



201 Park Washington Court  
Falls Church, VA 22046-4527  
[www.iaem.com](http://www.iaem.com)



Contact: **Larry J. Gispert**  
IAEM First Vice President  
[gispertl@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:gispertl@hillsboroughcounty.org)  
Phone: (813) 276-2385

## NEWS RELEASE

### **IAEM Expresses Concern that NOAA's Assessment of the National Hurricane Center May Negatively Impact Customer Service to Emergency Managers and the Public**

**July 5, 2007 (Falls Church, Va.)** – The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) today expressed great concern about the timing of an assessment of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Hurricane Center (NHC), located in Miami-Dade County, Florida. IAEM's concern is rooted in the potential disruption to the Center's customer service to local emergency managers providing protection of lives and property while the hurricane season is in progress.

"It's difficult for me to understand why NOAA is taking up so much National Hurricane Center staff time with the assessment when we're in the middle of hurricane season," said Larry Gispert, IAEM First Vice President and Emergency Manager for Hillsborough County, Florida. "I really don't want the folks at the National Hurricane Center to be distracted by anything that will divert their attention from their mission to provide me with the hurricane information I need – information that is critical to ensure that people and businesses in my county can make informed decisions impacting hundreds of thousands of people and millions of dollars of business revenue."

Gispert further notes that in the process of getting ready for the 2007 hurricane season, NHC Director Bill Proenza made remarks questioning whether NOAA was adequately providing funding, personnel and updated technology that would allow the Center to maintain its premier status in tropical storm prediction. "Congress should consider an independent assessment of the National Weather Service and its National Hurricane Center," said Gispert. "I'm concerned about the chilling effect that this ill-timed surprise management 'assessment' by NOAA may have on an open and serious discussion of the future needs of this vital Center."

### **About IAEM**

The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is a non-profit organization consisting of more than 3,600 emergency management professionals from local, state and federal governments, the military, private industry, and volunteer organizations. IAEM has consistently promoted the goals of saving lives and protecting property during emergencies and disasters since its founding in 1952 as the U.S. Civil Defense Council.

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