

Preparing for a hurricane

June 1 signals the start of the Central Pacific hurricane season and is an important reminder that it's time to make emergency plans.

To help you prepare, the Hawaii State Civil Defense provides a template for creating a family emergency plan, recommendations for a disaster preparedness kit, and an updated list of hurricane shelters, including those designated for people with special needs and for people with pets. Refer to www.scd.state.hi.us or call **733-4300**.

The National Weather Service (NWS) will issue statements on approaching hurricanes, giving you enough time to respond. A *hurricane watch* will be issued when hurricane conditions of high wind and storm surge are expected within 48 hours. A *hurricane warning* will be issued when hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hours.

NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) broadcasts official weather watches, warnings, and forecasts, as well as other public safety hazards, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. NWR requires

a special radio receiver capable of picking up the signal, broadcast on specific VHF radio frequencies. The radios can be purchased at electronics, hardware, and marine stores.



Some radios have special features, including: automatic activation, sounding an alarm, and turning on an external strobe light before an incoming alert. If selecting a radio with special features, look for one that bears the Public Alert logo. For details refer to www.weather.gov/hawaii or call **532-6411**.

The state Emergency Alert System

will broadcast the severe weather alerts issued by the NWS on local television and radio stations. Additionally, detailed safety information will be provided by state and county offices.

As your electric utility, we also will provide safety information to local media, including power restoration updates should there be a major power outage.

To prepare for power fluctuations or outages caused by a hurricane, we offer the following safety precautions:

- If you are dependent on electrically powered life-sustaining medical equipment, check backup facilities. If you need to go to a hospital or other emergency shelter, take your medical equipment and medications with you to the facility.
- Unplug unnecessary and sensitive electric equipment. If the power goes out, do not plug in the equipment until power has been restored and remains on steadily.
- Protect sensitive electric appliances that remain plugged in by using high-quality surge suppressors.
- If you need to evacuate to safer shelter, shut off the power supply to your home at the main breaker or switch, usually located by the electric meter or in the circuit breaker panel.
- If the storm knocks down a power line, stay at least 30 feet away from it. To report a fallen line or a power outage, call us at **548-7961**.

For detailed information refer to our *Handbook for Emergency Preparedness*, available on our website, www.heco.com, at our customer service offices, or by calling **543-7511**.

Bill payment help for low-income households

During June the state's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will be accepting applications from individuals with household incomes and assets below a certain level who want to apply for a one-time credit on their electric bill to help pay for heating or cooling their home.

To apply you must present: 1) your most recent, original electric bill (no copies), 2) proof you occupy the service address on the bill, and

3) proof of gross annual income and assets to one of the following Honolulu Community Action Program (HCAP) offices during the period **June 1 to June 30**. HCAP will determine whether you qualify.

- HCAP Central..... 488-6834
- HCAP Kalihi/Palama 847-0804
- HCAP Leahi 732-7755
- HCAP Leeward 696-4261
- HCAP Windward..... 239-5754

