

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Hurricane Season Starts Today; Red Cross Urging Residents To Be Prepared

Caribbean / **Published On June 01, 2016 11:58 AM /**

Staff **June 01, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- The 2016 Hurricane Season begins in earnest today, and runs until November 30. In light of what is predicted to be a near-average six months, the territory's arm of the American Red Cross is urging residents to be prepared and take precautionary measures for safety.

"This year we decided to turn the tables around and ask the people if they really feel prepared," said Lee Vanessa Feliciano, regional executive director of the American Red Cross Caribbean Region in a press release issued Tuesday. "[Through] this introspection, families can make some time to meet and together come up with a family preparedness plan."

Some important decisions that the American Red Cross encourages families to make include knowing where to meet in case of separation, and deciding for how many days residents should prepare emergency preparedness kits.

To help families to better prepare for disasters, Red Cross volunteers and staff will be present to disseminate information to the public in the following locations in St. Croix and St. Thomas:

St. Croix: Plaza Extra West and Sunny Isle Shopping Center from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. today,

St. Thomas: Plaza Extra Supermarket from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. today.

St. Croix: Saturday, June 4: Housing Expo 2016 at Sunshine Mall from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

People can learn more about hurricane preparedness [here](#). Red Cross also encouraged residents to download their free app, which enables the selection of up to 35 different severe weather and emergency alerts.

Meteorologists stationed at Colorado State University [in April](#) issued the results of their research into the 2016 Atlantic hurricane season, predicting 12 named storms, five of which will form into hurricanes.

That prediction classifies as near-average based on weather records dating to 1950, which shows a typical year consisting of 0 to 12 tropical storms, of which seven turn into hurricanes. A tropical storm contains sustained winds of 39 mph. It becomes a hurricane when winds reach 74 mph. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, though storms sometimes form outside those dates.

Meteorologists Philip Klotzbach and William Gray of Colorado State University's Tropical Meteorology Project released the forecast on Wednesday. The organization was the first to issue seasonal hurricane forecasts back in 1984. Wednesday's forecast — which covers the Atlantic basin (Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico) — is the team's 33rd forecast.

Of the five predicted hurricanes, two should be major hurricanes — category 3, 4 or 5 — with sustained wind speeds of 111 mph or greater, said Mr. Klotzbach.

Insurance companies, emergency managers and the media use the forecasts to prepare the U.S and its territories, as well as Caribbean countries for the year's hurricane threat. The team's annual predictions provide a best estimate of activity during the upcoming season, not an exact measure, according to Colorado State.

Last year, the team predicted seven named storms, with three becoming hurricanes. The season ended with 11 named storms, of which four were hurricanes.

For more information about disaster preparedness or about the American Red Cross of the Virgin Islands, call 774-0375 (St. Thomas office) or 778-5104 (St. Croix office).