Commissary patrons advised to stock up for emergencies

By Jessica Newby, DeCA public affairs

FORT LEE, Va. – This year marks the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Andrew, which slammed into South Florida Aug. 24, 1992, devastating Homestead, Florida City and parts of Miami before it crossed the Gulf of Mexico to strike the Louisiana coastline. It's a sober reminder that your commissary wants to help make sure you are prepared for any disaster.

Disaster preparedness can help improve your odds for survival, and the Defense Commissary Agency and its industry partners are working together to offer items needed for severe weather survival kits at low prices, said DeCA Director of Sales Chris Burns.

"Andrew's anniversary drives home the point that everyone should be prepared," Burns said. "Your commissary can help you do that. We've got lots of items to stock up your survival kit."

Since April 1, 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 DeCA's severe weather promotional package that runs until Oct. 31.

The package coincides with the prime times for both tornado and hurricane seasons in the United States. Tornado season runs from April to July. The National Weather reports that 2011 was a record breaking year; it was the second most active year in recent memory, with a total of 1,690. April 2011 has the greatest monthly total of tornadoes in modern record keeping with 758. April also holds the record for the greatest number of tornadoes on one day – April 27 – with 200.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30 and includes the North Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is predicting a less-active season this year versus other years. Predictions from the NOAA call for a 70 percent chance for about nine to 15 named storms, four to eight of which could become hurricanes; and one to three 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 the NOAA is calling for a less-active hurricane season, it still pays to be prepared," Burns said. "All of our customers – no matter where they are – should be prepared for any disaster. The commissary can supply our customers with what they need to survive."

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)

Two employees restock paper products at the Yokosuka Commissary. All stores in Japan operated regular hours after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, even though some locations experienced rolling blackouts and operated for short periods using generator power.

Photo by Defense Commissary Agency

• Paper goods – writing paper, paper plates, paper towels and 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

• Multipurpose tool

• Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates and insurance policies)

• Cell phone with chargers

• Family and emergency contact information

• Extra cash

• Emergency blanket

• Maps of the area

• Blankets or sleeping bags

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 2012 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 .

CFAY Safety provides tips for keeping your children safe

From CFAY Safety Office

Accidental deaths of children follow a tragic but consistent pattern every year. The most common causes of the accidental death of children in the home are fires, drowning, falls, choking, and poisoning. Below are some recommendations to protect our little ones from these avoidable hazards.

Drowning: Always watch your kids whenever in the tub. Not only can they turn on the hot water, but children under age 4 can drown in a few moments in only an inch of water or same goes for large buckets.

Watch out for open toilet bowls, pails of water, kiddie pools and of course swimming pools, and large bodies of water especially this summer. Swimming lessons are a good idea, but they don't make your child drown-proof. Their only protection is parents' close supervision.

Choking: Children can choke on any small object, such as buttons, crayons, jewelry, coins, and many other types of food like popcorn, grapes, and foods with seeds. Keep small round toys, plastic bags, and toys with long strings out of small children's reach. Check the age appropriateness of toys before purchase. Contact the on base American Red Cross at 243-7490 or website for classes on CPR and Heimlich maneuver.

Poisoning: Keep medicines, alcohol, and cleaning supplies out of reach and locked away. Install safety latches on all cupboards, drawers and closet doors. Don't take medications in front of a young child or call pills, "candy". Post the phone number of your local Japanese Poison Control off base 0298-52-9999 or USNH Emergency Room 243-7141/8597 for suspected poisoning. Don't hang up until the other person does.

Slips, trips and falls: Install child safety gate at top and bottom of stairways, but avoid the type with large openings that can cause head entrapment. If you can shove a 6-inch ball through, then it is dangerous for kids. Keep floors and stairs well-lit and free of clutter. Remove sharp edge furniture, or use stick on edge guards. Never rely on a window screen to prevent falls, and keep anything a child could climb up, such as desk, away from the window. For more information contact the CFAY Safety Department at 243-5519.