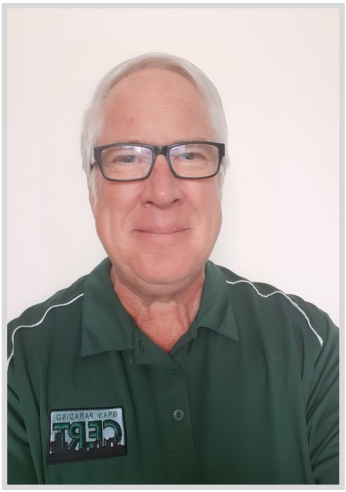
The GP Responder

March 2025

https://gp-cert.org

Vol. 6, Issue 1

Message from GP-CERT Administrative Lead, Gordon Holtby



I hope everyone enjoys this 19th edition of the GP Responder newsletter. As we get closer to the 2025 hurricane season, the recent outbreak of powerful storms that left at least 42 people dead across the Midwest and the South highlights the need for all of us to remain vigilant and prepared throughout the year.

Our first article highlights something that may have severe consequences for all of us in hurricane-prone areas. Please read it carefully, and if you disagree with dismant–ling the National Weather Service, contact your elected representatives as I have done and let them know how you feel. The second article, submitted by Brian Sheftel, is apropos with warmer weather just around the corner – Heat Related Emergencies, and how to both recognize and treat them. The third article, submitted by Rich MacCready is on Generator Care, something many of us need to review prior to 2025's hurricane season. Our fourth article continues our practice of high-lighting key members of the Command Team. In addition to being the Zone 2 Lead, Steve Phillips was instrumental in developing GP-CERT's communications infra- structure and plan in cooperation with Tom Porada. Thank you Steve for all you do for both GP-CERT and TARC. Last not least with summer around the corner, we wrap up with an article on heat exhaustion.

All residents are welcome to join the all-volunteer GP-CERT team. GP-CERT is about empowering our community – both educating our volunteers about disaster response, and communicating safety messages and in-formation to our residents. If interested in learning more about GP-CERT, please reach out to any of the volun-teers listed at the end of this newsletter for more information. Our next bi-monthly meeting is on Tuesday, May 13th, 2025 @ 6:30 pm in the Craft Room, so please feel free to join us at that time.

Sincerely,
Gordon Holtby

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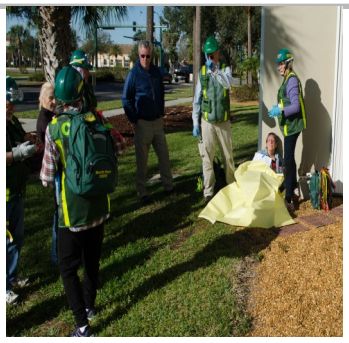
Volunteers Needed!



GP-CERT is a volunteer organization that deploys in the aftermath of disasters in the community. There is a continued need for volunteers to assist in areas such as damage assessment, access control, communications, and triage (basic first aid). Volunteers will be assigned to tasks based upon their desires, skills and experience. Background/training in these areas is encouraged but not required. The GP-CERT training and preparation will allow community members to respond and assist each other in those hours or days between the incident and the return of our property management staff. For more information or to volunteer, please go to the GP-CERT website at https://gp-cert.org or contact Gordon Holtby at gordon.holtby@gmail.com

A Serious Note: The WeatherTiger Newsletter for March 2025

Dr. Ryan Truchelut

Taking stock of what firing NOAA employees and dismantling NWS infrastructure means for the upcoming hurricane season and beyond. On November 8, 2024, from Brownsville to the Florida Keys the people of the Gulf Coast went about their daily lives as usual. Schools and businesses were open, after-work social sports teams practiced, complimentary peanuts were consumed at the Texas Roadhouse Grill.

Graphic courtesy of Pixabay and The Digital Artist

All this is remarkable only because about 350 miles from Tampa and New Orleans, Category 3 Hurricane Rafael lurked in the central Gulf of Mexico. Thanks to an accurate forecast from the National Hurricane Center that Rafael would harmlessly dissipate over water, no U.S. coastal watches or warnings were issued. No one on the Gulf Coast was asked to evacuate, or even to prepare for a hurricane. Life continued on, as unperturbed as if Rafael had never existed.

