

TROPICAL STORM ALERT

On- and Off-Campus Student Disaster Preparedness Tips

Last Update: August 28, 2008, 8:30 a.m.

ALERT: McNeese officials are monitoring Tropical Storm Gustav. This storm is expected to enter the Gulf of Mexico in the next 24-48 hours. Forecasters warn that coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico could be threatened over the Labor Day weekend. The University will be closed on Saturday and Sunday (except Police and Dining Services) and on Monday (except Police) for the usual Labor Day holiday. Monitor the University's website (www.mcneese.edu) and your mcneese.edu email account for updates. Media and information sources are posted on the University's website (www.mcneese.edu/emergency). If you have not registered with the campus emergency notification system, please do via the FirstCall icon on the McNeese website.



PREPAREDNESS TIPS:

1. Make a plan for where you will go, with whom you will stay, and how you will get there in advance of a threat. Discuss this plan in advance with your family, close friends, coaches, and other persons who may need to know your whereabouts. Provide appropriate names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers so persons who need to get in contact with you may do so. **DO THIS WELL IN ADVANCE OF HURRICANE SEASON.**
2. Purchase renter's insurance, especially if you live in local apartments or University housing. The State of Louisiana, The University of Louisiana System, and McNeese State University DO NOT provide for repair or replacement of lost, damaged or stolen personal property within residence halls. Privately owned apartment complexes usually do not insure personal contents of their occupants. **DO THIS WELL IN ADVANCE OF HURRICANE SEASON.**
3. Contact family and friends and let them know you are evacuating and confirm points of contact where they can reach you. If you are from the immediate Calcasieu Parish area, you may wish to arrange to join your family for evacuation of the area.
4. Gas up your vehicle and obtain enough cash to get you out of the evacuation area to safe shelter. Assume you may be stuck in place for several days and further assume you will have to provide your own food, water, fuel and personal supplies. Disaster response services usually take three to ten days to really start ramping up so it only makes sense that you are prepared to be self-sufficient as long as necessary. Don't assume others will provide food, shelter, and assistance to you.
5. Keep your personal identification (driver's license, student ID, passport), cash, credit cards, jewelry, financial records and other sensitive personal items on your person at all times during an evacuation. Never leave these items behind when you evacuate. International students should always keep visa documents, I-20, I-94, and related items with them in an evacuation.
6. Residence hall students: Lock all of your belongings in your room, including items you might normally leave in your bathroom or in the common living area of your suite. This will help ensure your belongings are located in a central place, are easily identifiable as yours, and are secure during the evacuation and closure period.
7. In the event an evacuation is ordered.....University and parish officials will assist students with limited or no transportation in accessing evacuation points. You must understand you will not be able to pick and choose where you are going under these circumstances and you will only be able to take the minimal essentials with you. Watch the University's website and email systems for important notifications about where you may be able to access transportation and evacuation services.
8. Follow the instructions of University officials, particularly those instructions that relate to timely and orderly evacuation and closure of buildings, residence halls, parking lots, and interior campus streets and cessation of campus operations in preparation for a disaster. It is a violation of the University Code of Conduct, Section 3.33--Interference, to fail to comply with directives of University officials. Failure to comply with directives of University officials results in immediate bar from campus pending disciplinary proceedings before the Dean of Student Services and/or criminal prosecution.
9. Assume you may not be permitted to re-enter your apartment or campus housing and the entire parish for several days. Take essential clothing, personal items, records, school supplies, work and/or athletic uniforms, laptop computers, and cell phones.
10. Don't assume parish-wide "look and leave" programs will apply to your residence hall. State regulations regarding publicly-controlled buildings may not permit you to re-enter a building that has been damaged or without power for a period of time. Some privately owned apartments throughout Lake Charles were so badly damaged during Hurricane Rita that residents were not permitted to enter their dwellings even after "look and leave" periods were declared due to health and safety concerns.
11. In the event of a relatively small weather event, you may be advised to shelter in place in your residence hall or other dwelling, assuming you deem your dwelling safe for such shelter. You may also be advised to relocate from campus housing to a central shelter if conditions so warrant. You should keep on hand sufficient non-perishable foods and water to sustain you for 3-5 days in the event of local power outages and inconveniences that could result from a serious weather event.
12. Small weather events may result in temporary power outages and other interruptions and inconveniences. Tropical storms and Category 1 and Category 2 hurricanes may cause such interruptions and inconveniences for one to five days or longer.