As residents along the Gulf Coast prepare for the impacts of soon-to-be major hurricane Harvey, we take a look at hurricane preparedness. Are you aware of the positive impact which the fuel and petrochemical industries play in keeping you safe during a storm?

According to data from EM-DAT: The International Emergency Database (which was created with the support of the World Health Organization and the Belgian Government), in the decade from 2004 to 2013, worldwide climate-related deaths (including droughts, floods, extreme temperatures, wildfires, and storms including hurricanes) plummeted to a level almost 89 percent below that of the peak decade of 1930 to 1939. This decrease happened despite an increasing population which has doubled in the last several decades and more comprehensive data collection. This decrease may seem counterintuitive, but technological advances thanks to the fuel and petrochemical industries have played a key role. Specific to hurricanes, a key improvement has been on the design and implementation of sturdier buildings. Petrochemical-based products are used in a range of housing applications including roofs, windows and walls. These applications (made from petrochemicals including chlorine (to make polyvinyl chloride), styrene (to make extended polystyrene) and other materials)) are critical to ensure that a home can sustain the potentially damaging winds and water from a hurricane. In addition, advance hurricane warning system, which are powered by oil and natural gas, help keep people informed of whether a storm may be coming their way. These items ensure a higher level of safety and potentially reduce the impact of a storm. Another important element to protect against hurricanes is a sea wall. A sea wall is a coastal defense which is built to protect areas of human habitation, conservation and leisure activities from tides and waves. A sea wall can be made from a range of materials including the use of polyvinyl chloride and fiberglass which are both made from petrochemicals. That being said, it is always a good idea to have a basic hurricane preparedness supply kit. According to Ready.gov, your kit should include the following items: • Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation • Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food • Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both • Flashlight and extra batteries • First aid kit • Whistle to signal for help • Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place • Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation • Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities • Manual can opener for food • Local maps • Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger Pop quiz – how many of these items involve petrochemical-based products? The answer is almost all of them, whether it is packaging for the food/water or plastic products made from petrochemicals (e.g., hand crank radio, flashlight, elements of the first aid kit, cell phone, etc.). Hurricanes can be dangerous events. Petrochemical based products can help keep you safe.

Print as PDF:

Topics

Products & Innovation

Petrochemical Products

Quality of Life

Tags

Hurricane Preparedness

Chloride

Polyvinyl Chloride

Styrene

Polystyrene

water

Wind