

Preparing Before a Hurricane

To Do List

- Prepare a household hurricane plan of action
- Learn the storm surge history and flood zones of your area
- Learn safe routes inland
- Determine where to move your boat in an emergency
- Check for loose rain gutters and down spouts
- Check insurance coverage (it is best to have coverage for replacement cost, not cash value)
- Consult with a contractor for advice on securing your home
- Check first aid kit
- Obtain plastic containers for storage of important papers, valuables and medical supplies
- People with special needs that require evacuation assistance should register with their local Office of Emergency Management
- If you have a generator, keep it maintained year round. To keep moisture out of gas, start your generator monthly.
- Test generators, lanterns, portable stove, radio, grill and flashlights
- Check your electrical meter. Make sure that the pipe connecting cable into your home is securely attached
- Trim tree limbs. Call your local power company to trim trees near power lines
- Prepare hurricane supplies

When a Hurricane Threatens

A Hurricane Watch is issued for a coastal area when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours. A Hurricane Watch is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in a specified coastal area in 24 hours or less. Hurricane conditions include winds of 74 miles and hour (64 knots) and/or dangerously high tides and waves. Actions for protection of life and property should begin immediately when the warning is issued. If local authorities recommend evacuation, you should leave! Their advice is based on knowledge of the strength of the storm and its potential for death and destruction.

When a hurricane WATCH is issued

- Check often for official bulletins on radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio
 - Fuel car. Fill propane gas tanks. Fill coolers with ice.
 - Get cash. If ATM's are without power you may be unable to obtain cash for days.
 - Moor small craft or move to safe shelter.
 - Secure lawn furniture and other loose outdoor materials (i.e., trash cans, plants).
 - Take TV antenna and satellite dish down. Remove and cover chimney caps and wind turbines.
 - Drain swimming pool one foot and add extra chlorine.
 - Turn off electricity to pool equipment and cover pool pump.
 - Board or shutter windows to prevent shattering. Do not use tape.
 - Wedge sliding glass doors to prevent lifting from tracks.
- Have hurricane supplies ready.
- Make sure cell phones, laptops and other devices are charging as there is a good chance you will lose power.

When a Hurricane WARNING is issued

- Stay tuned to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins and info about shelter locations.
- Board up garage and porch doors.
- Move valuables to upper floors.
- Bring in pets.
- Fill container (bathtub) with several days supply of water.
- Turn up refrigerator to maximum cold and only open when necessary.
- Use phone only for emergencies.
- Make arrangements with friends or family if you will need to evacuate.

If you stay in your home during a hurricane

- Take refuge in a small, interior room without windows, or in a closet or hallway. Close all interior doors.

Beware of the hurricane eye. When the eye passes, wind and rain may stop anywhere from a few minutes to more than an hour. The wind will then suddenly begin again from the opposite direction.

If you are in an evacuation area LEAVE

- Residents of high-rise buildings should also consider evacuating. Storm surge can cause erosion that might undermine the supports of the building.

- High-rise buildings are susceptible to conditions that can cause uncontrollable fires. Unless your high-rise has an emergency generator, the elevator will not work in a power failure.
- Some emergency generators will run lights only and will not power the elevators. Leave early-in daylight if possible.
- Shut off water and electricity at main stations and turn off gas appliances.
- Eat before leaving; shelters may not serve food for the first 24 hours.
- Take hurricane supplies.
- If you have pets, take them to a kennel or a friend, or prepare a "saferoom" for the pet. Shelters will not accept pets. ("Saferoom" should be an interior closet or bathroom. Place towel or blanket in a corner and leave plenty of food and water.) Lock up house.
- Drive carefully to nearest designated shelter using recommended evacuation routes.
- Bring proof of residency (driver's license/utility bill) and other important papers.
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After a Hurricane

- After a Hurricane - be careful!
- Beware of outdoor hazards.
- Stay clear of downed power lines and adjacent lines.
- Be alert for poisonous snakes, often driven from their dens by high water.
- Beware of weakened bridges and washed out roads. Look out for weakened limbs on trees.
- Drive only when necessary.
- Guard against spoiled food and do not drink or prepare food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated.
- Do not use the telephone unless absolutely necessary. The system is usually jammed with calls during and after a hurricane.