



SENATE
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Prepared for:
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Junior Minister of Health, Transport and National Security

Hurricane Preparedness

May 26th, 2021

Madam President, I rise this morning to remind this Honourable House that we are about to enter Hurricane Season which runs from June 1st until November 30th.

Madam President, based on records of the last 30 years the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Hurricane Centre (NHC) has raised the numbers on what is considered an average season. The numbers have risen from a yearly average of 12 named storms to 14 named storms; and from 6 hurricanes to 7 hurricanes. The average for major hurricanes, classified as a category 3 or above, remains the same at 3.

Madam President, the 2020 season saw a record breaking season with 30 named tropical storms, 13 hurricanes, and 6 major hurricanes. Bermuda saw Hurricane Paulette strike overnight on the 13th and 14th of September, and Hurricane Teddy strike overnight one week later on the 20th and 21st of September.

Madam President, with this said, the early predictions for the 2021 are that the season will be even more active than the new higher averages. Colorado State University, which is recognized as the world's leader in predictions, have indicated that the early season forecast is 17 named storms, 8 hurricanes, and 4 major hurricanes. NOAA, NHC issued their predictions for the 2021 season yesterday. The first Tropical Storm of the 2021 season was announced on May 10th, for the Pacific Coast. Due to climate change the NHC started its forecast two weeks earlier this year, on May 15th.

Madam President, each year the Government begins its preparations for Hurricane Season in advance of the start of the season. In preparation for the 2021 season the Emergency Broadcast Facility, 100.1fm, has now been fully relocated to the new Government Tower at Prospect and is broadcasting every day at reduced power. Power will be increased if needed. Honourable Members may recall that the station was used last December during the island wide power outage. The public is encouraged to familiarise themselves with the station by tuning in from time to time when they are driving.

Madam President, Hurricane Preparedness Week, is traditionally held during the first week in June and will run this year from Monday, May 31st, until Friday, June 4th. During Hurricane Preparedness Week the Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Team (DRRM) will coordinate a number of exercises to re-familiarise staff and train new staff with the Emergency Measures Organisation Operations Centre located at the Hamilton Fire Station. The week will also be used to test the equipment and conduct staff training for the Emergency Broadcast Facility (EBF). The EBF will test its connections with the Bermuda Weather Service and the Government Facebook Live link.

Additionally, **Madam President**, the EBF will go live each day during lunch time, for 30 minutes with guest speakers for the daily preparedness themes, which are:

1. Monday – Personal Safety
2. Tuesday – Family Safety
3. Wednesday – Financial Security
4. Thursday – Strengthen Your Home
5. Friday – Community and Neighbours

Madam President, during this week the EMO will meet on Wednesday, June 2nd, to ensure planning from each organisation is underway for the 2021 season.

Madam President, we all understand that it only takes one hurricane to make 2021 an active season for Bermuda, and I urge all residents to be prepared.

- Now is the time to prepare and repair your house for hurricane season.
- Now is the time to look at your family plans and update them with any changes to phone numbers and other important information.
- Now is the time to take stock of all medical prescriptions that your family and pets require and ensure you have at least two weeks supply on hand.
- Now is the time to check your hurricane kit to make sure you have working flashlights, a portable radio with spare batteries and a stock of non-perishable food to last your family for seven days.

- Now is the time to ensure your house insurance policy is up to date.
- Now is the time to visit your vulnerable neighbours and ask them if they need any help with their preparations, keeping COVID-19 safety precautions in mind.

Madam President, several years ago, the Department of Communications released their smart phone application called ‘Tree Frog’. This app will alert all users to news and alerts posted by the Bermuda Government and includes any alerts posted by the Emergency Measures Organisation that the public needs to be urgently aware of. I urge all in this Honorable House and all of Bermuda’s residents to sign up for this app, which is free, to ensure that you receive all emergency alerts.

Madam President, the DRRM Team will hold a further EMO meeting for all EMO agencies in late August, to update the country on the last hurricane season forecast for 2021, which will be published at the beginning of August.

Madam President, each year during hurricane season Bermuda has an opportunity to demonstrate its strength and resilience. I am confident that with proper preparation, this year will be no different and we will safely weather any storms that may test our shores. The DRRM Team and the Ministry of National Security will continue its work to ensure that we are well prepared.

Thank you, **Madam President.**