hurricane will be possible within 36 hours, and residents who live in vulnerable areas should stay tuned. If a hurricane warning is issued, a hurricane is expected within 24 hours. If you live in a highly vulnerable area and are advised to evacuate, you should be prepared to leave immediately. The state urges individuals and families to do the following:

- **Prepare to evacuate if ordered to do so:** Residents living in vulnerable areas and those living in mobile homes that are in the storm's path must plan their evacuation now. Become familiar with evacuation routes, which are marked with special signs. Options include: a hotel, motel, or friend's home that is outside the vulnerable area or an American Red Cross shelter. Hotels and motels fill up quickly and out-of county evacuations take time.
- **Fuel cars, keep supplies in vehicles, secure important documents:** If the storm approaches South Carolina, individuals and families should fill up their cars with gas. Road maps, nonperishable snack foods, a first-aid kit that includes a supply of your family's prescription medications, and convenience items such as diapers should be available in the car. Secure important documents in waterproof packaging.
- **Obtain supplies to protect the home:** If residents are ordered to evacuate, there will be little time to protect their homes for the storm. Boarding supplies such as wood and shutters should be purchased in advance. Make plans to clear property of outdoor furniture and debris that would damage the home during a hurricane.

- **Consider the safety of pets:** Pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters. Individuals and families should plan to board pets with veterinarians, kennels, or other facilities in non-vulnerable areas. Identification and rabies tags should be attached to the pets' collars.

Register for special medical care: Residents with special medical needs who may require transportation or medical care should contact their local emergency management office if they have not already done so. Special medical needs shelters require advance registration.

Residents who live well inland of the storm surge zone and not in vulnerable areas may not have to evacuate, and they should prepare to shelter inside their homes. They should protect their homes and gather supplies to last themselves and their families for three days after the storm makes landfall. Recommended supplies include: bottled water (one gallon per person per day), non-perishable canned foods, flashlights, a battery-powered radio and clock, ice, and paper goods. For safety reasons, residents are reminded not to use candles.

OPCON 1 Example News Releases

NEWS RELEASE: Preparations Being Made In Anticipation of Hurricane (Name)

COLUMBIA, SC (Date, Time) – In anticipation of possible effects on South Carolina from Hurricane (Name), the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, along with representatives from key state agencies and county officials, are preparing for Hurricane (Name) and monitoring the storm to see where it will eventually make landfall.

The South Carolina Emergency Operations Center (Time, Day), began operating in Operating Condition (OPCON) 1, the highest of five operational conditions. It provides for staffing of the Operations Center through storm landfall and into the response phase by state and volunteer agencies to deal with transportation, information and planning, mass care, resource support, health and medical services, food, and law enforcement.

Also recently:

- # SCEMD continues to maintain contact with the National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, FL and with FEMA.
- # SCEMD provided frequent briefings to Governor (Name) and members of his staff.
- # SCEMD was in close and continuing communication with coastal county emergency managers regarding preparatory storm activities.
- # On (Date/Time), the governor declared a State of Emergency in South Carolina, with particular attention to coastal areas of the state. He also asked for people in (Names) counties to voluntarily evacuate.
- # The Public Information Phone System (PIPS), a 24-hour evacuation and shelter information number, was opened on (Date/Time). The toll-free number for PIPS is (Number).
- # On (Date/Time), the governor ordered a mandatory evacuation for (Give Specifics) in response to the potential threat posed by Hurricane (Name).
- # As of (Date/Time), approximately (Number) vehicles and (Number) people had evacuated.
- # Approximately (Number) people are currently in authorized shelters.
- # Schools that are closed in counties throughout the state include those in (Names) counties.

With the path of Hurricane (Name) uncertain, the governor has urged citizens who have not evacuated (Names) counties, as well as those persons in other coastal counties, to make all necessary precautions to ensure their safety and secure and protect their property.

NEWS RELEASE: Hurricane Watch/Warning Issued For South Carolina Coast

COLUMBIA, SC (Date/Time) – In anticipation of possible effects on South Carolina from Hurricane (Name), the National Weather Service issued a hurricane watch today for part of the southeastern coast to include South Carolina.

