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Poll: Many not ready for hurricanes

By EVAN S. BENN

An alarming number of Floridians and residents of other hurricane-prone states do not have survival kits or plans for getting through a storm, according to a poll to be released Thursday.

The Mason-Dixon poll found that two-thirds of people surveyed have no hurricane-supply kit and more than half have no disaster plan for their families.

Other key findings:

- 54 percent of respondents said they don't feel vulnerable to a hurricane.
- 85 percent said they have done nothing in the past year to make their homes stronger.
- 13 percent said they might not or would not evacuate even if ordered to do so.

Gov. Charlie Crist on Thursday will join weather forecasters and emergency managers at the National Hurricane Center in West Miami-Dade to announce the full results of the poll and urge residents to prepare for hurricane season. The six-month season begins Sunday.

They also will discuss the launch of this year's National Hurricane Survival Initiative, a coalition of government experts, relief organizations and corporations. The coalition commissioned the poll and has produced a 30-minute television program to help residents prepare for and get through the 2008 hurricane season.

Partners in the initiative include the National Hurricane Center, the Salvation Army, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Emergency Management Association and corporate sponsors Travelers Insurance and Plylox.

The poll surveyed 1,100 adults from 18 Gulf and Atlantic coast states who were interviewed May 6 through May 12. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.