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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC

TO ALSAFETY

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SUBJ: HURRICANE RESPONSE OPERATIONAL SAFETY

A. Safety and Environmental Health Manual, COMDTINST M5100.47 (series)

B. Coast Guard Occupational Medicine Manual, COMDTINST M6260.32 (series)

C. Motor Vehicle Manual, COMDTINST M11240.9 (series)

1. Overview.

A. Hurricane response operations are fast-paced and often occur in environments with chemical, physical, and biological hazards. To ensure the safety of all responders and maintain operational readiness, the following guidelines outline key hazards and protective measures per refs (a) – (c).

B. Safety Service Center (SAFECEN) and Incident Management Team Safety Officers are available for additional guidance as needed.

2. Flood Response and Water Damage:

A. Storms increase water damage risks associated with intrusion through damaged structures, or flooding.

B. Water-damaged materials, including drywall, should be removed or thoroughly dried within 48 hours to reduce the risk of mold and mildew growth. Loss of HVAC due to power outages can further worsen indoor air quality and elevate environmental health risks in the workplace.

Avoid entering buildings with significant mold growth or strong mold odors; if entry is unavoidable, ensure proper respiratory protection is used. The information linked here provides resources to help Coast Guard personnel identify, assess, prevent, and respond to these health risks:

<https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/hswlsc/SafeEvHealth/SitePages/Mold%20and%20Moisture%20-%20Habitability.aspx>

C. Driving through flooded areas is high-risk and requires training. Follow Coast Guard Motor Vehicle Fording Safe Work Practice guidance: <https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/hswlsc/SafeEvHealth/Documents/Motor%20Vehicle/Vehicle%20Fording%20Safe%20Work%20Practice.pdf>

3. Hurricane Preparations:

A. It is imperative to have a plan in place prior to the arrival of a storm or natural disaster.

B. At work, follow guidance to adjust the Hurricane Condition level and implement the unit's hurricane response plan.

C. For your home, take actions to protect yourself from damage by securing items that could be blown by wind, boarding windows, and consider securing gas, water, or electricity before evacuation. Maintain at least a two-week supply of medicine. Consider specific needs for dependents and pets.

4. Incident Command System Safety Officer (ICS SOFR):

A. SAFECEN staff maintain qualifications as ICS SOFR to support contingency responses at the local and Area level. They provide expert knowledge on hazard identification and risk mitigation and are equipped with assessment tools to conduct a variety of health risk analyses.

B. After a unit is reconstituted, there may be lingering damage and associated hazards that require interim controls and abatement plans. It is imperative to continue coordination with your SEHO and Safety and Risk Management (SARM) Council throughout the process. Additional follow up assessments may be required to fully mitigate the hazard. Abatement plan guidance is available: <https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/hswlsc/Documents/SAFECEN%20TD%202025-001%20-%20Abatement%20Plan%20Admin.pdf>

#### 5. Carbon Monoxide Safety:

A. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless byproduct of combustion that can be fatal. During a power outage, there may be an increased use of fuel burning devices such as generators, grills, and vehicle engines. Symptoms of poisoning include headache, dizziness, nausea, and confusion. If exposed, move to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention.

B. Prevention: Keep generators and grills outdoors, away from windows and doors. Never operate fuel-burning devices indoors or in enclosed spaces.

#### 6. Asbestos and Lead Hazards:

A. When clearing storm debris, be mindful of asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and lead-containing paint (LCP).

B. Review hazard management plans before disturbing any potentially hazardous building materials.

C. Coast Guard personnel are not authorized to handle ACM or LCP cleanup. If LCP or ACM is damaged in a storm, restrict access and hire licensed professionals.

7. Additional Resources: For more information on hurricane preparedness, visit <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes> or <https://www.noaa.gov/hurricane-prep> .

8. Additional information on hurricane contingency response can be found at:

<https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/hswlsc/SafeEvHealth/SitePages/Hurricane%20Contingency%20Response.aspx>

9. If you have any questions on how prepare for hurricanes or need to request safety support, please contact your SAFECEN - Safety and Environmental Health Officer (SEHO)

<https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/hswlsc/SafeEvHealth/SitePages/Contacts.aspx> .

10. You can also request Safety Service Delivery through CGFixIt by searching "SAFECEN" or following this direct link:

[https://uscgesmp.servicenowcloud.mil/esc?id=sc\\_cat\\_item&sys\\_id=8c4d8f450c43b210c98af6b1990b2dcc&table=sc\\_cat\\_item&searchTerm=safecen](https://uscgesmp.servicenowcloud.mil/esc?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=8c4d8f450c43b210c98af6b1990b2dcc&table=sc_cat_item&searchTerm=safecen) .

11. CG SAFECEN POC: CAPT Harold Hurst, CG SAFECEN Occupational Safety Division Chief at [Harold.P.Hurst@USCG.mil](mailto:Harold.P.Hurst@USCG.mil) .

12. Mr. Ed Bock, Executive Director CG SAFECEN, Acting, sends.

13. Internet release is authorized.

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