

# **NEWS FROM SCDCA**

## **South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs**



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

September 13, 2005

Release #05-049

SCDCA Media Contact: Public Information and Education Division

1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

(803) 734.4200 (direct number)

Email: [scdca@dca.state.sc.us](mailto:scdca@dca.state.sc.us)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Columbia, S.C. ---As Tropical Storm Ophelia churns off the coast of South Carolina and could possibly become a Hurricane, Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator of the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs, is urging consumers to take steps to protect themselves before, during and after a disastrous storm. While most consumers stock up on milk, bread and can foods, there are a few other things that consumers should consider:**

- **Fill clean containers ( and perhaps the bathtub) with water.**
- **Store a supply of candles, flashlight batteries, handy wipes and propane if you have a gas grill, as well as can food items.**
- **If your home is more than one story and you live near the coast, consider the possibility that the storm surge could flood your home, so get as many valuables as possible to the second floor.**
- **Gather personal/important papers, such as insurance policies, contracts, social security cards and banking information. If you need to evacuate, take this information with you.**

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About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers. Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education. For more information, visit [www.scconsumer.gov](http://www.scconsumer.gov)

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- **If you rent, check with your insurance agent and see if you can get renters insurance for your household goods. It may be too late if the storm is approaching, but it is worth a call.**
- **Take pictures or video your home and its contents before the storm arrives.**
- **Follow the Governor's Orders. If there is a mandatory evacuation, it will only be because the Governor determines that a dangerous storm is likely to hit the state.**

**If the storm hits with force, here are some things to remember:**

- **If your home is damaged, take reasonable precautions to guard against further damage. For example, if your roof is damaged, cover it with a tarp to keep the rain out. Your insurance contract may require this, and it may prevent you from having further damage to insulation, dry wall or other household items.**
- **Keep receipts and records of your expenses; your insurance company may reimburse you.**
- **Be careful who you deal with. Remember that "disaster vultures" may descend after a disaster. Make sure that contractors you deal with are licensed and bonded and always get multiple bids. Don't agree to anything until after you have spoken with your insurance company's adjuster.**

**To assist consumers in preparing for Hurricanes and other natural disasters, the Department has developed a Hurricane Preparedness Guide. This Guide includes what to do before, during and after the storm, along with tips on home repair, identity theft and a model contract.**

**For more information or to request a free copy of the Department's Hurricane Preparedness Guide, please call 1-800-922-1594(toll-free in SC) or 803-734-4195 or visit our website at: [www.sconsumer.gov](http://www.sconsumer.gov).**

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