

# Your Energy Connection



May 2015

## How to Prepare for a Hurricane

Hurricane season begins June 1 and lasts until Nov. 30. North Carolina is no stranger to hurricanes and the devastation they can cause. Therefore, Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) encourages customers to celebrate National Hurricane Preparedness Week during May 24-30 by taking the following precautions:



### **Plan ahead**

Know your risks from hurricanes based on where you live, your home's structure, and your circumstances. People who live inland are at risk for wind, thunderstorms, and flooding. Hurricanes also cause widespread power outages, which may be a risk factor for people who rely on electricity to operate life-sustaining electronic equipment, such as a respirator or dialysis machine. Customers with life-sustaining equipment should inform the City of Rocky Mount, their rescue squads and fire departments, and have emergency back-up equipment on hand. For more information, call (252) 972-1250.



### **Review evacuation routes and shelter locations**

In the event of an evacuation, determine where you would go and how you would get there. If you plan to evacuate by car, keep your car fueled and in good condition. If you expect to go to a shelter after evacuating, download the American Red Cross Shelter Finder App at [www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/shelter-finder-app](http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/shelter-finder-app). This app displays a map of all open American Red Cross shelters and provides the capacity and the current population of each shelter. You can also text SHELTER + your ZIP code to 43362 (4FEMA) to find the nearest shelter in your area. If you have pets and plan to go to a shelter, call to inquire whether the shelter can accommodate your pets. Shelters will accept service animals.



### **Stay informed**

Rocky Mount's local emergency response team uses the **Code Red Emergency Notification** system to notify the community by phone in the event of an emergency situation. To sign up for Code Red, call the Fire/Life Safety division at (252) 972-1376 or visit [www.rockymountfire.org](http://www.rockymountfire.org).



### **Stock food, supplies, and medicine**

Before a hurricane strikes, build an emergency kit that includes basic items such as:

- » At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water (one gallon per person per day)
- » First aid kit and medications
- » Flashlight and radio with extra batteries
- » Infant formula and diapers
- » Pet food

For a full list of supplies for your emergency supply kit, visit [www.ready.gov/build-a-kit](http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit).



### **Use generators safely**

Never use a generator indoors. Follow the manufacturer's directions regarding connecting appliances directly to your generator. Use a generator only in a well-ventilated area. Do not connect your generator directly to your home's electrical system as it is dangerous to you, your neighbors and utility workers.

**For more information on hurricane preparedness, download the guidebook "How to Prepare for a Hurricane" at [www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/communications.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/communications.html).**

## Connect with us!



Connect with us to stay posted on the latest news, events, outage updates, and energy-saving tips!

- **Like us on Facebook at**  
***Facebook.com/RockyMountPublicUtilities***
- **Follow us on Twitter @rmtpu**
- **New!** RMPU is now using **Nextdoor**, the free and private social network for neighborhoods. Connect with your neighbors and get updates from RMPU by signing up at *Nextdoor.com*.

## New Bill Pay Option Available

The city now offers an additional utility bill payment option called the **Due Date Option Program**. Through this program, customers may choose a specific day of the month on which their bill will be due. The due dates to choose from are the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th. Customers should choose the due date based on their pay schedule or availability of funds. Once the due date is selected, it may only be changed if there is a change to the customer's pay or funds.

To qualify for the Due Date Option Program, customers must have a good payment and collections history. Customers may be required to make a full or partial payment on the account to ensure that the account is current.

To enroll in the Due Date Option Program, submit a Pre-Qualification Form online at [www.rockymountnc.gov/duedateoption.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/duedateoption.html), call (252) 972-1250, email [customerservice@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:customerservice@rockymountnc.gov) or speak with a Customer Service Representative on the first floor of City Hall located at 331 S. Franklin St.

## Load Management Helps You Save Money on Your Electric Bill!

Sign up today! Load Management participants help lower the cost of electricity citywide and can earn the following monthly credits on their utility bills:

- Electric Water Heater: \$2.00 credit per month
- Electric Heat Strips: \$15.00 credit per month during three months of winter
- Central Air Conditioner: \$20.00 credit per month during three months of summer

For more information or to sign up for the load management program, call (252) 467-4803 or visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/loadmanagement.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/loadmanagement.html).

## If the Power Goes Out...

Before an outage occurs, make sure the city has your most current phone number on file so the outage can be accurately recorded. Please call (252) 467-4800 to update your number.

If you lose power, look outside and see if your neighbors are also without power. If you're the only one, check your fuse box or circuit breaker panel to see if you can locate the problem.

If the neighboring houses are dark too, look to see if there are any trees or branches on the lines, or if there are downed wires, flashes of light, or any other signs of trouble. Don't touch or try to move electric lines or trees or any other obstacles in contact with electric lines. Report the outage by calling (252) 467-4800 to be directed to the city's automated system. Press #1 to report a power outage unless you have information about damage to wires, transformers or poles. If so, please stay on the line to speak with a dispatcher.

## You Can Help with Power Restoration!

When an outage occurs or lasts for an extended period of time, a heavy burden is placed on the system at the moment the power is restored. This high demand can cause an overload on the system, and you could lose power once



**Tip: Leave a porch light on so repair crews know when service has been restored.**

again. Follow these simple tips to be sure power is restored safely and effectively:

- Turn everything off in your home except one light. When the light glows, you'll know the power has been restored.
- Turn off the stove and any heat-producing appliances. If left on, they can pose a serious fire hazard after the power has been restored.
- Once power is restored, gradually switch on appliances and return thermostats to their normal settings.

For more information, visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/emergency.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/emergency.html).

## Do you know what items are accepted in your Recycling Rollout Cart?



**Plastics (#1-7), Magazines, Newspapers, Phonebooks, Cardboard, Junk Mail, Glass, Soda Cans, Cereal Boxes...and more!**

Visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/publicworks/solidwaste.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/publicworks/solidwaste.html) for more information.

**Remember, your cart with the GRAY lid is for garbage. Your cart with the BLUE lid is for recycling only.**