A hurricane watch indicates that South Carolina is vulnerable to Hurricane (Name) and should take swift actions to safeguard residents and tourists. If individuals and families are not prepared for evacuation, secured their homes and purchased supplies for their families, they must act now.

- **Determine if you live in an evacuation zone.** During a hurricane warning individuals and families may be ordered to evacuate. Evacuation zones will be identified by local emergency managers and state officials via the news media. Individuals and families should keep in mind that out-of-county evacuations and evacuating far inland takes time. People planning to evacuate of their own accord should leave now, during the watch period.
- **Help a friend or relative in need of shelter.** Individuals and families who live far inland and outside of the storm surge evacuation zone have the opportunity to help friends and relatives by offering their home as safe shelter. The location of approved Red Cross shelters will be announced via the news media.
- **Residents who live far inland and outside the storm surge zone must prepare their homes.** Boarding supplies to protect the home must be purchased now. Residents with storm shutters should begin installing them. Supplies to last the family for three days should also be collected now. Those supplies include: bottled water, battery-powered radios, flashlights, canned foods, blankets, special medications and extra clothes.
- **Shelter and road closure information.** The state is providing toll-free, 24-hour telephone numbers for information on shelter locations and routes (1-800-Number for PIPS) and road closures (1-800-Number for DOT information).

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division is still currently operating in Operating Condition (OPCON) (Insert level), the (Rank) lowest of five operational conditions. It provides for staffing of the Operations Center by state and volunteer agencies to deal with transportation, information and planning, mass care, resource support, health and medical services, food, and law enforcement. Those areas include three that would be of immediate importance if Hurricane (Name) were on a track toward South Carolina: evacuation, traffic control, and sheltering.

Also today:

- SCEMD continues to maintain contact with the National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, FL and FEMA.
- More than (Number) SC National Guard members were transported from armories in the upstate to staging areas nearer to the coast today.
- SCEMD provided frequent briefings to Governor (Name) and members of his staff.
- SCEMD was in close and continuing communication with coastal county emergency managers regarding preparatory storm activities.

EAS MESSAGE: Voluntary Evacuation

South Carolina Governor (Name) is requesting that tourists, visitors, and residents along the entire South Carolina coast voluntarily leave in response to the potential threat posed by Hurricane (Name). This is a very dangerous storm that is capable of severe damage in South Carolina.

The governor is strongly recommending voluntary evacuation to safeguard human life on the South Carolina coast.

NEWS RELEASE: Governor (name) closes state offices in areas possibly affected by Hurricane (name)

Columbia, SC (Date, Time) – Governor (Name) will excuse employees from reporting to work on (Day of Week) in counties affected by extreme weather conditions expected from Hurricane (name).

The following counties' offices will be closed all day: (list counties)

The following offices will close at noon: (list counties)

The following offices will close at 3 p.m.: (list counties)

NEWS RELEASE: Governor Calls For Voluntary Evacuation

Columbia, SC (Date/Time) -- Governor (Name) on (Day) called for a voluntary evacuation of South Carolina's coast. The governor said coastal residents should secure their property and move inland.

(Name) said if the situation remains the same, he will call for a mandatory evacuation of South Carolina's coast (Day/Time).

Those on barrier islands, living in low-lying areas or along rivers and streams are especially vulnerable.

American Red Cross shelters will be open (Location) (Day) (Time).

There are (Number) state law enforcement officers and National Guard troops on duty to help with the evacuation. In addition, these officers will secure the property of residents who evacuate and will enforce the law in evacuation zones.

In inland counties, anyone living in mobile homes or vulnerable structures should consider relocating to more substantial locations.

NEWS RELEASE: Public Information Phone System Available

COLUMBIA, SC (Date/Time) – The Public Information Phone System was activated (Day/Time) after Governor (Name) requested a voluntary evacuation along (Specify areas) of South Carolina's coast.

