TO: University of Hawaii at Hilo Campus
FROM: Dr. Debra L. Fitzsimons, Vice Chancellor of Administrative Affairs
DATE: June 15, 2009
SUBJECT: Preparing for Hurricane Season on the Big Island

Aloha! For those of you at UHH who are either newcomers to Hawaii or have lived here for many years, this memo provides some important reminders and information for preparing for Hurricane Season on the Big Island of Hawaii. Hurricane season in Hawaii runs from June to the end of November every year. All Hawaiian Islands are at risk for hurricanes and their effects. Besides high winds and heavy rains, hurricanes can also cause flooding, high waves, and storm surge.

We are asking that you take a moment and familiarize yourself with the information being provided in this memo. Everyone is asked to be prepared for a hurricane and should take personal responsibility for themselves and their families. The information provided is helpful for preparing your family and household for a hurricane, but also provides relevant instructions for responding to a hurricane at UHH.

Hurricane information is available on the web from the Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC – http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/cphc/). Being prepared means knowing what to do before an emergency happens and having a plan and supplies in place.

Emergency Information is available at our UHH Emergency Preparedness Information website at:


Additional information on our website includes links to the UHH Emergency Operations Plan which outlines UHH response and operations during a wide variety of emergency situations, provides sign up information for the UH Alert System to receive emergency text messages and emails, and outlines emergency kit suggestions from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Note: Beginning this year, the Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) has increased the lead time for hurricane/tropical storm watches from 36 to 48 hours and hurricane/tropical storm warnings from 24 to 36 hours. Watches and warnings are
prepared for the Hawaiian Islands by the National Weather Service Central Pacific Hurricane Center in Honolulu (CPHC). When watches and warnings are issued, people should closely monitor radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins of the storm's progress and instructions from civil defense authorities. Links to the Hawaii County Civil Defense website are provided on our UHH Emergency Preparedness Information website. We also have provided links to television and radio stations. The definitions for a hurricane/tropical storm watch and a warning described below.

**HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM WATCH:** Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are possible within the Watch area within 48 hours. During a Watch, prepare your home and business and review your plan for possible evacuation in case a Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning is issued.

**HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM WARNING:** Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are expected within the Warning area within 36 hours. Complete storm preparations and leave the threatened area if directed by local officials.

When a Hurricane or Tropical Storm Watch is issued:
- Fuel and service family vehicles.
- Prepare to cover all windows and door openings with boards, shutters or other shielding materials.
- Check food and water supplies. Have clean, air-tight containers on hand to store at least two weeks of drinking water (14 gallons per person), and stock up on canned provisions. Keep a small cooler with frozen gel packs handy for packing refrigerated items.
- Check prescription medicines - obtain at least 10 days to 2 weeks supply.
- Stock up on extra batteries for radios, flashlights, and lanterns.
- Store and secure outdoor lawn furniture and other loose, lightweight objects, such as garbage cans and garden tools.
- Check and replenish first-aid supplies.
- Have on hand an extra supply of cash.

When a Hurricane or Tropical Storm Warning is issued:
- Follow instructions issued by civil defense.
- Leave immediately if ordered to do so.
- Complete preparation activities, such as boarding up windows and storing loose objects.
- Evacuate areas that might be affected by storm surge flooding. If evacuating, leave early.
- Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.

(from NWS-CPHC 2009)
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either Ken Ikeda at keni@hawaii.edu or Debra Fitzsimons at debra.fitzsimons@hawaii.edu as we will be happy to help you.