



**American  
Red Cross**

of Lee County

Lee County Chapter  
6310 Techster Blvd Suite 7  
Fort Myers, FL 33966  
Arclcc.org



**Contact:** Colin Downey  
239-841-9633  
pr@arclcc.org

## **As Red Cross preps for hurricane season, so should you** *Follow three simple steps: Get a Kit, Make a Plan, Be Informed*

**FORT MYERS, May 29** – The American Red Cross of Lee County is preparing for the 2009 hurricane season and urges all Lee County residents to prepare as well. The season officially begins Monday and runs through the end of November.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the 2009 season will be near normal with four to seven hurricanes likely. Predictions call for nine to 14 named storms and 1 to 3 major hurricanes with winds of 111 mph or higher.

“The time to get ready is now,” said Heidi Ruster, Executive Director of the Lee County Red Cross. “Go over your plan and make sure it is still current. Get out your kit and see if anything needs to be replaced.” Some steps you can take to be prepared include:

**Build a disaster supplies kit** or check the kit you got ready last year. Include a three-day supply of water and ready-to-eat non-perishable foods such as tuna fish, peanut butter, crackers, canned fruit, juice boxes, etc. Don’t forget a manual can opener, battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries. Your kit should also have a first aid kit, prescription and non-prescription medications, and copies of important documents.

**Prepare a personal disaster and evacuation plan.** Identify two meeting places, one near your home, and one outside your area in case you can’t return home. Make plans for your pets. Select an out-of-area emergency contact person.

**Be informed.** Know what a hurricane WATCH means. If a hurricane WATCH is issued, listen to weather updates from your battery-powered or hand-cranked radio. Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, hanging plants, bicycles, toys and garden tools, anchor objects that cannot be brought inside. Close all windows and doors. Cover windows with storm shutters or pre-cut plywood. If time permits, and you live in an identified surge zone, elevate furniture or move it to a higher floor to protect it from flooding. Fill your vehicle’s gas tank. Check your disaster supplies kit to make sure items have not expired.

If a hurricane **WARNING** is issued, listen to the advice of local officials, and leave if they tell you to do so. Secure your home by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity and the main water valve. If you are not advised to evacuate, stay inside, away from windows, skylights and glass doors. Do NOT use open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light. If power is lost, turn off appliances to reduce damage from a power surge when electricity is restored.

**Visit [arclcc.org](http://arclcc.org) and [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) for detailed disaster preparation advice and tips.**

*The Red Cross is dedicated to helping make families and communities safer at home and around the world. It provides training in life-saving skills and mobilizes relief to victims of disasters in addition to assisting members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. For additional information about the Red Cross and the assistance it provides, making donations, registering for a class or volunteering, call 278-3401, or log on to [arclcc.org](http://arclcc.org). The American Red Cross of Lee County is a proud member of the United Way of Lee County.*