



Weather Safety: Hurricanes

Safety and Preparedness Fact Sheet

Before the Hurricane Season

- ▶ Determine safe evacuation routes inland.
- ▶ Learn location of official shelters.
- ▶ Make emergency plans for pets.
- ▶ Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators and battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards and cell phones.
- ▶ Buy food that will keep and store drinking water.
- ▶ Buy plywood or other material to protect your home.
- ▶ Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- ▶ Trim trees and shrubbery.
- ▶ Decide where to move your boat in an emergency.
- ▶ Review your insurance policy.

During the Storm

When in a **Watch** area...

- ▶ Listen frequently to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for bulletins of a storm's progress.
- ▶ Fuel and service your vehicles.
- ▶ Inspect and secure mobile home tie-downs.
- ▶ Board up windows in case the storm moves quickly and you have to evacuate.
- ▶ Stock up on batteries, food that will keep, first aid supplies, drinking water and medications.
- ▶ Store lawn furniture and other loose, light-weight objects, such as garbage cans and garden tools.
- ▶ Have cash on hand in case power goes out and ATMs don't work.

Plan to evacuate if you...

- ▶ Live in a mobile or manufactured home. They are unsafe in high winds no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- ▶ Live on the coastline, an offshore island or near a river or flood plain. In addition to wind, flooding from storm surge waves is a major killer.
- ▶ Live in a high-rise. Hurricane winds can knock out electricity to elevators, break windows and more.

When in a **Warning** area...

- ▶ Closely monitor radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for official bulletins.

TERMS TO KNOW

Hurricane Watch: Hurricane conditions are *possible* in the specified area of the watch, usually within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning: Hurricane conditions are *expected* in the specified area of the warning, usually within 24 hours.

Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings: Take these alerts seriously. Although Tropical Storms have lower wind speeds than hurricanes, they often bring life-threatening flooding and dangerous winds. Take precautions!

- ▶ Close storm shutters.
- ▶ Follow instructions issued by local officials. **Leave immediately if ordered!**
- ▶ If evacuating, leave as soon as possible. Stay with friends or relatives, at a low-rise inland motel or at a designated public shelter outside the flood zone.
- ▶ **DO NOT** stay in a mobile or manufactured home.
- ▶ Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
- ▶ Take pets with you if possible, but remember, most public shelters do not allow pets other than those used by the handicapped. Identify pet-friendly motels along your evacuation route.

If Staying in a Home...

- ▶ Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and keep closed.
- ▶ Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- ▶ Turn off propane tanks.
- ▶ Unplug small appliances.
- ▶ Fill bathtub and large containers with water in case tap water is unavailable. Use water in bathtubs for cleaning and flushing only. **Do NOT** drink it.

If Winds Become Strong...

- ▶ Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway.

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- ▶ Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.
- ▶ If you are in a two story house, go to an interior 1st floor room.
- ▶ If you are in a multi-story building and away from water, go to the 1st or 2nd floor and stay in the halls or other interior rooms away from windows.
- ▶ Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object.



What to Bring to the Shelter

- First aid kit
- Medicine, prescriptions
- Baby food and diapers
- Games, books, music
- Toiletries
- Battery-powered radio and cell phone
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- A blanket or sleeping bag for each person
- Identification
- Copies of key papers such as insurance policies
- Cash, credit card

REMINDER: If you are told to leave, do so immediately!

- ▶ Once home, check gas, water and electrical lines and appliances for damage.
- ▶ Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Never use candles and other open flames indoors.
- ▶ Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until officials say it is safe.
- ▶ If using a generator, avoid electrocution by following manufacturers instructions and standard electric code.

Be Alert For...

- ▶ Tornadoes: They are often spawned by hurricanes.
- ▶ The calm “eye” of the storm. It may seem like the storm is over but after the eye passes, the winds will change direction and quickly return to hurricane force.
- ▶ Storm surge flooding. These high waves can be more deadly than hurricane winds. Leave the coast and stay away from low lying areas, creeks, streams and other inland waterways.

After the Storm

- ▶ Keep listening to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio.
- ▶ Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- ▶ Watch for closed roads. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, **Turn Around Don't Drown!**TM
- ▶ Avoid weakened bridges and washed out roads.
- ▶ Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from power lines.

NWS hurricane links, forecasts, assessments:

<http://www.weather.gov/os/hurricane>

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards:

<http://www.weather.gov/nwr>

National Hurricane Center:

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>

Central Pacific Hurricane Center:

<http://weather.gov/cphc>

NOAA Hurricane Website

<http://hurricanes.noaa.gov/>

American Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org>

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

<http://www.fema.gov>