The phone system provides people with evacuation routes and shelter information and will be operational 24 hours a day. The public can call (Number) to speak with an operator about evacuation routes and shelters that are available to coastal residents who have been asked to voluntarily evacuate.

American Red Cross shelters will be open by (Date/Time).

EAS MESSAGE: Mandatory Evacuation

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division is requesting activation of the Emergency Alert System at the direction of South Carolina Governor (Name). The Governor has ordered a mandatory evacuation of all persons located (Describe, as "on barrier islands; on beachfront property; near low-lying rivers, creeks, or streams; and in manufactured housing") in the following counties: (List Counties). Persons in inland counties near the projected path of Hurricane (Name) should take all precautions to ensure their protection from potential high winds. (Describe affected areas within counties by landmarks, when possible.)

Law enforcement personnel will be posted along evacuation routes to help people move as safely and quickly as possible.

The governor has ordered the mandatory evacuation in order to safeguard human life in the coastal counties of South Carolina.

NEWS RELEASE: Governor Orders Mandatory Evacuation

Columbia, SC (Date/Time) -- Governor (Name) on (Day/Time) ordered a mandatory evacuation of people in vulnerable areas along (Specify Area)

Those on barrier islands, living in low-lying areas or along rivers and streams are especially vulnerable.

American Red Cross shelters are open from (Specify Area).

There are (Number) state law enforcement officers and National Guard troops on duty to help with the evacuation. In addition, these officers will secure the property of residents who evacuate and enforce the law in evacuation zones.

In inland counties, anyone living in mobile homes or vulnerable structures should consider relocating.

EAS MESSAGE: Lanes Reversed On Parts of (Highway)

To speed the flow of traffic from coastal areas, all four lanes of (Highway) from (Exit/Location) at (Location) to (Highway) near (Location) are being used for westbound traffic only. Law enforcement personnel are routing all traffic from (Location) inland to (Location) on all four lanes of the (Highway/Interstate). Traffic is not being allowed to travel (Direction) toward (Location) on (Highway/Exit) toward the coast.

Law enforcement personnel are posted along evacuation routes to help people move as safely and quickly as possible.

NEWS RELEASE: Highway Patrol prepares interstate for one-way traffic

Columbia, SC (Date/Time) – In response to an order from Governor (Name), the state Highway Patrol is routing (Number) miles of (Highway) for westbound traffic only.

The patrol is preparing to close eastbound lanes of (Highway) from (Exit/Intersection) at (Location) to (Exit/Intersection) in (Location). The affected portion of the road in (Names) counties will be open to westbound traffic only.

Motorists should not begin to cross into the eastbound lanes until law enforcement officers have secured the route.

NEWS RELEASE: Highway Patrol issues traffic warning.

Columbia, SC (Date/Time) – In response to an order from Governor (Name), the state Highway Patrol and local law enforcement have activated the state hurricane evacuation road network. Expect heavy westbound traffic from coastal areas.

To facilitate evacuation traffic flow, the Highway Patrol is requesting motorists limit travel from points west of Columbia into Columbia and to any points along established hurricane evacuation routes east of Columbia.

NEWS RELEASE: Filling Stations Urged To Remain Open during Evacuation

COLUMBIA, SC (Date, Time) - Filling stations located along hurricane evacuation routes and out of mandatory evacuation areas are being urged to remain open during the evacuation from coastal areas in anticipation of Hurricane (name).

Governor (name) has ordered people to leave vulnerable areas along South Carolina's coast beginning at (time / day). Owners and managers are asked to keep filling stations open along evacuation routes throughout the evacuation process so that motorists will be able to leave vulnerable areas without delay. Stations within mandatory evacuation areas must close to allow employees to move inland to safety.

OPCON 1 – Reentry Example News Releases

NEWS RELEASE: Governor Lifts Mandatory Evacuation Order; Reentry Begins

COLUMBIA, SC (Date/Time) – Governor (Name) lifted the mandatory evacuation order for (Names) counties, allowing residents and visitors to return to the counties at the discretion of their local and county officials.