The story of modern meteorology is the story of this kind of quiet miracle. Most days, the public doesn't think too hard about the weather other than a quick glance at an app or the TV news, and certainly doesn't ponder how that forecast arrives, fully formed, on your device of choice. While no predictive science will ever be free from uncertainty, generally accurate and reliable forecasts are part of the unremarked background of existence, like the air itself.

Of course, the public availability of free, accurate weather forecasts is not effortless. Wrangling domesticated predictability from the dynamic chaos of the ocean and atmosphere is the end result of generations of effort from forecasters and researchers, plus the continual maintenance and incremental improvement of complex observational and computational systems.

Perhaps nowhere has this progress been more dramatic than in my own chosen sub-domain of expertise, hurricane forecasting. A couple of weeks ago, the National Hurricane Center released verification statistics for their forecasts issued during the 2024 hurricane season, which tallied $200 billion in U.S. damages.

Continuing a decades-long trend, the NHC beat their own accuracy records last year. In 2024, a forecast 5 days out was as accurate as one with just 2 days of lead time in 2000. That means fewer false alarms, narrower evacuation orders, reduced storm anxiety, and billions of dollars in efficiencies for the economy as a whole. For those savings, you can thank the dedicated forecasters who work at the NHC, decades of NOAA investments in observation and modeling technology, and researchers like my friend Dr. Andy Hazelton, who evaluates the next-generation HAFS hurricane model that enabled those skillful forecasts in 2024. Andy was fired last week, swept up despite exemplary performance reviews in a purge of approximately 700 "probationary" (read: at their current job for less than a year) NOAA and NWS employees.

Unfortunately, these firings had the consequence of not only terminating Andy's work improving hurricane models, but also excluding buoy data from ocean analyses, cancelling weather balloon launches, and straining understaffed NWS local weather forecast offices to the breaking point.

Nor is that likely to be the end of it. There are indications of further disruptions to come, including the possible liquidation of NOAA-affiliated contractors, dismissal of thousands more NWS forecasters, and termination of leases on operations centers housing critical radar, satellite, historical data, and forecast infrastructure. If these changes go forward, you'll notice. Given the robust and growing slate of private weather companies in the United States, it's understandable to assume that your app, the Weather Channel, or people like me can step in to seamlessly fill any gaps in demand that hobbling the NWS might create.

We can't.

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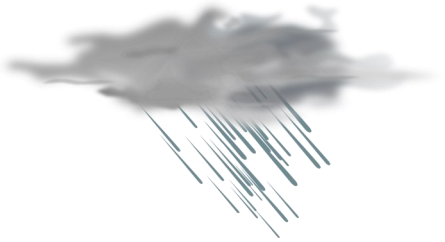

Graphic courtesy of Pixabay and OpenClipArt-Vectors

Despite accounting for one-thousandth of the federal budget, NOAA and the NWS produce routine forecasts, created by trained human experts, for the entire country, plus lifesaving severe weather warnings. NOAA also operates the computer modeling, radar, satellite, windsonde, station, and buoy networks that inform those forecasts.

By law, all of this modeling and data must be provided for free to the public. That gives everyone from massive companies like IBM to small entrepreneurs like me the freedom to use that trove of information to develop new applications (like WeatherTiger's real-time seasonal hurricane forecast and agricultural yield models), supporting the specific needs of our clients and deriving yet more value from the data.

If NOAA operations are crippled, almost all the modeling and data that underpins private weather forecast products goes away as well, leaving us blind. Your phone's weather app is very likely an AI repackaging of forecast output from the NWS' suite of weather models, and your radar app draws directly from NOAA's national network of 160+ radars. While other weather models, like the European, do exist, those models are only as good as the data fed into them. Slashing NOAA's observational, radar, and satellite networks will greatly degrade the skill of these forecasts as well. Almost everything that I do at WeatherTiger hinges on NOAA data, which is true of weather-dependent enterprises as a whole. The capacity to replicate NOAA/NWS public safety functions or data sources simply does not exist in the private sector.

For what it's worth, I will continue to write forecasts and discussions this season with whatever information is at hand. Hopefully there will not be interruptions to the reliable availability of U.S. weather data, but I am actively planning for contingencies to mitigate that risk.

