

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Says Preparations for 2020 Hurricane Season Continues Even as Covid-19 Presents Challenge

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The 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins today, and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is encouraging its employees and customers to act now and be prepared for any potential storm activity which may threaten the territory over the next six months.

“We have already seen two named storm systems even before the official start of the season, so clearly the hurricane season is off to an early start,” said Executive Director / CEO Lawrence J. Kupfer. This year, preparations for the hurricane season are made more challenging with the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Planning for the hurricane season may be different this year because of the need to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Today, I reassure our community that WAPA is prepared and ready to respond to any windstorm event that may adversely affect our power production plants, electric grids or water production and distribution systems. Hurricane season preparation is a year-round effort for WAPA,” he added.

WAPA said each year since the 2017 hurricanes, it takes the lessons learned and fine-tune its approach to emergency storm response, safety, overall preparedness and recovery response. “The internal measures we have implemented assure better coordination with local and federal partners prior to and after a storm event. Additionally, we have strengthened financial accountability while continuing to expand the means by which WAPA updates the public through mainstream media and social media platforms,” Mr. Kupfer said.

Before a Storm: Stay aware and check the weather forecast before heading outdoors. Check your emergency kit, unplug major appliances, and charge cell phones in case you lose power.

During a Storm: Take shelter inside a sturdy building away from windows and doors. Avoid contact with conductors of electricity such as appliances, metal objects, and water.

After a Storm: Never touch any downed or low-hanging wires, including telephone or TV wires as they might be touching a power line. Never pull tree limbs off power lines or enter areas with debris or downed trees as downed power lines may be buried in wreckage. Do not cut downed utility poles or lines.

“WAPA encourages our community members to get an early start, make your preparations now, and be ready should a storm system threaten our islands,” Mr. Kupfer said.

The authority also encouraged residents to sign up for WAPA Alerts at www.viwapa.com