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## **Seven Travel Tips Offered to Help Travelers Weather Hurricane Season**

*Eight Days Until Hurricane Season Begins and MacNair Travel Advises Travelers to Prepare*

ALEXANDRIA, VA—May 24, 2007 – MacNair Travel & Cruises/American Express announced today tips for travelers preparing for vacations during hurricane season (June 1—November 30). Summer travel is on the rise and the threat of hurricanes is not stopping people from taking vacations to more hurricane prone destinations, according to MacNair’s Travel & Cruises Division Director Skip Fortier. MacNair has outlined tips that travelers can employ to ensure smooth sailing throughout hurricane designated months.

“Whether you are taking a cruise or visiting an all-inclusive resort in the Caribbean, a traveler’s best defense during the hurricane season is to purchase travel insurance,” Fortier said. “Even the basic travel insurance will provide some compensation if flights are cancelled or a resort is closed down due to a hurricane.”

Since the 2005 devastating hurricane season, third party insurance companies have made many enhancements to their policies surrounding hurricanes including that if an area is determined uninhabitable, the traveler is covered. Prior to 2005, if an airport was open, yet the resort was closed, the traveler was not covered.

“By purchasing travel insurance, more options are available to those going on vacation. Insurance provides piece of mind for travelers in knowing their travel investment is protected,” Fortier adds.

The National Hurricane Center is predicting an active hurricane season with up to 17 named storms. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said seven to 10 of those storms could become hurricane, with three to five becoming major hurricanes of category three or stronger.

Fortier says “You need to plan ahead. While we can not forecast the weather for this summer, we can provide help in dealing with the variety of weather conditions vacationers may face that could take a toll on vacations.”

Following are some recommended travel strategies to help prepare for the onset of hurricane season:

### **1. Use a travel agent.**

Purchasing vacation packages through a travel agency will give travelers the peace of mind in knowing that travel professionals are their advocates and ready to help them through difficult travel scenarios. If a vacation is booked online, a vacationer may find they are on their own and it may be difficult to get through to one of their representatives.

### **2. Purchase travel insurance.**

Different travel companies offer a variety of vacation insurance plans. Working with a travel agent, they can assist a traveler in which plan provides them with desired coverage. Some companies offer a “cancel

for any reason” waiver, allowing travelers to see that a hurricane might be heading in the direction of their vacation destination. With this type of plan, the travel agent can quickly use their resources to find another optimal vacation spot and rebook clients so their vacation is not lost.

### **3. Do not make assumptions.**

Even if you purchase non-refundable tickets, some airlines will attempt to accommodate their passengers in the event of schedule delays and cancellations due to hurricanes. And if a hurricane hit a destination a traveler might be frequenting next month, do not assume that the resort sustained damage. A travel agent can provide up-to-date information on status of resort and destination conditions.

### **4. Be one step ahead.**

Always call the airport early to check on the status of your flights. Many airlines allow online check-in up to 24-hours prior to departure. Check the weather at your destination a few days before your trip. Knowing in advance what the expected weather pattern is going to be will help a vacationer to prepare and take necessary steps prior to their trip.

### **5. Sailing around the storm.**

If taking a cruise vacation, there is a good chance that a vacation will not be ruined by a hurricane. The cruise industry has state-of-the-art technology on all of their ships and they can alter their itineraries to avoid oncoming hurricanes. If they have to cancel the entire voyage, passengers will receive a future cruise credit from most of the cruise lines. And if weather causes a cruiser to miss the sailing, they can always catch up to ship at first port of call. Of course, having travel insurance provides added protection and covers many unforeseen expenses.

### **6. Pack light and with technology tools.**

Whenever possible, pack light. Checked luggage complicates things if a flight is rescheduled or re-routed. Be sure to carry a fully charged cell phone and have the travel agent’s number and after-hours emergency assistance number in hand in case alternate travel arrangements need to be made. Even while waiting in line at airport, call your travel agent as they might be able to resolve issue before a traveler ever makes it to front of line.

### **7. Take an extra day.**

Particularly when cruising out of southern ports such as Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa, Miami and San Juan, consider spending a pre-night prior to cruise in the departure city. This has multiple benefits including a day to unwind and get into vacation mode and gives a cushion in case of delayed flights due to inclement weather.

The most important advice is to expect the unexpected, according to Fortier. “If you are prepared for everything, you can handle just about anything – even a hurricane.”

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