



CERC in a Hurricane Response

- 1. Be First:** Quickly sharing information to inform actions can prevent illness, injury, and death. People often prefer and remember the first source of information they hear in a crisis. Without valid information, rumors can start or people can engage in dangerous behaviors.
 - Before power goes out, start spreading the word about generator safety and carbon monoxide poisoning prevention, including at retail locations where generators and gasoline-powered tools are sold.
 - Before roads become flooded, let people know that vehicle-related drowning is a major cause of death during hurricanes, so that they can plan alternate routes or plan not to drive.
 - Share preparedness information about safe water in case systems become affected. Provide information on water advisories as soon as they become available.
- 2. Be Right:** Accuracy establishes credibility. Information should include what is known, what is not known, and what is being done to fill in the information gaps.
 - Make sure messaging is consistent across all response organizations. Determine who will take the lead on developing guidance on different topics, and make sure messages are coordinated. For example, emergency managers may issue information on road safety while an environmental taskforce may lead in mosquito control.
 - Always fact check with subject-matter experts and those with the most situational awareness.
- 3. Be Credible:** Honesty, timeliness, and scientific backing encourages the public to trust your information and guidance.
 - Acknowledge when you do not have enough information to answer a question and then work with the appropriate experts to get an answer.
 - Do not make promises about anything that is not yet confirmed.
- 4. Express Empathy:** Crises create suffering. Addressing what people are feeling and the challenges they face shows that you are taking their personal circumstances into consideration when you give recommendations.
 - For example, you may say, “We understand that many are eager to return home, while others are feeling the devastating loss of their homes.”
- 5. Promote Action:** Giving people meaningful things to do empowers them when they may have lost some sense of control. It calms anxiety and builds a resilient community.
 - Remind people to check on their neighbors and elderly family and friends and to share information with those without power or internet.
- 6. Show Respect:** Respectful communication is particularly important when people feel vulnerable. Respectful communication promotes cooperation and rapport.
 - Remember that all responses start locally. Actively listen to the issues and solutions brought up by local communities and local leadership.



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