If you disagree with dismantling the National Weather Service and replacing it with nothing as tornado, flood, fire, and hurricane seasons approach, contact your elected representatives and let them know how you feel.

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Heat Related Emergencies

Submitted by Brian Sheftel

With the temperatures shortly to be exceeding 90 degrees every day in Florida, our residents are susceptible to heat emergencies. What are they? How can they be treated and prevented? Below are the 3 most common types of heat related emergencies to be concerned about:

Heat Cramps: Painful muscle cramps in the abdomen, arms and legs, usually during strenuous activity. Heavy sweating is present. How do you treat Heat Cramps? Stop and move to a cool location. Drink sports drink or water. Gently stretch or massage the muscles affected.

Heat Exhaustion: Sweating, thirst, pale cool skin, weakness, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps. Condition can worsen quickly. How do you treat Heat Exhaustion? Stop working and try to lie down in a cool location. Remove clothing. Cool the person (water, spray, fan). Drink sports drink or water.

Heat Stroke: The body can no longer control its temperature and the body temperature rises rapidly. This is a life-threatening emergency. High body temperature, dry or moist, flushed skin, confusion, dizziness, slurred speech, seizures, severe headache, fast breathing and pulse. Unresponsiveness. How do you treat Heat Stroke? Call 911. Quickly cool the victim by immersing in water up to neck; spraying, sponging or showering with cool water; placing ice packs against the groin, armpits and sides of the neck.

How to prevent heat related emergencies. Drink plenty of fluids, eat a proper meal and be well rested.

Generator Care

Submitted by Rich MacCready

If you are like me, Milton was the first time I used my generator for its intended purpose. Yes, I have owned the generator for two years now, but it was an "after Ian" purchase. Now, I was a good owner, I did test run the generator but only twice. Luckily the second time was three weeks prior to Milton. I had a total run time of about 45 minutes on the generator. It has a 13,000 Watt "startup" and a 11,500 Watt "continuous" rating, designed to meet my house needs. It is gasoline only and the gasoline and the engine oil are separated. I ran the generator for about 16 hours during Milton while we waited for the commercial electrical power to return. For us, that was Saturday morning. I ended up using about 10 gallons of gasoline. I used it to keep the refrigerator cold, Internet router up and a couple of fans. We benefited from a consistent breeze after the storm, so we chose to not run the air conditioning.

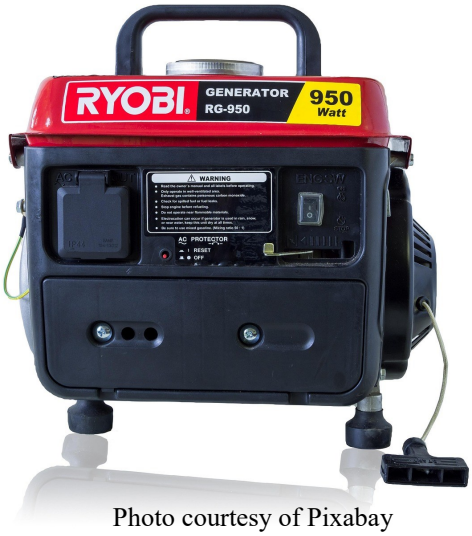

Photo courtesy of Pixabay

For the generator, I want to do what I can to ensure that it will start the next time it is needed, or when I perform the next test. Here are the items I did or will be performing shortly on my generator.

1. Gasoline –
(a) I monitor the weather, and I bought 15 gallons of gasoline about five days before Milton hit.
(b) I have a gasoline suction device (battery operated) to pull gas out of my cars if needed.
(c) I usually let the gasoline run dry in the generator as I do not want any gas in the generator over long periods of time.
(d) For my test runs, I use a small amount of gasoline, and I turn off the generator by closing the "fuel flow" valve versus just turning off the generator. This "running it dry" may take 2 minutes for the generator to run out of gasoline. This prevents any ethanol buildup in the carburetor.
(e) If you want to keep gasoline in the generator for a long period of time, I suggest you add a "gas stabilizer" to the fuel tank.

2. Storage –
(a) Keep in an environmentally controlled area, namely, to prevent rain or wind, not so much the heat of the Summer.
(b) I added a little dolly I picked up from Harbour Freight for around $12 that is about half the size of a normal dolly. It fits perfectly under the rubber toed legs of my generator. It allows me to move the generator from the storage area to its running location without the typical "lift and jerk" movement. Now, I just lift it at the end and slid the little dolly out from underneath it when I configure it to run..

