



November 14, 2025

Challenges in Preparedness

The images from communities affected by Hurricane Melissa remind us how quickly a forecast can turn into a life-changing event. What started as a system expected to remain manageable rapidly intensified with surprising speed and strength, leaving families, businesses, and entire towns facing significant losses. Events like Melissa's are sobering, and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with our neighbors in Jamaica who are enduring a long recovery. They prove how fragile our assumptions can be when we rely on early forecasts rather than ongoing vigilance. Despite advances in forecasting and modeling, storms can still alter course, intensify, and cause cascading impacts that challenge our preparedness.

Hurricane Season Ends November 30

As we conclude the 2025 hurricane season, it is worth reflecting on what it has taught us. While Louisiana did not experience a direct hit, we saw storms in the Atlantic basin that organized quickly and showed the kind of sudden intensification that has become more common. These changes emphasize the importance of a strong, shared operating picture. When businesses, state partners, and local leaders share information early and often, our decisions are better informed. This season once again proved that preparedness is not just a summer duty but a year-round commitment to awareness, communication, and partnership.

CyberSeason

As we approach the holiday season, a new risk appears - cyber-season. The increase in online shopping, beginning in mid-November, is accompanied by a rise in cyber threats. Criminals are aware that inboxes overflow with shipping alerts, discount offers, charity requests, and purchase confirmations. They also know that businesses hire seasonal staff, adjust workflows, and rely heavily on digital systems to manage inventory and transactions. All of this creates an opportunity that cybercriminals are eager to exploit.

This is the time for businesses to strengthen basic security measures.

- Starting with a review of multi-factor authentication is crucial. Stolen or reused credentials remain the most common attack method during the holiday season. Ensuring that critical accounts require a second layer of verification significantly reduces that risk.
- Seasonal staff should receive a quick onboarding reminder about secure passwords, identifying suspicious links, and verifying unexpected messages that appear to come from supervisors or vendors. Phishing attempts mimicking package carriers or payment processors spike in late November.
- Training teams to pause before clicking protects both the business and the customer. It is also prudent to review third-party access privileges. Services and platforms used only during peak times should be watched carefully or disabled when not in use.

- Situational awareness is just as vital in cybersecurity as it is in hurricane response. The more aware we are of what is happening around us, the less likely we are to be caught off guard.

Whether tracking storms in August or monitoring network activity in November, being prepared depends on having the correct information and regular engagement.

Thank you for the work you continue to do to strengthen Louisiana's resilience. Each season presents its own challenges, and every season benefits from the dedication of our partners across the state.

Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association

On a personal note, the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association board elevated me from an alternate to a full member. This is an opportunity to strengthen ties between the private and public sectors.

In closing, Thanksgiving will be here before long. Louisianians have so much to be thankful for. During this season, share your gratitude with someone who may not be as fortunate as you.

Stay alert, stay safe.

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