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division, along with representatives from FEMA and local officials, began assessing damage in coastal counties from (Location) to the (Location). Also recently:

- ❑ SCEMD provided frequent briefings to Governor (Name) and members of his staff.
- ❑ SCEMD was in close and continuing communication with coastal county emergency managers regarding response and recovery activities.
- ❑ (Number) of people are without power in South Carolina. Power companies are currently working to restore power to those people affected by the hurricane.
- ❑ Currently, South Carolina is under no hurricane watches or warnings of any kind.
- ❑ All Red Cross Shelters were closed at (Time). The shelters housed (Number) people and provided (Number) meals.

Schools that are closed in counties throughout the state include: (List closings)

NEWS RELEASE: Exercise Precautions When Returning Home

COLUMBIA, SC (Date, Time) – Governor (Name) rescinded his mandatory evacuation order for coastal areas of South Carolina (Day/Time), clearing the way for local governments to determine when it is safe for residents to return home. Residents should keep the following precautions in mind.

Do not return home until local authorities say it is okay to do so. The health and safety of you and your family should be your first concern after a disaster.

- ❑ Be on the lookout for new hazards created by the hurricane, such as washed out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated water, gas leaks, broken glass, downed power lines or damaged wiring, and slippery floors.

- ❑ Be aware of exhaustion. Resist the tendency to do too much at once. Set your priorities and pace yourself. Create a manageable schedule.
- ❑ Watch for signs of stress and fatigue. Talk about the situation with others to release tensions. Encourage others to talk about their concerns. Get professional crisis counseling if necessary.
- ❑ Encourage children to talk about their feelings. Explain how you plan to deal with the situation. Involve them in cleanup activities. Being part of the recovery process will help them cope. Keep the family together.
- ❑ Drink plenty of clean water. Try to eat well and get enough rest.
- ❑ Wear sturdy work boots and gloves, and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water often when working in debris.
- ❑ Inform local authorities about health and safety hazards, including downed power lines, washed out roads, smoldering insulation or dead animals.

When returning to a damaged home:

- ❑ Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates.
- ❑ Wear sturdy work boots and gloves.
- ❑ Before going inside, walk carefully around the outside of your home and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. Do not enter if flood water remains around the building. If you have doubts about safety, have your home inspected by a professional before entering.
- ❑ Use a battery-powered flashlight for light. **DO NOT** use oil, gas lanterns, candles or torches. Leaking gas or other flammable materials may be present. Do not smoke. Do not turn on the lights until you're sure they're safe to use.
- ❑ Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- ❑ Enter the building carefully and check for damage. Check for cracks in the roof, foundation and chimneys. Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors. If it looks like the building may collapse, leave immediately.
- ❑ Check for gas leaks, starting at the hot water heater. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside, if you can. Call the gas company from a neighbor's house. If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve, you will need a professional to turn it back on.
- ❑ Check the electrical system. If you see sparks, broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker if you are not wet and can do so without standing in water. If you have any doubts about your ability to turn off the electricity safely, leave the house and call a professional.
- ❑ Check appliances. If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Then unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have appliances checked by a professional before using them again.
- ❑ Check the water and sewage systems. If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve.
- ❑ Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, and gasoline. Open cabinets carefully. Be aware of objects that may fall.
- ❑ Look for valuable items, such as jewelry and family heirlooms, and protect them.
- ❑ Try to protect your home from further damage. Open windows and doors to get air moving through. Patch holes.

- ❑ Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. The mud left behind by floodwaters can contain sewage and chemicals.
- ❑ Check with local authorities before using any water; it could be contaminated. Wells should be pumped out and the water tested by authorities before drinking.
- ❑ Throw out fresh food that has come into contact with flood waters. Check refrigerated food for spoilage. Throw out flooded cosmetics and medicines.
- ❑ Call your insurance agent. Take pictures of damages. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.
- ❑ Tune to local radio and television stations and read local newspapers for information regarding financial assistance, emergency housing, food, first aid, and clothing.