3. Oil – Yes, I need to change the oil. According to what I read, you change it after the first 5 hours and then again every 50 hours.

4. Air filter – I need to check to ensure if is not clogged. I do not anticipate this to be the case, but it needs to be part of the maintenance checklist.

5. Test Runs – Yes, I'm not as good at this, but a test run for about 15 minutes about 3-4 times a year is recommended.

6. Spark Arrestor - It is a small screen in your exhaust pipe. Look for it. Easy to clean with an old toothbrush. Do this when you change the oil.

Meet Zone 3 Lead—Steve Phillips

Steve and his wife Patti purchased a home in Gran Paradiso in 2015, and moved here full time in 2017. Steve retired, after almost 40 years, working as an engineer at a federal government research laboratory outside of Pittsburgh, PA. He filled many roles at the lab, including Fluid Systems Engineer, Information Technology Engineer, and Communications Security Control Officer and Custodian. He also served as an Emergency Medical Technician both on a municipal 911 Advanced Life Support ambulance service, and for the in-house emergency service at the laboratory. As an EMT, Steve participated in numerous large-scale emergency drills including Chemical, Nuclear, and Biological scenarios and multi-agency response. He has been a licensed Amateur Radio operator since 1976, holding an Extra Class license and is very active with the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club in Venice.
He is also an avid scuba diver and is certified as a scuba Instructor for multiple agencies. Steve's other hobbies include riding his motorcycle and tinkering with his antique British sports car.

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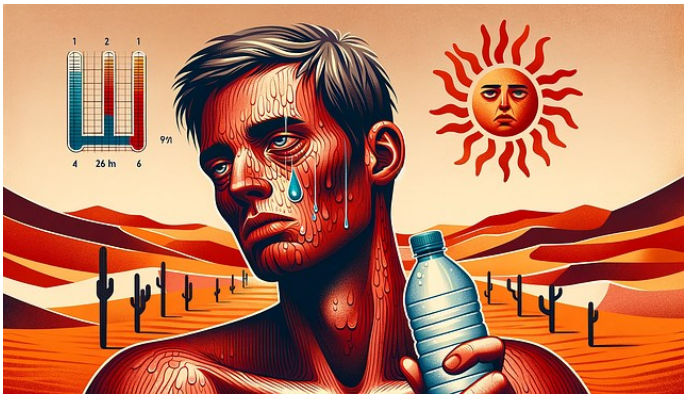
Heat Exhaustion: How to Recognize the Signs

Healthy people who aren't used to heat can sweat more than six cups of liquid in an hour on a super-hot day. Heat exhaustion can happen when you lose too much water and salt. Your body can overheat and struggle to cool down.



Graphic courtesy of Pixabay/dlsdkcgl

Symptoms include:
- ◊ heavy sweating
- ◊ cold, pale and clammy skin
- ◊ fast, weak pulse
- ◊ nausea or vomiting
- ◊ muscle pain or cramps
- ◊ tiredness or weakness
- ◊ dizziness
- ◊ headache
- ◊ fainting

How do you treat heat exhaustion: Spring into action if you notice someone else with these symptoms — or if you have them yourself. If you cool off within 30 minutes, you can help prevent serious health issues. Your first step is to bring your body temperature down. Some strategies that work fast:

- ◊ move to a cool place (in front of a fan or air conditioning)
- ◊ loosen your clothes
- ◊ sip some water or a sports drink
- ◊ place a cool, wet cloth on your skin
- ◊ take a cool bath
- ◊ spray water on your body with a mister
- ◊ lie down and raise your feet

Get medical help right away if you are throwing up throwing up, symptoms worsen, or if symptoms last more than 30 minutes.

The Gran Paradiso Community Emergency Response Team (GP-CERT) has been formed to assist neighbors in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The team is comprised of your neighbors who have undertaken the appropriate training to assist where needed.

Please submit articles and/or corrections to the newsletter publisher, Carole Myles, at cmyles252@gmail.com.

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GP Zone Map	https://gp-cert.org/?page_id=521

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CERT COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM