



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Walterboro, SC – Hurricane Season began on June 1, 2020, and extends until November 30, 2020. We have witnessed three named storms already and experts predict an above average number of storms this hurricane season with 13-19 named storms, 6-10 hurricanes, and 3-6 major hurricanes. We want to encourage Colleton County residents to begin making plans for hurricane season by focusing on three things.

You can start by making a basic disaster supplies kit with essential items such as non-perishable food, water, flashlights, and batteries. We strongly encourage you to have masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer in your disaster supplies kit.

Next, Know Your Zone. There are two evacuation zones in Colleton County – Zone A and Zone B. You can go to the website for SC Emergency Management Division <https://www.scemd.org/> and select “Zone Finder” to find the evacuation zone in which you live. You can also download the SCEMD app to your phone. This app will allow you to make a plan, find your evacuation zone, and locate a shelter, if needed, during emergencies.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic presents an issue for providing shelter to residents who may need it during evacuation orders. We strongly encourage you to make plans to seek shelter with family or friends who live outside the evacuation zones or stay at a hotel outside of the evacuation zones. If you do not have a place to go, Colleton County will provide a shelter. If you choose to stay at the shelter, bring a mask to wear as all shelter residents and workers will be required to wear masks. The shelter capacity will be greatly reduced to allow for social distancing inside. Be prepared to exercise social distancing and to answer questions regarding your health and potential COVID-19 exposure. You should also expect to be screened twice a day when staying at the shelter. We have seen the spread of COVID-19 in congregate housing settings, such as nursing homes and jails, across the country. Despite the many precautions that the Department of Social Services, the American Red Cross, and Colleton County will take, it is possible that COVID-19 could spread similarly inside a congregate setting such as the hurricane evacuation shelter. The evacuation shelter should always be considered a last resort, which is particularly important this year among the elderly or those with pre-existing medical conditions. If you live in an evacuation zone, plan now to stay with a friend or family member outside of the evacuation zone in the event that the Governor orders an evacuation.