

BEWARE OF NATURAL DISASTERS RIP CURRENTS AND HURRICANES

Drowning Prevention Plan

Due to the three 2013 Memorial Day week-end drownings along Fort Morgan peninsula caused by rip currents, the Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department stepped up its efforts to try to prevent this from occurring again.

Once again, over the 2013 4th of July week-long holiday, severe rip currents were predicted along the Alabama coast. A conference call was conducted consisting of the three fire departments on Pleasure Island—Fort Morgan, Orange Beach, and Gulf Shores—the County EMA Director and the County Sheriff, to discuss ways to alert the public whenever a high risk of rip currents is predicted. The group decided to have the State highway department put out electronic traffic signs advising visitors to use caution in the Gulf due to a high risk of rip currents. The Sheriff's office sent officers to all the condos in Fort Morgan to advise them to alert their visitors to the extreme danger of the predicted rip currents. At the end of the July 4th holiday week, all three fire departments reported a minimal number of water rescues and no drownings.

To enhance their water rescue ability, the Fort Morgan VFD also purchased two beach rescue vehicles equipped with basic life support equipment. The vehicles are 4X4 ATVs equipped with medical skid units to transport patients and medical bags equipped with supplies appropriate for water rescues.

Keep yourself, your family, and your guests informed of potentially hazardous Gulf water conditions, particularly rip currents, and POST THESE WEBSITES AT YOUR COMPUTER AND ON YOUR FRIDGE--

<http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/forecasts.shtml>
<http://www.swellinfo.com/surf-forecast/gulf-shores-alabama>

Hurricane Preparation—Hurricane Alert Bulletins National Hurricane Center www.nhc.noaa.gov

1. Vehicle decals are mailed to all property owners and are required to gain re-entry to the Peninsula after a mandatory evacuation. If you did not receive yours (2 per owner), contact Gulf Shores City Hall to obtain as soon as possible. Once a mandatory evacuation notice is issued, decals will not be available.
2. If an evacuation is ordered, heed the warning and go to a shelter or other place of safety. The automated telephone warning system will be used to call every telephone listed in our area with a recorded evacuation notice. Our Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department will also tour the area to make sure everyone has been notified.
3. In the event of an evacuation, our VFD will remain in the area and operate out of Station #1 as long as it is safe to do so. They will move all personnel, fire trucks and emergency vehicles off the island if it becomes too dangerous to remain. While in the area, a primary job for the fire department is to monitor the storm and keep the County Emergency Services Center in Robertsdale notified of what is happening in our area and if any outside assistance is needed. We also send a VFD member to the Robertsdale Center to handle the other end of this communication and to make sure the exact location of any problem areas are known and where to send assistance if requested.

4. As part of emergency preparation, the 911 dispatcher provides a street address only when paging out units to respond to a call for emergency assistance. Our VFD has responded to a number of calls to locations where the reported house number could not be found. Valuable time was lost in going door to door to find the location. Therefore, if you have a mail box, put your house number on both sides in large, reflective paint or numbers. If you have no mail box, put your house number on a post or any object where it can easily be seen from the road. Many emergency calls occur at night—use reflective numbers at least three inches (3") tall. If you can't read your house number as you approach your house, neither can emergency responders. Having someone outside to signal emergency vehicles as they arrive, and turning outside lights on, is a big help.