

# BEING READY FOR A HURRICANE

The time to prepare for a hurricane is *before* the hurricane season starts. Hurricane disasters can occur whether a season is active or relatively quiet. All it takes is one hurricane or tropical storm to cause a disaster for you and your family. Hurricanes can be dangerous killers. Learning the warning signals and planning ahead can reduce the chances of injury and/or major property damage. The following is information from the FEMA web site, to use before, during and after a hurricane.

## BEFORE THE HURRICANE SEASON STARTS

**Plan your evacuation route:** learn a safe route inland and be ready to drive 20-50 miles to find a safe location.

**Have your family disaster supply kit ready, to include:**

- ✓ Flashlight & extra batteries
- ✓ Portable, battery operated radio & extra batteries
- ✓ First aid kit & manual
- ✓ Enough food & water to last up to 3 days (*Can you go it alone for 3 days?*)
- ✓ Essential medication
- ✓ Cash & Credit Cards
- ✓ Change of clothing & sturdy shoes for each family member
- ✓ Infant, children or elderly family member items
- ✓ Sleeping bag, pillows and blankets for each family member

**Make arrangements for pets.** Pets may not be allowed into an emergency shelter for health and space reasons. Contact your local humane society for information on local animal shelters. Prepare a Disaster Kit for each of your pets (*Taking Care of Pets in Disasters*).

**Educate all family members on hurricane preparedness.** Make sure all family members know how to respond after a hurricane. Instruct everyone on how and when to turn off gas, electricity and water. Teach children how to and when to call 911, police or fire department and which radio stations to tune to for emergency information.

**Develop an emergency communication plan for your family.** If family members become separated during a disaster, you will need a plan for getting back together. This can happen during the day when adults are at work and children are at school. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact" and make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address and phone number of the contact person.

**Be prepared to protect your property:**

- ✓ Permanent hurricane shutters are the best protection for your windows but there are lower cost options. Use ½ inch plywood, marine plywood is best, cut to fit each window, making sure to mark each panel for which window it fits, and pre-drill holes every 18 inches for screws. Do this long before a storm is expected.
- ✓ Trim back dead or weak branches from trees
- ✓ Remove outside antennas
- ✓ Secure or bring in any outdoor objects, such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools, which could become airborne in high winds.

**CHECK INTO FLOOD INSURANCE.** You can find out about the National Flood Insurance Program through your local insurance agent or emergency management office. There is usually a 30-day waiting period before a policy becomes effective. For information you can go to [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov). *Homeowner policies do not cover damage from flooding that accompanies a hurricane.*

## DURING A HURRICANE WATCH OR WARNING

Education is one of the best forms of emergency preparedness. Knowing what a hurricane watch and a hurricane warning means is important.

A **HURRICANE WATCH** is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.

### During a Hurricane Watch:

- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for hurricane progress reports
- Check emergency supplies
- Fuel the car
- Secure outdoor objects
- Secure buildings by closing and boarding up windows and remove outside antennas
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly
- Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, bottles and cooking utensils
- Review your evacuation plan
- Moor boats securely or move to a designated safe place. Use rope of chain to secure a boats to a trailer. Use tie downs to anchor the trailer to the ground or house.

**HURRICANE WARNINGS** are issued when hurricane conditions are expected in 24 hours or less and requires immediate action. Hurricane conditions are winds of 74 miles per hour or greater or dangerous high water and rough seas.

### During a Hurricane Warning you should:

- Listen constantly to a battery-operated radio or television for official instructions
- If in a mobile home, check tie downs and evacuate immediately

## DURING A HURRICANE if you:

### Choose to **STAY AT HOME**:

- Stay inside, away from windows, skylights and glass doors
- Keep a supply of flashlight and extra batteries
- Avoid open flames as a source of light
- If the power goes off, turn off major appliances to reduce the power surge when the electricity is restored.

### Instructed to **EVACUATE**:

- Before leaving your home, be sure to secure your home by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity and the main water valve
- Follow your planned evacuation route or as proceed as directed by local officials to a determined shelter
- Take your emergency disaster kit for family members and pets
- Take blankets, clothing and sleeping bags to the shelter
- Lock up your house before leaving.

## **AFTER THE STORM**

- ☀ After a hurricane or other storm, return home only after authorities have advised it is safe to do so. Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed out bridges.
- ☀ Re-enter your home with caution, being aware that there could be damage that could cause injury.
- ☀ Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home if necessary.
- ☀ Take pictures of any damage, both to the house or its contents, for insurance claims.
- ☀ Continue to monitor your local radio station for information.

For additional information review the following information also available on the City's website:

Taking Care of Pets in Disasters  
Emergency Operations  
Can You Go It Alone For 3 Days

## **AFTER THE STORM**

- After a hurricane or over, return home only after authorities have advised it is safe to do so. Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed out bridges.
- Re-enter your home with caution, being aware that there could be damage that could cause injury.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home is necessary.
- Take pictures of any damage, both to the house or its contents, for insurance claims.
- Continue to monitor your local radio station for information.

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