



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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'You ready for the next disaster?'

Commissary patrons advised to stock up for emergencies

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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FORT LEE, Va. – If a tornado, hurricane, flood or any other natural disaster strikes, would you be able to survive? That's the question emergency preparedness organizations want the public to address before the next crisis occurs.

Disaster planning is considered crucial to improving your odds of survival, and this year, the Defense Commissary Agency has worked with its industry partners to offer many of the items needed for severe weather survival kits at reduced prices, said DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu.

"We always offer certain nonperishable foods, water and nonedible items such as batteries as part of our summer club packs," said Jeu, referring to the bulk purchases similar to what a consumer would see at a membership warehouse. "But this year our network of industry partners – manufacturers, vendors and suppliers – offered us a special package of discounted items that our customers would need to augment their survival kits, and we extended the availability of these items in our stores to coincide with the peak periods of severe weather."

Since April 1, items such as canned chicken, powdered milk, batteries, weather-ready flashlights, all-weather tape, first aid kits, lighters, matches, candles and hand sanitizer have been reduced in price as part of the severe weather promotional package that runs until Oct. 31.

DeCA's severe weather promotional package coincides with the prime time for both

tornado and hurricane seasons in the United States. Tornado season runs from April to July. According to the National Weather Service, this year the number of tornadoes doubled in comparison to the same period in 2010.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November and includes the North Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. Predictions from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration call for a 70 percent chance for about 12 to 18 named storms, six to 10 of which will become hurricanes, and three to six are expected to be major hurricanes. These predictions do not include which hurricanes will make landfall, because it's not possible to plot landfall weeks or months ahead of a storm, the NOAA website said.

“Although there's lots of attention, and deservedly so, on the peak storm periods in the states, we want our customers to know that they need to stock their food pantries with items to sustain them for any emergency – natural or manmade – that could occur anywhere in the world at any time,” Jeu said.

Emergency preparedness officials suggest having a disaster supply kit that includes the following items:

- Water, at least one gallon, daily, per person (three-day supply for evacuation, two-week supply for home)
- Nonperishable foods – canned meats, fruits, vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, raisins, cereal, crackers, cookies, energy bars, granola, peanut butter, and foods for infants and the elderly (three-day supply for evacuation, two-week supply for home)
- Paper goods – writing paper, paper plates, paper towels, toilet paper
- Cooking items – pots, pans, baking sheet, cooking utensils, charcoal, a grill and a manual can opener
- First-aid kit – including bandages, medicines and prescription drugs
- Cleaning materials – bleach, sanitizing spray, and hand and laundry soap
- Specialty foods – diet and low-calorie foods and drinks
- Toiletries – personal hygiene items and moisture wipes
- Pet care items – food, water, muzzle, leash, carrier, medications, medical records, and identification and immunization tags
- Lighting accessories – flashlight, batteries, candles and matches
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Duct tape, scissors

- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Maps of the area

DeCA recommends that customers take advantage of their commissary benefit and its average savings of 30 percent or more to stock up on emergency items that can sustain them during a crisis.

For more information about the 2011 hurricane season or on ways to prepare for emergencies, visit the following websites: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/outlooks/hurricane.shtml>; the Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater/prepare.asp>; the Red Cross, <http://www.redcrosslv.org/disaster/materials.html>; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/epc.pdf>.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*