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Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences

News Release

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Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences Issues Hurricane Hazard Advisory

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS) has activated its Hurricane Preparedness Plan. Activation of the plan includes a public service announcement regarding the risks of death associated with Hurricane landfall and recovery. The HCIFS attributed 12 deaths to Hurricane Ike in 2008:

- 41% of deaths resulted from carbon monoxide poisoning associated with improper use of gas powered generators
- 33% of deaths resulted from falls or falling debris
- 25% of deaths resulted from residential fires

The HCIFS urges the citizens of Harris County to use caution in preparation for, and during the aftermath of a storm. This includes ensuring adequate ventilation when using gas-powered generators. Citizens are urged not to use generators inside a residence, inside a partially enclosed space, or in any other setting where family members may be exposed to exhaust fumes. 41% of the deaths that occurred in Harris County as a result of Hurricane Ike could have been prevented by proper use of generators. Candles are a frequent, reliable and convenient source of light in blackout situations; however candles (or other open flames) should never be left unattended.

For additional guidance on the avoidance of hurricane-related hazards refer to the following websites:

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/hu_hazard.shtm

Harris County Homeland Security and Emergency Management:

<http://www.hcoem.org/>