

Hurricane Season Returns, Long Island Urged to Prepare

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Atlantic Hurricane Season dawned on the East Coast Saturday, seven months after Sandy ravaged Long Island, prompting officials to urge residents to prepare for the possibility of another devastating tropical cyclone strike.

A new survey by the American Red Cross and The Weather Channel found that only 49 percent of New York and New Jersey coastal residents are preparing for another hurricane despite their experiences with Sandy. About half of these residents have an evacuation plan and one in three lack a so-called "Go Kit" in case of another evacuation.

"Hurricane Sandy and Irene should erase any doubt that Long Island is not vulnerable to coastal storms, and it's time for people here to get ready now for the 2013 hurricane season," John Miller, chief executive officer of the Long Island Red Cross, told reporters Friday at Farmingdale State College, which serves as one of LI's evacuation shelters.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center forecasts this season will be active or extremely active. There's a 70-percent likelihood this season of 13 to 20 named storms—those with sustained winds of at least 39 mph. Seven to 11 of those may become Category 1 hurricanes with winds upward of 74 mph, including 3 to 6 major hurricanes, defined as at least a Category 3 with winds over 111 mph, according to NOAA.



A satellite image of Sandy (NOAA)

Superstorm Sandy, a massive hurricane-nor'easter hybrid, struck LI on Oct. 28, just before the end of hurricane season ends in November. The season peaks in late August and early September—like when Irene struck just before Labor Day weekend in 2011.

Steps that Long Islanders can take include creating a family evacuation plan, getting needed supplies and medications, and downloading the Red Cross hurricane app that maps shelter locations, according to Miller.

One in five households have a member with a health issue or disability, but a quarter of those households are not confident they have planned to meet these medical needs in an emergency, the Red Cross-Weather Channel study found.

Nassau County officials urged residents to proactively pack Go-Kits, which should be kept by front doors in a bag and include enough supplies for everyone in the household for five days.

To learn additional hurricane preparedness information, visit the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management website or the Red Cross website.