



Guide to Hurricane Safety

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Hurricane Safety Tips

A hurricane is a severe tropical storm that forms in coastal regions and is characterized by high winds, thunderstorms, flooding, tornadoes, and microbursts. Hurricanes in the United States typically form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific Ocean. Although coastal regions are most in danger of hurricanes, the storms can affect land hundreds of miles inland.

Before a hurricane occurs, you should take some safety precautions, so you'll be ready with a plan. Research the area surrounding your home and know your home's risk for floods and mudslides (these dangers often accompany the storms). It's also a good idea to learn about your community's hurricane evacuation plan. Plan a route you should take and where you should go if a hurricane becomes a danger to your home and family.

If you're ordered to evacuate, make sure to do so—ignoring evacuation orders can be devastating. If you're going to a shelter or hotel, keep in mind that they usually don't accept pets, so you'll want to make alternate arrangements for them. Keep in mind that evacuating for a hurricane can be chaotic—you'll likely hit traffic and delays. However, if you have a plan, and your entire family knows what to do, it should make the situation more bearable. Sit down with your family and make a plan as soon as possible.

How to Prepare Your Home

As we all know, hurricanes can be devastating. But you can take comfort in the fact that there are steps you can take to help prepare your home against hurricane damage. Here are some tips for helping your home stand up against the natural disaster:

Windows

Board up windows with marine plywood, cut to fit, or install hurricane shutters. Consider also investing in hurricane-proof windows, which should withstand storms better than regular windows. Word of warning: do not use tape to prevent windows from breaking—it doesn't really help.

Roof

Reinforce the internal structure of your roof with metal hurricane ties to anchor the trusses or rafters. You can also install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. All this preparation should help reduce roof damage and prevent shingles from flying off during a hurricane.

Trees

Trim trees and shrubs in your back and front yard. Keeping your plants well-manicured should help make them wind-resistant. That way, your trees and bushes can help protect your home and are less likely to cause damage from being blown over.

Rain Gutter

Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts. Clean gutters can help prevent damage to your home from heavy rainfall because they redirect water and help prevent flooding.

Garage Door

Install reinforced garage doors. Garage doors play an important role in protecting your home from fierce hurricane winds. When garage doors aren't reinforced, winds can sometimes force them open, causing damage to the home's structure.

Refrigerator

Turn your refrigerator to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed. Many times, the power goes out during hurricanes, and the food in the fridge will only last so long. If the power goes out for four hours or more, you should throw away perishable food in the fridge and keep frozen food in the freezer for as long as possible.

Bathtub

Sanitize your bathtub with bleach, and then fill it with clean water. If you have to wait out the storm for hours or days, you'll have a clean water supply for drinking and sanitary needs.

Doors

Close all the doors in your home, both exterior and interior doors. Some say that cracking open your windows or interior doors will stabilize pressure during a hurricane, but this is a

myth. The most effective way to fortify against a hurricane is to keep the wind and storm out of your home.

If you live in areas near the coast (or even hundreds of miles inland from the coast that might be within the reach of a hurricane), you should definitely take time to prepare your home for a hurricane. Taking steps to help ensure the safety of your home and loved ones will give you greater peace of mind. Don't be caught off guard—have a plan and safety measures in place in case a hurricane affects your home.

Conclusion

Before a hurricane occurs, you should make a plan for your family, keep an emergency kit handy, and fortify your home in any way you possible. We hope you'll use the emergency checklists in this guide to aid in your natural disaster preparation. For more information on preparing for natural disaster and for additional safety resources for your family and community, visit www.yourlocalsecurity.com.

Recommended Resources

How to Prepare for a Hurricane:

<http://www.mnn.com/family/protection-safety/stories/how-to-prepare-for-a-hurricane#>

Emergency Preparedness and Response:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/index.asp>

About Hurricanes and Preparedness:

<http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

Emergency Kit Checklist

Every household should have an emergency kit, and you should customize it to your family's individual needs, but here are the essentials you should include:

Food and Water

- Water (three gallons per person, per day)
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- Water purification tablets

Communication and Tools

- Battery-powered radio
- Waterproof matches
- Flashlight with batteries
- Wrench or pliers
- Pocket knife
- Whistle

First Aid and Hygiene

- First aid kit
- Moist sanitary wipes
- Medications

Other

- Photocopies of important documents in a waterproof bag or container
- Cash
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Cell phone charger, inverter, or solar charger

Once you've gathered all the supplies for your emergency kit, you should put it in an easy-to-grab carrying case, such as a backpack. Keep your emergency kit in a place where it's easily accessible, and make sure the entire family knows where it's kept. You'll feel better prepared for any emergency or disasters that come your way.

Visit www.yourlocalsecurity.com for more disaster preparedness information.

Emergency Communication Plans

Emergency Contact Info

Fill out the information on this page and post it in your home or write it down on a cards for each family member to carry in their wallet, purse, briefcase, or backpack.

Home Address:

Home Phone:

() -

Parent/Guardian phone numbers

Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____

Cell: () - Cell: () -

Work: () - Work: () -

Child contact info

List child names followed by the school they attend and cell-phone #'s, if available:

Other Emergency Contacts

Name: _____ Phone: () -

Name: _____ Phone: () -

Meeting Plan in the Event of an Emergency

When disaster strikes, know where you are and where you're supposed to be to meet up with your family members.

IF you're in the house or the immediate neighborhood (backyard, front yard, garage, next door neighbor, driveway, etc).

THEN everyone will meet at:

(ex: in front of the light post outside, fire hydrant, etc.)

IF you're far away from home, get in contact with your family ASAP using the *numbers on the Emergency Contact Info page*.

IF you're at school, follow the emergency plan that your school has in place.

School Emergency Plan: _____

Emergency Pet Plan

What will you do with your pets in the event of a natural disaster?

Important Considerations:

- Keep a current photo of your pet in case you lose them.
- Make sure ID tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to your pet's collar.
- Have a secure pet carrier, leash, or harness for your pet in case he/she panics.
- Take pet food, bottled water, meds, vet records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dish, first aid kit, and other supplies you might need for your pet in an emergency situation.

Plan:

Emergency Plan for Seniors and Disabled Family Members

Important Considerations

- Make sure that you've assigned someone to check on seniors or disabled neighbors.
- Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.
- Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices they require.
- Make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.
- Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.

Plan:

**For more information on this
and other natural disaster
safety information, visit:
www.yourlocalsecurity.com**