



Life is tough, but it's tougher if you don't prepare

I was chairing a decision-making board a number of years ago where I felt I was really not prepared to make a decision. In other words, I had not done my homework!

It was clear to most folks in the meeting that things were not going well. A friend, who was a great creator of cartoons, was busily sketching away on a transparency. When he finished, he walked to the front of the room and put it on the viewgraph machine. It was a great caricature of John Wayne stating the obvious: "Life is tough, but it is tougher if you are stupid!"

That has remained with me for all these years to remind me to always prepare for difficult meetings, difficult tasks and potential natural disasters. Regardless of the endeavor, preparation is the key to success or, in some cases, survival.

Just remember: Life is tough but tougher if you do not prepare, and to not prepare is "stupid." So sayeth John Wayne.

GUEST COLUMN

By Bob Gaffney, JSC Emergency Preparedness Manager



Johnson Space Center is part of a coastal community, and that means that employees need to be prepared for a major hurricane. Are you? With a little planning and common sense, you can be better prepared for the unexpected.

Some of the things you can do to prepare, such as making a family emergency plan, assembling a supply kit and staying informed, are the same for most emergencies. The most critical part of your plan should be to prepare to evacuate in advance, decide when to leave (before highway congestion blocks your route) and then stick to your plan, even if the storm eventually makes landfall somewhere else.

Possibly the most unexpected aspect of hurricane planning is the return to your community. When you decide to protect yourself and your loved ones by evacuating to a safe area, take time to relax at your destination and get plenty of rest. Monitor news broadcasts for weather bulletins for your community, but don't consider returning immediately after the storm passes beyond the Houston/Galveston area. Public health and municipal officials may need additional time to restore services for the return of citizens to the community.

Take an emergency supply kit with you, but remember that you probably won't need it at your destination. Rather, you may need it when you return to your own community. Your roads back may be blocked by fallen trees, power lines or other debris, and utility service may not be available depending on how much damage the surge, flooding and high winds did throughout the region.

Local law enforcement and the Texas Department of Public Safety will establish roadblocks to prevent entry into unsafe areas until public safety, health and emergency management officials declare that the community is safe – that the roads are clear, there is a sufficient supply of uncontaminated water and food, and local government is operating. This is for your protection and for the protection of the entire region.

Finally, before deciding to return home, consider whether you or your family can live in the challenging conditions that frequently follow the impact of a severe weather event such as a hurricane, devastating flood or tornado. After Hurricane Alicia 20 years ago, some areas of Clear Lake had no electricity for more than a week. Some roads were impassable for many days because floodwaters receded slowly.

Planning for emergencies isn't difficult or time-consuming, but it can enhance your survival opportunities during and after a disaster. Make a plan and an emergency supply kit and stay informed. Emergency planning information is available from your community's emergency management, fire or police department or from the ready.gov Web site at <http://www.ready.gov/>.

Please note the following hurricane-survival tips. For more details, including local emergency phone listings and what to include in emergency supply kits, **see pages 4 and 5.**

During the storm

When a hurricane watch is issued, continue normal activities and stay tuned to radio and television for further weather advisories. Also, check your supplies and restock the necessary items as needed, and take the below steps to ensure that you will be prepared if the weather worsens.

When a Hurricane Watch is issued for your area:

- * Monitor official bulletins on radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio
- * Fuel car(s)
- * Check mobile home tie-downs
- * Moor small craft or move to safe shelter
- * Stock up on canned provisions
- * Check supplies of special medicines
- * Check batteries for radios and flashlights
- * Secure lawn furniture and other loose material outdoors
- * Tape, board or shutter windows to prevent shattering
- * Wedge sliding glass doors to prevent their lifting from their tracks

When a Hurricane Warning is issued for your area:

- * Stayed turned to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins
- * Board up garage and porch doors
- * Move valuables to upper floors
- * Bring in pets
- * Fill containers (including bathtubs) with several days' supply of drinking water
- * Turn up refrigerator to coldest setting and don't open unless necessary
- * Use phone only for emergencies
- * Stay indoors on the downwind side of house, away from windows
- * Beware of the eye of the hurricane
- * Leave mobile homes
- * Leave areas that might be affected by storm surge or stream flooding
- * Leave early, in daylight if possible
- * Shut off water and electricity at main stations
- * Take small valuables and papers, but otherwise travel light
- * Make arrangements for pets
- * Lock up house
- * Drive carefully to nearest designated shelter using recommended evacuation routes

After the All-Clear is given:

- * Monitor media broadcasts from public officials to decide when to return to your community. Public safety and health officials must assess damage in local communities and determine when residents can return
- * Drive carefully; watch for dangling electrical wires, undermined roads and flooded low spots
- * Report broken or damaged water, sewer and electrical lines
- * Use caution re-entering home
- * Check for gas leaks
- * Check food and water for spoilage

Corrections

There are two corrections to last month's article entitled "Soyuz at a glance."

1. While Expedition 6 Commander Ken Bowersox and NASA ISS Science Officer Don Pettit are the first American Astronauts to land in a Soyuz spacecraft, Dennis Tito was actually the first American to do so.

2. While the components of the newer Soyuz TMA can stay in space for up to one year, the spacecraft itself will continue to be replaced around every six months, as was the Soyuz TM. The *Roundup* regrets these inaccuracies.