

Safe Tips

Hurricane Preparation

Know the difference between a hurricane *watch* and a hurricane *warning*:

- **Watch:** Hurricane conditions are possible in the specified area within 36 hours.
- **Warning:** Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area, usually within 24 hours.

To prepare your home and yourself for a hurricane

- Inspect your yard and property for potential problems that may cause damage during a hurricane.
- Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs, the strategically removing branches so that the wind can blow through.
- Move or secure any objects that could become airborne during high winds; bring inside any outdoor furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, and anything else that can be picked up by the wind. If possible, remove outdoor antennas.
- Consider installing protection for windows such as marine plywood panels of 1 ½ inch thickness; learn how to install the panels and be sure to mark where each panel will go when needed. Install anchors for the plywood and pre-drill holes in the plywood so that you can put it up quickly.
- *Note:* Tape does not prevent windows from breaking, so taping windows is not recommended.
- If there is time, move furniture, electronics and other valuables to the highest level of your home.
- Communicate with co-workers and family members often to ensure that everyone knows what to do and when.
- Keep paying close attention to the progress of the hurricane via any means possible; check often for official bulletins on radio, TV or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.
- Be ready to act quickly if and when a hurricane warning is issued.
- Listen to announcements from local officials and leave if told to do so.
- Fuel vehicles in case it is necessary to evacuate the area.

- Check and secure mobile structure tie downs.
- Stock up on canned food and other non-perishable items; be sure to have a manual can opener.
- Check radio and flashlight batteries and be sure to have extra batteries on hand.
- Be sure to have an adequate supply of special medicines and prescription drugs.
- Be sure to have first aid supplies.
- Wedge sliding glass doors to prevent lifting from their tracks.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings if not instructed by officials to turn off utilities. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly.
- Review evacuation plans. Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter and ask for the community preparedness plan. Plan an evacuation route that will take you 20-50 miles inland.
- Board up garage and porch doors.
- Fill clean containers with several days supply of drinking water.
- Find shelter for domestic animals and be sure to have a supply of food and drinking water for animals on hand.

Once a hurricane warning has been issued:

- Use the telephone only for emergencies.
- Stay indoors on the downwind side of the building away from windows.
- Be aware that the "eye" of the storm is deceptively calm; the storm is not over. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds.
- Be alert for tornadoes. Tornadoes can happen during a hurricane and after the storm passes over. Remain indoors, in the center of the building, in a closet or bathroom without windows.
- Do not stay in any mobile structure.

If an evacuation is necessary:

- Leave areas that may be affected by storm tide or stream flooding.
- If it is necessary to evacuate, leave early, in daylight if possible.
- Take small valuables and papers but travel light.
- Take cash, credit cards, and copies of important papers, including bank accounts, insurance and household records.
- Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and take a change of clothing.
- Leave food and water for domestic animals.
- Shut off utilities and disconnect electricity, sewer and water lines. Shut off propane tanks and leave them outside after anchoring them securely.
- Lock up buildings.
- Drive carefully to nearest designated shelter using recommended evacuation routes.
- Stay away from flood waters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car and climb to higher ground.

Once the hurricane has ended:

- Continue listening to the NOAA Weather Radio or local radio and television stations for instructions.
- If evacuated, return only when local officials tell you that it is safe to do so.
- Do not walk in, play in or drive through flooded areas. Flood water contains hidden hazards and may be deeper and faster-moving than it appears. 6 inches of swift water can knock you off your feet and 2 feet of water will carry away most automobiles.
- Wear shoes at all times.
- If you get a cut or puncture wound, get a tetanus booster shot if you have not had one in the past 5 years.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Use flashlights in the dark; do not use candles.
- Only use generators outdoors in a well ventilated, dry, and away from home air intakes.
- If you're going to use a chainsaw to clear debris, wear gloves that give you a good grip, hard hat, safety goggles,

hearing protection, steel-toed shoes with non-slip soles and snug clothing. Follow the instructions in the owner's manual for starting and using the saw. Keep both hands on the saw while it is running. Take precautions to avoid kickback, one of the leading causes of chainsaw accidents. Be cautious of where the nose of the bar is at all times so as to prevent accidental contact between it and any surface, thus lessening the likelihood of kickback. Don't try to cut above mid-chest height. Never try to cut a tree with a diameter greater than the length of the chainsaw blade. Make sure power lines are not entangled in fallen trees. Carry the saw below your waist with the engine off and with the bar and chain pointed to the rear.

- Be careful when checking for damage to your home and when making temporary repairs. Numerous hazards are associated with repairing roofs (for example, downed electrical lines, falls from ladders or wet, slippery roofs, or falling through weak structures). Leave those repairs to professionals. More people die or are injured after a hurricane than during one. To conserve batteries, try to minimize how much you use your flashlights and cell phones. If you're driving, remember that traffic lights may not be working. Stop at intersections and proceed with caution. Report downed power lines.
- These risk management tips apply to the aftermath of any significant encounter with severe weather. Stay tuned in to your local situation, and follow the guidance of local authorities. Your families, friends and coworkers are counting on you to make good decisions. Plan to survive the storm and the aftermath.

Purifying drinking water:

- Public and private wells that have been flooded or have lost electricity may become contaminated. Water must be treated before use.
- Contact your health department about well water testing.
- If local authorities tell you to boil your water, bring it to a rolling boil for at least a minute. If you can't boil water, add six drops of newly purchased, unscented liquid household bleach per gallon of water, stir well and let the water stand for 30 minutes before using it.

- Pharmacies and sporting-goods stores sell water-purifying tablets
- Tap water used for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth or making ice must be boiled for at least three minutes before use. (Pregnant women as well as children should use bottled water instead of tap or boiled water. Baby formula should be made with bottled water.)
- If you cannot boil tap water, it can be treated with bleach. Use 8 drops (1/4 teaspoon) to one gallon of tap water. Mix thoroughly and let stand for 30 minutes before using. (Warning: Do not use bleach that is scented or contains soap.)
- Do not use flood water for any use.

Food and medicine:

- Any foods (even those in cans, plastic or glass) that have come into contact with flood water should be thrown away.
- Make sure your food is safe. Don't rely on how it looks or smells.
- If you lost power and don't know for how long get rid of perishable items such as meats, dairy, and eggs.
- If the power has off for more than 4 hours or food is warmer than 45 degrees Fahrenheit, it should be discarded.
- Do not re-freeze thawed food.
- Medicines and cosmetics that have come into contact with flood water should be thrown away.