

LA BEOC

LOUISIANA BUSINESS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

August 15, 2023

Supporting business during a disaster



It's hard to believe, but it's school time once again.

Maybe it's me, but it seems the school year appears to start earlier each year. With the start of the school year, we are reminded that we need to be a little more careful around school zones. Not only are there more families and buses on the road during this time of the year but there are many new drivers on the road. New drivers

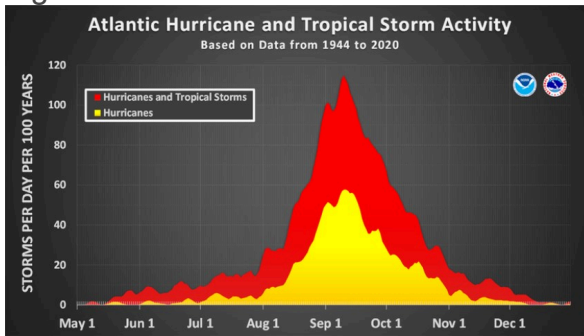
are not as experienced and may be a little more tentative than your schedule is accustomed to accommodating. So, during the next couple of weeks, we experienced drivers need to plan for a little extra time in our daily commute. Here are a few tips to make the transition into the school commute safe for everyone involved.

- **Obey Speed Limits:** Always follow the posted speed limits in school zones, which are typically lower during school hours. Be vigilant and reduce your speed even if you don't see any children around.
- **Watch for School Zone Signs:** Pay close attention to signs indicating school zones. They might also have flashing lights during school hours to alert drivers.
- **Crosswalk Awareness:** Be especially cautious near crosswalks. Yield to pedestrians and ensure they have completely crossed before proceeding.
- **Follow School Crossing Guards:** If there's a crossing guard, follow their instructions without hesitation.

- **Stay Alert:** Keep distractions to a minimum. Avoid using your phone, eating, or engaging in any activity that takes your attention away from the road.
- **Expect the Unexpected:** Children can be unpredictable. Be prepared for them to suddenly dart into the road or act in ways you might not anticipate.
- **Check Blind Spots:** Ensure your blind spots are clear before changing lanes or turning. Small children can be difficult to see.
- **Maintain a Safe Following Distance:** Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. This allows for a buffer in case you need to stop suddenly.
- **Do not Text and Drive:** While mentioned earlier, distracted driving is the cause of an increasing number of accidents. Be a good steward and example for all your passengers, keep your focus on the road, and use hands-free features as much as possible.
- **Teach Kids about Road Safety:** If you're a parent or guardian, teach your children about proper road safety and the importance of using crosswalks and paying attention to traffic signals.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention hurricane season at this time. Thankfully, it was very quiet after much hype when the season started. Many people (me included) tend to get a little complacent around this time. With season projections increasing by both NOAA and Colorado State University, you may ask yourself, how can this be? Well, if you look at sea surface temperatures, which are higher than have been in recent memory, and the fact that we have not reached the height of tropical activity historically (See figure 1). The point is that we cannot forget that whether there are 5 or 15 storms, it only takes one for it to be a bad season in your area. Remain vigilant, watch your weather forecaster of choice, and listen to your local emergency management officials.

Figure 1



James 'Jim' Williams

Public-Private Partnership Operations Officer
Informatics Research Institute
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
james.williams@louisiana.edu
337.482.0633

Greetings from the NIMSAT Institute,

It's August and that means one thing – it's Back-to-School time! As we send our children back to school, let's take this time to review some basic youth preparedness activities, especially as we gear up for hurricane season at the same time!

According to FEMA, “Children and youth are empowered through understanding risks and knowing how to protect themselves. Empowered youth can help involve their families, peers, and communities in disaster preparedness.”

To prepare your children for any type of disaster, FEMA proposes you follow these helpful tips:

- **Learn the risks** that may threaten your family at home, school or work.
- **Find more information at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).** Make sure everyone understands the **types of emergency alerts** they may receive and how to receive them.
- If a disaster happens, knowing **who to call and where to meet** is an important part of emergency planning for you and your family.
- **Pick one main contact locally** and one contact out of town who may be easier to reach during a disaster.
- **Decide on safe, familiar, accessible places** where your family can go for protection or to reunite.
- If you have pets or service animals, **think about animal-friendly locations.**

- Consider places in your house, in your neighborhood, and outside of your city or town so you're **prepared for any situation**.
- Make sure your **family members know to use texting** during a disaster to free up phone lines for first responders.
- **Practice your plan.** Put pen to paper and make sure everyone in your family has copies of your plan. Hold regular meetings as a family to review your plan.
- **Build a kit.** Keep enough emergency supplies on hand - water, nonperishable food, first aid, prescriptions, flashlight, and battery-powered radio - for everyone in your household. For a list of items to consider including, visit [ready.gov/kit](https://www.ready.gov/kit).

By following these simple tips, you and your family can be better prepared for any type of disaster. FEMA has a lot of great tools for families and youth to use to get ready for hurricane season, tornados, or floods. For more information and fun interactive games, I encourage you to visit [ready.gov/kids/games](https://www.ready.gov/kids/games) or [ready.gov/kids/prepare-with-pedro](https://www.ready.gov/kids/prepare-with-pedro).

As always, stay prepared, stay safe!

Shannon



Shannon Strother, PhD
Director, NIMSAT
Informatics Research Institute
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
shannon.strother@louisiana.edu
337.482.0609

Latest News

Helpful Links

Follow @LABEOC



The LABEOC is managed by the National Incident Management Systems and Advanced Technologies Institute at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in partnership with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness and Louisiana Economic Development.