



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS:

Step 1 - Make a Plan

Take the time to ensure your family's safety during the storm. Time is of the essence once a warning is announced, and you'll want to prepare in advance.

Select the best place to gather your family during a hurricane. Determine the best escape routes and confirm the location of the nearest shelters.

Keep emergency numbers by the phone including police, fire, ambulance, and schools.

Make copies of important documents such as; Will, Mortgage, Insurance Policies, Insurance Cards. Place them in a waterproof container so they can be accessible and easily transported should you need to leave your home.

Stock emergency supplies. You should have enough food and water for your family and pets for 3 or 4 days. Store water in clean plastic containers and avoid glass or empty bleach or detergent bottles. Keep in mind that adults need 1 quart of water per day to survive.

When stocking food, aim to have a full week's supply of canned food that requires little water and can be eaten with little or no preparation. Don't forget the manual can opener! Remember that infants and those with illnesses will require special foods.

Additional supplies to have handy would include:

- battery-powered radio and flashlights (with extra batteries for both)
- tools, blankets and clothing
- fire extinguisher, candles and matches
- a pail with cover, boards, plastic sheeting and tape
- all special medications like insulin and heart tablets

Be prepared to give first aid. Have a first-aid kit and handbook with your emergency supplies and consider enrolling in a course. Although first aid procedures are not a substitute for qualified medical treatment, you'll learn to do things that could make an important difference when help is not readily available.

Repair loose boards, shingles and shutters and all other things that could become a greater problem in high wind.

Step 2 - Before the Storm

A hurricane watch indicates that a hurricane may threaten your area generally within 36 to 48 hours.

- Listen to advisories on the TV or radio. Official announcements and special instructions will be announced this way and should always be taken seriously.
- Check your emergency supplies and make sure your flashlights and portable radio work and that you have enough batteries, water and canned goods. Also, gather the tools and materials that you might need to fix leaks or to use as shutters.
- Fill your car's gas tank. You will need gas if you have to evacuate and at that point, it is likely that the gas stations will have lost power due to the storm.
- Bring in all items from the outside of your house, such as lawn furniture and toys, which could potentially be dangerous flying objects. Make sure sheds and similar detached structures are secured.

A hurricane warning means that a hurricane is expected to hit your area within 24 hours.

- Board or shutter glass windows to protect them from wind pressure. Select one window or door on the side of your house opposite the prevailing wind that you can open to reduce pressure, if necessary.
- Check your supplies one more time and fill your bathtub with extra water. Turn your refrigerator to its coldest setting. Much of the food will remain edible for days if the power goes out.

Step 3 - If You Must Evacuate

Your house may be the safest place to be if it is away from the shore but if authorities tell you to evacuate, do so immediately and follow their instructions. Avoid mobile homes during hurricanes. Take care of the following matters before you go.

- Turn off all utilities including gas, water, and electricity.
- Leave your pets at home in a secure place with food and water for at least a few days.
- Tightly lock your home's doors and windows, including the ones on the second floor.
- Leave a message for authorities that says where you are going and who is with you.
- Take along food and water, vital medicines, important papers, a first-aid kit, sleeping bags and blankets, supplies, a flashlight, a radio, a change of clothes and cash. If you are going to a shelter, leave alcohol, smoking materials and pets at home.
- Follow the recommended routes, and do not take shortcuts. Keep your radio on at all times.

Step 4 - During the Hurricane

- Find shelter immediately and evacuate motor vehicles or motor homes. The safest place is an inside room or the center of a room.
- To reduce pressure, open a window or door on the opposite side of your house facing the wind. Then stay away from all windows.
- Turn off electricity if flooding begins and keep the refrigerator door closed to conserve food.
- Beware of the calm "eye" of the storm that can pass over your home, causing the wind to drop to near calm for as long as a half-hour. Stay indoors during this time because the wind will still return and possibly with greater force.

Step 5 - After It's Over

- Stay calm and don't panic. Check to be sure all family members are safe, and administer first aid if necessary. Locate all of your survival supplies.
- Stay at home unless ordered to evacuate the area, and listen to your battery-operated or car radio for emergency instructions. Do not drive.
- Check all utilities and turn them off if you suspect damage. Do not turn them back on yourself. Typically, you can turn your gas and water shut-offs with the same wrench. In case electric wires are shorting or if you suspect there is damaged or wet wiring, turn off the main switch.
- If you smell gas, open the windows, turn off the main valve and don't use lights or appliances until the gas has dissipated. Call your gas company to restore service after the storm.
- Stay away from damaged or weakened walls, and wear shoes around all debris.
- Keep all family members away from fallen power lines.

Important Resources

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/index.shtm>
- Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness (FEMA) <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>
- Ready.Gov (U.S. Department of Homeland Security) <http://www.ready.gov/>
- American Red Cross Disaster Services <https://redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/>