



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 - Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

[www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org)

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## Public Health encourages Alabamians to prepare for Hurricane Gustav

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### CONTACT:

Jim McVay, Dr.P.A.  
(334) 206-5600

The Alabama Department of Public Health recommends all families take health and safety precautions and prepare for possible damage as a result of Hurricane Gustav. As part of its emergency preparedness campaign Get 10, the department is encouraging all Alabamians to create an emergency supply kit containing 10 essential items that can help them survive an emergency.

“Creating this emergency supply kit is easy, but it can prove to be lifesaving,” said State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson. “These 10 items can be helpful whether a family needs to evacuate or shelter-in-place.”

Get 10 suggests families pack the following essential items:

1. Water - at least one gallon per person per day for three days, including pets
2. Non-perishable food - a two-week supply for each person, including pets
3. Can opener - a manual one that can be used if there is no electricity
4. Medications - include both prescription and non-prescription medications
5. First aid kit - this kit should include antiseptic, gloves, bandages, masks and a thermometer
6. Flashlight - remember to include extra batteries
7. Battery-powered radio - consider buying a radio with a weather alert feature
8. Extra clothing, socks and shoes - pack rain gear and outerwear for inclement weather
9. Personal care items - include cleaning and hygiene items
10. Important documents - keep electronic copies of these as well on a flash drive/memory stick.

Residents should take the following precautions should the hurricane impact the state.

### Food Safety

Power outages associated with a hurricane can cause concerns about the safety of frozen and refrigerated foods. The Alabama Department of Public Health advises that as a general rule, a full upright or chest freezer will keep foods frozen for about two days without power.

A partially full freezer will keep foods frozen for about one day. This time may be extended by keeping the door shut. A refrigerator will keep foods cool for four to six hours if the door is kept shut as much as possible.

Any thawed foods that have been at room temperature for more than two hours should be discarded. Foods still containing ice crystals can be refrozen, although the quality of the food may decrease. Foods that have thawed to refrigerator temperatures (that is, no more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit) can also be cooked and then refrozen.

## **Carbon Monoxide**

The public should never use generators, grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, basement, garage or camper—or even outside near an open window.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if breathed. When power outages occur during emergencies such as hurricanes, people often try to use alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling or cooking. CO from these sources can build up in a home, garage or camper and poison the people and animals inside. Look to friends or a community shelter for help. If you must use an alternative source of fuel or electricity, be sure to use it only outside and away from open windows.

If a generator is used, be sure to strictly follow all safety precautions.

If power lines are lying on the ground or dangling near the ground, do not touch the lines. Notify your utility company as soon as possible that lines have been damaged, or that the power lines are down, but do not attempt to move or repair the power lines.

Avoid driving through standing water if downed power lines are in the water. If a power line falls across your car while you are driving, continue to drive away from the line. If the engine stalls, do not turn off the ignition. Stay in your car and wait for emergency personnel. Do not allow anyone other than emergency personnel to approach your vehicle.

For more information on Get 10 and hurricane safety, please visit the Alabama Department of Public Health's Web site at [www.adph.org/CEP](http://www.adph.org/CEP).