

Stock Up & Stay Safe Thanks to Sales Tax Holiday

Holiday Begins Friday Morning and Continues Through the Weekend

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Thursday encouraged Alabamians to remember this weekend's state sales tax holiday for severe weather preparedness items and stock up on essential supplies at a reduced cost.

"The time is now to go ahead and get what you and your family will need in the event of an emergency and its aftermath," Governor Bentley said. "Whether it's something as simple as a battery-powered radio or something as large as a generator, the items covered by this sales tax holiday can help you weather a storm and stay safe in the days following a natural disaster."

This is Alabama's first-ever state sales tax holiday for severe weather preparedness items. The holiday will begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, July 6 and will continue through Sunday, July 8. The sales tax holiday is a direct result of the work accomplished by Governor Bentley's Tornado Recovery Action Council. The council was appointed by the Governor following the historic April 27, 2011, tornado outbreak.

Council members suggested the holiday as a method of encouraging people to make sure they have the supplies they need to help them stay safe during severe weather and its immediate aftermath. Senator Greg Reed of Walker County and Representative Bill Poole of Tuscaloosa County sponsored legislation to create the holiday. The measure was approved by the Alabama Legislature in April and was immediately signed by Governor Bentley.

As part of the holiday, items related to severe weather preparedness (listed below) will be exempted from state sales and use taxes. A provision also allows counties and municipalities to join the state by removing their own local sales and use taxes from the same items during the same weekend. More than 200 local governments across the state are participating. A list of participating municipalities can be found on the Alabama Department of Revenue's website – www.revenue.alabama.gov.

"The number of local governments joining the state and waiving their local sales taxes for storm preparedness items is very impressive," Alabama Revenue Commissioner Julie Magee said. "We encourage everyone to take advantage of the holiday and stock up on storm preparedness items ahead of time so they can be better prepared when severe weather strikes."

Items covered by the sales tax holiday include:

- Several types of batteries, including cell phone batteries and chargers
- Battery-powered radios
- NOAA weather radios
- Flashlights, lanterns, and emergency glow sticks
- First aid kits

- Duct tape
- Plywood, window film or other materials, specifically designed to protect window openings
- Portable generators
- Gas or Diesel fuel containers
- Tarpaulins and plastic sheeting
- Any non-electric food storage cooler or water storage container
- Non-electric can openers
- Any artificial ice, blue ice, ice packs, or reusable ice
- Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors
- Ground anchor systems such as cords or rope or tie-down kits

The covered items must cost \$60 or less, except for generators, which are covered as long as they cost \$1,000 or less.

Beginning in 2013, the annual sales tax holiday will be held during the last full weekend of February. This will place the holiday in close proximity to the annual Severe Weather Awareness Week and ahead of Alabama's primary severe weather season.

"Our goals with this annual sales tax holiday are to raise awareness, to increase preparedness, and, ultimately, to save lives," Governor Bentley said. "We have seen nature's fury from tornadoes to hurricanes and other storms. I encourage people to use this weekend's sales tax holiday as a good chance to prepare for future disasters."

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For additional information, contact the Governor's Press Office at 334-242-7150.