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MITIGATION DIRECTORATE

Avoiding Hurricane Damage:

A Checklist for Homeowners

Preparing for hurricane season means more than just making a disaster kit and reviewing your family's disaster plan, although those are critical first steps. There's much more you can do to protect your home and your family before a hurricane hits. FEMA's Mitigation Directorate recommends you take the following additional steps to prepare for hurricane season 2008.

1. Know your risk. People who live along our nation's coastlines are at greater risk of experiencing the damaging effects of a hurricane, but that doesn't mean you're not at risk if you live further inland. Ask your local emergency management office or local building department about the history of hurricanes in your area and how to protect your family and home. For additional information visit the [FEMA Map Service Center](#)



2. Buy flood insurance. Buy flood insurance. Not only will it give you greater peace of mind, but it will also greatly speed your recovery if a hurricane does cause flooding.

To learn more about flood insurance contact your insurance company, or call 1-800-427-4661. For additional information visit www.floodsmart.gov

3. Install hurricane straps. Hurricane straps (made of galvanized metal) help keep the roof fastened to the walls in high winds. They can be difficult to install, so you may need a contractor for this project.



4. Install and maintain storm shutters.

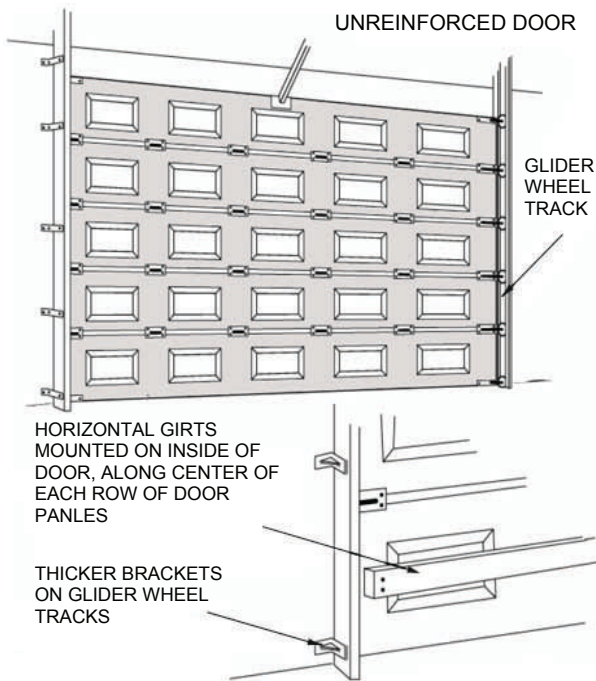
Installing storm shutters on windows, sliding glass doors, skylights, and French doors is one of the best ways to protect your home. You can buy manufactured shutters made of wood, steel, or aluminum. You can also make storm shutters with 5/8-inch thick exterior-grade plywood. Check with your local building department as to the type and strength of shutters used in your area.

5. Install a Generator for emergencies.

Power outages are commonplace during disasters, and they often last for several days. An emergency power generator can provide power to essential home appliances, heating, and emergency lighting. Remember to keep an adequate supply of fuel, ask your local utility company about regulations governing the use of generators., and always use caution when operating a generator inside of a building or attached garage.



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6. Reinforce your garage door.

High winds from hurricanes can damage garage doors or even blow them in. If wind enters a garage, it can cause dangerous and expensive structural damage. Reinforcing your garage door helps you protect not only your garage, but its contents as well.

As shown in the figure, you can reinforce a garage door by adding girts across the back of the door and by strengthening the glider wheel tracks.

Reinforcing an existing garage door is something you may be able to do yourself if you have the necessary skills and tools.

Don't wait until a hurricane warning is issued to reinforce your garage door; you probably won't have time.

7. Anchor or remove potential windborne objects.

Everyday objects outside your home such as trash cans, yard furniture, barbecue grills, playhouses, and tools can be moved by the wind and cause damage during a hurricane. The wind can pick up smaller objects and drive them through windows and glass doors.

Be sure to anchor storage sheds to a permanent foundation and remember that the straps and ground anchors used for manufactured homes can be used to anchor outbuildings, especially small garden sheds, which are usually not placed on a permanent foundation.

You can secure trash cans with cables or chains attached to ground anchors or to wood posts firmly embedded in the ground.



8. Remove trees that could fall on your house.



All trees should be far enough away from your house that they can't fall on it. The distance between your house and any nearby tree should be greater than the height the tree will reach.

9. Use GovDelivery

Receive updates about flood insurance, mitigation, individual assistance, disaster declarations, and much more. To learn more about this feature visit www.fema.gov/help/getemail.shtm



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HURRICANE SEASON 2008

10. *Get More Help from the FEMA Library and other Great Sources!*

For additional resources to protect your property from high winds visit:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3263>

For additional resources to protect your property from flood visit:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3262>

And be sure to check out the website of the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes www.flash.org, a FEMA partner that has more ways to strengthen homes and safeguard families.

For additional information on the National Flood Insurance Program visit:

www.floodsmart.org

