Hurricane and Storm Preparedness

 Living in North Carolina we can all expect at some point and time to face a storm related event such as a hurricane, tornado, severe thunderstorms, and even the occasional snow and ice storm. Since we are currently in the Atlantic hurricane season that runs from June 1 to November 30, with the peak occurring between mid-August and late October, we will be focusing primarily on hurricane preparedness. In this article we will be sharing tips on basic hurricane preparedness, what to do as a hurricane approaches, and what to do after a hurricane.

 To keep yourself hurricane ready you should always have a plan on where you will go in the event you should be advised, or required to evacuate your home. Having a preplanned evacuation route established ahead of time can help you with getting to a safe location early. Once people start moving inland and away from the coast traffic will be heavy and roads congested, often making evacuation a lengthy process. Have yourself a go-bag ready that will contain your medications, a source of communication, some basic supplies, and any valuable documents you may need later. If sheltering in place be sure you have enough supplies to get through several days without power. Have a plan for your pets should you need to evacuate to a shelter as some shelters are not pet friendly. Make sure you let someone else know where you are going should you decide to leave your home.

 Check around your home to locate and secure any loose items that can be blown around and possibly damage your home or injure someone. Know if your neighborhood or home is prone to flooding, even if you just get high water in your yard you may not be able to evacuate if necessary. Prepare and make a plan on what you will do if water gets high around or in your home, particularly with extremely valuable items. Put your vehicles on high ground or move them to another safe location. Be prepared for power outages in your area that may last for several days, particularly if you have special medical needs. Having a generator is a great idea and comes in handy when the power is out. Be sure to check your generator several times throughout the year to keep it in good working order and ready to use. Keep trees trimmed around your property, particularly trees that are leaning or hanging over your home or power lines. Document your home and property before and after the hurricane through photographs and video.

 After a hurricane passes keep yourself informed about local conditions and pay attention to what officials are advising or directing you to do. Your neighborhood may be temporarily closed due to high water, trees blocking the roadway, and downed power lines. Have a plan on what you will do if you cannot return to your home right away. Stay out of flood waters as they may contain harmful bacteria, debris, animals, or downed power lines. Walking in flood waters may endanger your life. If you have evacuated then return to your home only after it is safe to do so and flood waters have dissipated. Let someone know when you have returned home so that you can be easily located if necessary.