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Vacationing at Virginia Beach during Hurricane Sandy

Pat Perriello | Nov. 1, 2012 NCR Today
Hurricane Sandy

About three months ago, we were trying to decide where we were going to take a one-week vacation. I somehow managed to decide on a week at Virginia Beach during Hurricane Sandy. I think such careful planning requires special talent.

We started out Friday morning with Sandy scheduled to hit Virginia Beach sometime Saturday night. Our trip down from Maryland was uneventful, and the weather was good. Our two children and their spouses joined us for the weekend. There was a big 10k run on the beach Saturday morning with at least 2,000 participants. Virginia Beach did not seem to be in a panic. We felt we were in the hands of hurricane experts who knew exactly what to do. The six of us had a nice dinner Saturday evening, but the weather was starting to deteriorate.

Sandy was to be our first hurricane. We became very concerned about the kids getting back home safely on Sunday as the news and weather reports continued to worsen. We saw the kids off early Sunday morning, and except for some pretty high water at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, they all arrived home safely.

Now Norma and I were all alone and waiting for Sandy to arrive. The resort removed all the air conditioners from the oceanfront units to avoid damage, so we had no heat or air for two nights. They taped our windows shut so we could not go out on the balcony. The resort staff was busy tying down everything in sight. When I awoke at 6 a.m. Sunday, the staff was hard at work securing beach and pool chairs, tables, etc. The wind howled during the night through the missing air conditioning units. We watched the ocean during high tide lapping over the boardwalk, with waves reaching within a few feet of our building.

By Monday night, the storm was starting to wind down at Virginia Beach. Tuesday morning, I was able to walk on the boardwalk, and though windy, there was no rain. The sun shone brightly on the water. Just as the storm was leaving us, it slammed into Atlantic City and New York City. Blizzards were the order of the day in West Virginia. It makes one realize how lucky we were as we share our concern and prayers for those suffering in those areas devastated by Sandy.

As I walked on the beach Wednesday morning, I saw the Virginia Beach work crews still busy trying to minimize the damage from Hurricane Sandy. Workers with shovels scooped up every bit of sand from the boardwalk. Heavy graders dumped the recovered sand back onto the beach area. There is every indication that at least here in Virginia Beach, officials were ready for the storm. Yet any damage here is clearly minimal in comparison to what has occurred elsewhere.

We started out on our vacation with a certain amount of trepidation at the oncoming storm. It has been an interesting vacation for us, to say the least. As we prepare to head home Friday, we are thankful for the time we have spent here despite the tension of Hurricane Sandy. All in all, our vacation wound up being quite a success. As it turned out, it was at our home in Maryland where we lost power. As of this writing, we still have no power at home. I guess I made a wise choice after all in having us take off to Virginia Beach. The only missing ingredient is a T-shirt that reads, "I survived Sandy."

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