



To: All News Editors

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NWC URGES WATER STORAGE FOR HURRICANE SEASON

The National Water Commission (NWC), Jamaica's primary provider of essential water and wastewater services, is urging its customers across Jamaica to make appropriate arrangements for water storage as a critical part of their preparations for the 2009 Atlantic Hurricane Season.

According to Corporate Public Relations Manager at the utility, Charles Buchanan, NWC urges all its customers to follow the advice of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) and store as much water as possible to last at least 7 days for every member of the household.

The Corporate Public Relations Manager says, "Everyone has a responsibility to do their part and be prepared by storing potable water for an emergency. There is no such thing as a 'hurricane-proof' water system anywhere in the world and some countries actually require, by law, that householders do personal water storage. We are simply asking that persons do the right thing, prepare for the hurricane season and store water," Mr. Buchanan said.

Even while reporting a high state of readiness in its disaster preparedness machinery, the NWC is at the same time cautioning that water systems are inherently vulnerable to Storms and Hurricanes and hence customers need to have personal storage in the event the systems are affected by events in the just-started Atlantic Hurricane Season.

Pointing to some of the inherent risks to water systems, Charles Buchanan says many of the 460 water supply systems across the island, of necessity, have intakes in riverbeds and are

susceptible to flood damages and blockages; of the other systems, wells are often located in low lying plains and susceptible to flooding; most systems are heavily dependent on National Power Grid for operations; more than 9,000 kilometres of undulating pipeline susceptible to land slides, pipeline dislocation and breakages; water sources are at risk of contamination and muddy inflows (high turbidity) after heavy rainfall; and most water systems are at least partly situated in very remote areas that are difficult to access.

“Within the limitation of our available resources, the NWC has already taken several steps to prepare for this Hurricane Season, and has taken into consideration both the best practices within the water industry worldwide and the cumulative experiences of our employees in preparing our particular systems to operate as much as possible during the current hurricane season”, says Corporate Public Relations Manager Charles Buchanan.

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