

As most have heard, there is a significant Hurricane to the south of us. While it is too soon to know if it will affect us, I wanted to put out a bit of information on preparedness. Excellent information can be found at: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes> or the Red Cross site, <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/hurricane#About> . In addition, I want to pass along some local information and personal tips.

Official messages will be put on the Town's web site: [www.town.ledyard.ct.us/](http://www.town.ledyard.ct.us/), Everbridge notification system and the Town Face Book page: <https://www.facebook.com/LedyardNews/> . Messages are also distributed via radio and TV. When power and communication services are affected by a storm, a hardcopy of the notice or update will be posted at Town Hall, Gales Ferry Library, both fire houses, Gales Ferry School and Gallup Hill School. This sheet, updated daily will have information on what services are available and other helpful information.

Put together a personalized plan and evacuation kit for your family, remembering to include all pet needs (all shelters take household pets) including leash, food, medication, bowls, carrier or crate. Having a picture of your animal is helpful for identifying your pet if your pet is lost or escapes. Service animals are allowed in the shelter proper, companion animals are kept in a separate location within the shelter building over seen by animal control and volunteers. You are expected to assist in the care and feeding of your pet(s).

Ledyard takes part in a Regional shelter plan with the multiple area towns. Shelters are very manpower intensive to operate, historically have seen limited usage and there are not enough volunteers to open shelters in all towns. For Ledyard, the designated regional shelter locations are: Groton Senior Center 102 Newtown Rd, Groton, CT, Fitch Senior High School 101 Groton Long Point Rd, Groton, CT and 176 S. Broad St, Pawcatuck, CT (RT1). The location opening will be publicly announced, generally prior to a hurricane. Location openings are based on a matrix of needed capacity, expected landfall location and estimated need. Ledyard High School at 24 Gallup Hill Rd, Ledyard, CT is an alternate location and would be the designated site if a Ledyard shelter is opened.

Obviously, evacuation orders are very seriously considered before being implemented. Your plan needs to include where you will go if evacuation orders are issued or if you want to leave your home for the storm. Consider going to family or friends in an unaffected area, mini vacation out of the area, or to a shelter. Determine what is best for your family and situation. Shelters are there to keep your family safe and alive. They include cots, blankets and folding chairs in a large room. When making your plan, be realistic about your medical/ physical needs and your capabilities and plan according.

If Ledyard receives widespread damage, we call for support from the state. This could come in the form of heavy equipment or food and water. Depending on the scope of the issues, distribution point(s) would be set up at a location(s) to be announced. Pre-planned locations are the Gales Ferry/Middle School Complex and Town Hall/Ledyard Center School. It generally takes 72 hours to get these locations operational. Location(s) will depend on accessibility and extent of need. A formalized assembly line for distribution or a pallet of water and a pallet of the civilian version of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) in

multiple locations (where the notices are posted), operating on the honor system, to take one of each per family may be in place.

Now a few personal thoughts. If Ledyard is ever faced with a significant event with widespread destruction, we need to come together as an extended family. While we enjoy a very dedicated group of primarily volunteers that staff our fire and EMS services, and capable police and public works employees, their collective abilities are limited and a major storm will take significant time to get us back to normal. Neighbors will need to work together to help one another whenever possible. Faith and social groups would be called on for assistance as well. We will all need to work together to bring our community back to normal as quickly as possible.

I prepare for a storm so that if it does or does not come, my preparations do not come at high financial cost. I check my emergency equipment to assure all operates properly and all is in its place. My family starts planning meals to first consume perishables if the power is lost. Put away lawn / patio furniture and any loose yard items- these items can become projectiles in high winds endangering people and structures. We pick up bottled water and canned foods /pasta that can be heated on the grill or campfire. If the storm track looks like it has an eye on us, we buy spare fuel and get cash in various denominations (stores may be open post-storm, but unable to use credit due to communication/power failures).

If the storm comes, we are prepared. If it does not, we know we have checked our equipment, frozen food gets rotated out, we can skip the next "can-can" sale, and the yard looks nice!

Russell Shaw

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