



October 13, 2004
For immediate release

**The “Storm of the Century” provides a golden opportunity to
evaluate our preparedness for the next one**

TORONTO, ONTARIO - As we mark the 50th anniversary of Hurricane Hazel this week, The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) is advising GTA residents to think through their preparedness for another storm of the same magnitude or greater.

Natural disasters are occurring more frequently and with more intensity than ever. Since 1995, atmospheric and oceanic conditions have favoured this increased activity and it is expected to continue over the next few years. The recent spate of hurricanes and the resulting destruction in the Caribbean and Southern United States is evidence of this. This new century will bring a new “Great One.”

Paul Kovacs, ICLR's Executive Director said, “The trends in disaster losses over the past few years are alarming and in fact, not sustainable. Canadians are aware of this increased activity yet many homeowners have not taken steps to protect themselves and mitigate against the possibility of loss of life and property. Sometimes, unfortunately it takes a tragic and meaningful occasion such as the anniversary of Hurricane Hazel to stir action.”

There has been considerable progress since Hurricane Hazel passed through the region in 1954. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority was established in 1957 to direct flood control planning. The provincial government has acted to develop and implement new legislation regarding land use that has seen the diversion of populated areas to safer areas, and new building codes to ensure safer buildings and infrastructure in areas most prone to damage from hurricanes.

Kovacs added, “Perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is that many disaster losses can be prevented if people take time to plan ahead. Simple, low-cost actions taken today can lessen future losses.”

Some preventative measures are:

- Installing storm shutters to cover all exposed windows and glass surfaces
- Covering window glass with a protective film so that it will not shatter if broken
- Replacing gravel-rock landscaping material with shredded bark
- Keeping trees and shrubs trimmed and removing weak branches
- Securing or storing patio furniture and outside barbecues
- Cleaning leaves and debris from roof gutters, and removing vulnerable belongings from basement floors.

These tips and other helpful information such as how to respond if a hurricane strikes you and your family are available on ICLR's website, www.iclr.org

Established in 1998 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR's research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

For further information, please contact: Glenn McGillivray, Managing Director, ICLR, tel. 416/364-8677, ext. 3216, fax 416/364-5889, gmcgillivray@iclr.org