



Charleston County News Release

Release Number: 3617

Date: June 6, 2013

11:30 a.m. Press Conference with Berkeley/Charleston/Dorchester

The following officials will hold a press conference at **11:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 6** at the Charleston County Emergency Operations Center located at 8500 Palmetto Commerce Parkway in North Charleston:

- Cathy Haynes, Charleston County Emergency Management Department ([Charleston County Emergency Management Department](#))
- Nick Marino, Berkeley County Emergency Management Department (<http://www.berkeleycountysc.gov/dept/epd>)
- Mario Formisano, Dorchester County Emergency Management Department (www.dorchestercounty.net/emergencymanagement and Facebook www.facebook.com/DorchesterCountyEMD)

Charleston County Moves to OPCON 4 at 10 a.m. Today to Monitor Tropical Storm Andrea

Operating Condition 4 means there is a possibility of an emergency or disaster situation.

Charleston County participated in a conference call today (Thursday, June 6) regarding Tropical Storm Andrea. The call was initiated by the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) and included representatives from several counties.

As a result of the information learned during today's conference call, and as a precautionary measure, **Charleston County moved into readiness Operating Condition (OPCON) 4 at 10 a.m. today.** The Emergency Operations Center is not activated at this point, however, officials are monitoring Andrea closely.

Per National Weather Service-Charleston, possible impacts are as follows, based on 8 a.m. advisory:

- Wind-low impact; possible tropical storm force winds expected to be confined to immediate coastal areas and Atlantic waters to include Charleston Harbor
- Inland flooding-high impact; due to heavy rainfall
- Tornado: low impact; mainly along and east of I-95 late today and tonight
- Marine (water): moderate impact; seas building 5-10 feet near shore and 10-15 feet off shore

If you have not reviewed your family disaster plan this would be a good time to do so along with checking your emergency supply kits. Download your 2013 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide at <http://charlestoncounty.org/guides.htm>.

Phrases like "OPCON 4" are unfamiliar to the public, so the counties' emergency officials want to explain exactly what these mean to citizens.

"The OPCON 4 level means that there is a possibility of an emergency or disaster situation, and it notifies our employees who may be called into our Emergency Operations Center to stay on alert and be ready to act if needed," Haynes said.

At OPCON 4, the Counties' Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) personnel are required to be on alert as officials monitor the storm.

Charleston County's EOC is located in the Consolidated Dispatch Center and Emergency Preparedness Center at 8500 Palmetto Commerce Parkway in North Charleston.

The purpose of the EOC is for county decision-makers to coordinate information and to implement the County's Emergency Operations Plan during any type of disaster. This plan is reviewed and updated every January to ensure proper readiness and response procedures.

The public is encouraged to monitor their local news media and to be prepared in case Tropical Storm Andrea moves toward the state's coastline.

Officials from Charleston County will stay in close communication with state agencies and other counties and organizations.

The Operating Condition (OPCON) levels of readiness run from five to one in level of severity, with one being the most severe. This is opposite of how hurricane severity levels run, from one to five, with five being the most severe.

The following is an explanation of each OPCON level, and Charleston County is at OPCON 4 as of 10 a.m. today:

5: Day-to-day operations to include normal training and exercises.

4: Possibility of an emergency or disaster situation that may require a limited or full activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center.

3: Disaster or emergency situation likely or imminent. Full or partial activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center; activate County Emergency Operations Plan.

2: Disaster or emergency situation in effect; maximum preparedness level; full activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center.

1: Disaster or emergency situation in effect; full-fledged emergency response operations on-going; highest state of emergency operations.

"We are at the beginning of hurricane season, and for those who have not done so already, it is time to gather supplies and review family emergency plans in order to be prepared," Haynes said.

To download the 2013 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide, and to keep up to date with County news releases concerning Tropical Storm Andrea, visit www.charlestoncounty.org. Click on the "Are You Ready?" banner on the front page of the Web site to download, print and share:

- The 2013 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide (in English and Spanish)
- The 2013 Disabilities Emergency Guide

Information in the 2013 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide includes:

- Definitions and what you need to do during hurricane watches, warnings and tropical storms
- Preparations for your home and your family before the storm
- What you need to have in your emergency supplies kit
- Evacuation information and routes out of Charleston County
- Shelters in Charleston County
- What to do if you don't have transportation – *pick-up point signs are posted around the county. Learn now where you need to go!*
- Rules to know and items to bring if you have to bring your pet to the pet shelter
- What to do after a storm, including safety measures and handling debris
- A family communications plan form to fill out
- Important phone numbers

Information on family emergency planning is available on the S.C. Emergency Management Division Web site at www.scemd.org.

For information on Charleston County Government news and services, the public can:

- Visit our website: www.charlestoncounty.org
- Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ChasCountyGov>
- Like us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Charleston-County-Government/474878989220753>
 - **Emergency Management Department:** <http://www.facebook.com/EMDChasCo>



- written by Jennie Flinn -