

Curfews imposed for area beaches

By **BETTIE FENNEL**

Staff Writer

Don't expect to get back on most area beaches today.

Evacuations for Hurricane Bertha have turned into curfews at most places as beach officials planned to keep the beaches closed while they assessed damage.

Kure Beach and Carolina Beach, which took heavy hits Friday, could be closed another couple of days. The New Hanover County Sheriff's Department, Wilmington Police Department and National Guard are helping keep people off those beaches and helping start today's cleanup.

Wrightsville Beach now has power but no water and sewer, said Sylvia Holleman, a town spokesman. Town officials won't let anyone on the island until a damage assessment is done.

In North Topsail Beach, where angry seas washed out a road and swallowed a pier, the beach could be closed several days, said Mayor Marty Bostic.

In Brunswick County, officials said they won't know if the beaches will open until midmorning today. High-rise bridges at Oak Island, Holden Beach and Ocean Isle will get particular scrutiny.

Cleanup behind the hurricane had begun in Wilmington and New

Hanover County before Bertha moved up the coast.

Wilmington officials are going to get a helping hand from the Charleston Police Department, said Charleston Chief Reuben Greenberg. Thirty-five officers will arrive this morning to take over traffic control and other routine duties so Wilmington's officers can handle other problems that only they can handle, Chief Greenberg said.

Cities across the country helped Charleston after Hurricane Hugo in 1989, Chief Greenberg said. So Charleston, he said, is trying to repay the debt. Charleston officers have helped out during California earthquakes and hurricanes in the Virgin Islands, Florida and other areas up and down the coast. Chief Greenberg briefs other departments on what to expect after storms and offers to assist with routine duties.

"We feel law enforcement is pretty important for the first three to four days," Chief Greenberg said.

The American Red Cross will be out today with county officials assessing damage to see if the relief agency needs additional resources. Along with the Salvation Army, the Red Cross will be roving with mobile units providing food and drinks to residents trying to clean up.

Once power is restored, the Red

Cross will open a service center to interview victims of the storm who need food, clothing or shelter.

Meanwhile, city departments were also making plans to help life return to normal.

The Parks and Recreation Department planned to do a preliminary damage assessment and clear major streets Friday evening. Work on other streets will begin this morning, said Gary Shell of the Parks and Recreation Department.

The city hadn't had time to assess damage to its waterfront dock, which was hit by a Navy ship that was being scrapped by Signa Recycling. The ship, which broke loose from its dock, hit the city's dock and several privately owned boats moored there, Mr. Shell said.

County officials planned to meet early today to go over their cleanup plans, said Bruce Shell, county finance director. To receive money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the county must follow certain guidelines established by FEMA, Mr. Shell said.

A preliminary survey of the damage will be done early today, he said. The state also plans to send in a crew to look at the county's needs, Mr. Shell said. But he was unsure when state officials would arrive.

For those who stayed put, a rough ride

By **CHRIS DAVIS**
and **MERTON VANCE**

Staff Writers

As Hurricane Bertha swirled across Kure Beach on Friday, Kenneth Tesh was shuffling pots and pans.

He was collecting the rainwater seeping through his damaged roof.

"I put pots and pans and buckets to keep the carpet dry upstairs," he said. For the most part, it was a success.

While thousands evacuated beaches across Southeastern North Carolina, Mr. Tesh was one of many who decided to stay behind. Mr. Tesh, who has spent time in Kure Beach off and on for 25 years, said he wanted to remain at his 2-year-old house there as Hurricane Bertha closed in.

"I decided to stay and protect it as best I could," said Mr. Tesh. "It wasn't as bad as I feared, but I felt it shake a little bit a time or two."

He boarded up all the windows, but peeked out a door to see black objects flying amid the wind and rain. His shingles.

"You could just see shingles flying everywhere. It made a terrible noise. It sounded like the roof was coming off," said Mr. Tesh, 59, who lives in Midway but spends much of his summers at his beach house.

He sent his wife, Nellie, to stay with their daughter and her family north of Wilmington, but decided Thursday night to stay behind and watch the house, at 737 Fort Fisher Blvd.

Most of the shingles on the north side of the house blew off and some water seeped into the lower floor. Otherwise, it was mostly intact.

He wasn't alone in choosing to ride



Staff photo: MEN DEVINS

A downed power line sparks (right) at Second and Marstellar streets Friday afternoon as firefighters survey the damage.

out the storm.

As winds began to kick up late Friday morning, Pete Astoske was putting plywood over the last few uncovered windows on his home in Long Beach. Although he hadn't lost power, he said tree limbs were whipping past his windows.

The Astoskes' decision to stay proved important to a handful of kittens the family found crying in the storm. Mr. Astoske's wife, Susan, rescued the three kittens, hoping their owners could reclaim them when the storm passes.

At Wrightsville Beach, Buddy Wiles was determined to protect his property. After town officials turned off the power, Mr. Wiles said he had little to do but watch the wind and rain batter the coast.

He was looking forward to Bertha's

passage. "If they let us leave, we'll go out and get dinner. If not, we'll sit here around the lantern and eat Beanitos-Weanitos," Mr. Wiles said, laughing.

In Surf City, Edna and Jim Malcolm decided to ride out the storm in their apartment, along with their four children and a neighbor.

"I can hear the shingles peel off the roof," Mrs. Malcolm said around 2 p.m.

It was the first hurricane for the Malcolms, who moved from Delaware two years ago after buying the Blue Roof Inn and neighboring sub shop. Tourists in the inn's nine rooms all left Wednesday, Mrs. Malcolm said.

At Ocean Isle Beach, police were determined to get everyone off the island, making one last sweep Thursday night. Officers found two people hiding out in their house. The glow of their television gave them away,