

Your Family Hurricane Plan Checklist

STEP I: PREPARING A DISASTER SURVIVAL KIT

The most important thing you and your family can do in preparation for a hurricane is be able to survive on your own after the storm. This means having enough food, water, and other supplies to last at least three days.

You may want to consider storing enough supplies to last up to two weeks. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they can't reach everyone immediately. Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days or weeks.

You should store your kit in a designated place at home and have it ready in case you need to leave your home quickly.

Basic Disaster Supplies Kit:

(Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy to carry containers)

- Water: three day supply - one gallon per person, per day (see below for further details)
- Food: three day supply - non-perishable (see below for further details)
- Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Sanitation and hygiene items (moist towelettes and toilet paper)
- Matches and waterproof container
- Extra clothing
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils, including a can opener
- Photocopies of credit cards and other identification cards
- Photocopies of important papers and phone numbers
- Cash
- Prescriptions
- Other medical needs items: eye glasses, contacts, hearing aid batteries
- Items for infants: formula, diapers, bottles, pacifiers

It's important to maintain your disaster supplies kit on a regular basis so that it is safe to use when needed. Change stored food and water supplies every six months. Canned foods should be kept in a dry place and boxed food should be stored in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to extend their shelf life. Replace food with fresh supplies when they go bad.

Water:

You should store at least one gallon of water per person per day. More water may be required for children, nursing mothers, ill people, and in cases of a medical emergency.

The safest and most reliable water supply would be made up of commercially bottled water. The water should be kept in its original container and not opened until it is used. Observe the expiration date.

If you choose to bottle your own water, it is recommended that you use food-grade water storage containers from surplus or camping supply stores. If not, you can use two-liter plastic soft drink bottles. Avoid using any containers that have had juice or milk in them: they can foster bacteria growth. Also avoid using cardboard or glass containers.

Before storing water, thoroughly wash the containers with dishwashing soap and water. Sanitize the bottles by adding one teaspoon of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water. Swish around the solution so it touches every surface of the bottle. Thoroughly rinse out the sanitizing solution with clean water.

Fill the bottles with tap water and close the bottles with the original cap. Store the bottles in a cool dark place. Replace the tap water every six months.

Food:

Food should be non-perishable. Avoid foods that will make you thirsty. Choose salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals, and canned foods with high liquid content.

Stock canned foods, dry mixes, and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water, or special preparation. Include a manual can opener. Remember special dietary needs.

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STEP II: PREPARATIONS AT THE START OF HURRICANE SEASON

- ___ Know whether or not your family lives in a designated evacuation zone (see the maps in this book).
If you do live in an evacuation zone, plan ahead of time where you will go and where you will stay.
- ___ Know your children's school emergency plan. Ask how the school will communicate with families during a crisis.
- ___ Find out your workplace evacuation and emergency plan.
- ___ Learn how to shut off utilities (such as water and electricity) in your home.

Preparations around your property:

- Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8-inch marine plywood.
- Roof clips or straps (fastening roof to frame structure) can help reduce roof damage.
- Trim trees and shrubbery around the home.
- Clear clogged rain gutters.
- Determine how and where to secure your boat.
- Find a central room on the lowest floor of your home away from windows to serve as a shelter during the storm.

Inventory/Records:

- Make copies of important documents: Insurance policies (Property, Life, Health, etc.), credit cards, identification cards, property deeds. Keep copies in your disaster supplies kit.
- Make inventory of personal property for insurance purposes.
- Make video of your personal property – furniture, pictures, appliances, clothes, tools, etc.
- Consider storing important documents in a safety deposit box away from your home.
- Have an emergency fund (savings account) that could be tapped into in a crisis.
- Keep a small amount of cash in a safe place that can be quickly accessed during evacuation.

Plan for Those with Special Needs:

If you or someone close to you has special needs, you may have to take additional steps for protection in an emergency. The following special needs should be considered: the hearing or mobility impaired, the critically ill, the single working parent, non-English speaking persons, people without vehicles, and people with special dietary needs.

A special needs person should register with the office of emergency management for assistance so that required help can be provided in a time of crisis. Create a network of contacts to aid the person in an emergency. Be sure each knows how to operate necessary equipment. Keep specialized items available, including extra batteries, oxygen, medication, and any other items that might be needed. Make provisions for medications that require refrigeration. In an apartment or high-rise building, ask management to make arrangements to help the person leave the building.

Sheltering Pets:

Plan ahead on where you will board your pets during a hurricane. Some emergency shelters do allow pets now, but only certain shelters. Check ahead with a local emergency management office or animal shelter on which shelters, motels or hotels will allow pets, and where boarding facilities are located. Be prepared to make sure your animal is properly identified and to take veterinary records with you to prove vaccinations are current if you are asked to evacuate.

Sheltering Larger Animals (such as horses or cattle):

Ensure all animals have some form of identification. Make available vehicles and trailers for transporting each type of animal. Be prepared to evacuate the animals if necessary. Ensure that destinations have food, water, veterinary care, and handling equipment.

STEP III: WHEN A HURRICANE THREATENS

- ___ Frequently monitor radio, TV, NOAA Weather Radio, Internet or hurricane hotline telephone numbers for official bulletins of the storm's progress.
- ___ Fuel and service family vehicles.
- ___ Inspect and secure mobile home tie downs.

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- ___ Prepare to cover all window and door openings with shutters or plywood.
- ___ Check prescription medicines — obtain at least a ten day to two week supply.
- ___ Store and secure outdoor lawn furniture and other loose, lightweight objects, such as garbage cans, garden tools, potted plants, etc.
- ___ Stock up on extra batteries for radios, flashlights, and lanterns and check for ample first aid supplies.
- ___ Get an extra supply of cash to last two weeks. Banks may be closed and ATM machines may not work after the storm.
- ___ Make sure you have a full disaster supplies kit (see list in Step I).

Plan to evacuate if you...

- ___ Live in a designated evacuation zone (see maps in this book). If so, you may be directed by local authorities to evacuate. Be sure to follow their instructions.
- ___ Live in a mobile home or temporary structure. Do not stay in a mobile home under any circumstances.
- ___ Live on the coastline or on an offshore island, or live near a river or in a flood plain.
- ___ Live in a high-rise building. Hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.

If you are evacuating:

- ___ Disconnect utilities (including phone and electricity) as a precaution to prevent further damage.
Electricity: remember to shut off individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker.
Gas: turn off gas at each appliance but do not turn off main gas line to the house.
- ___ Leave early and if possible, during daylight hours.
- ___ Notify neighbors and family members outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
- ___ Stay with friends or relatives or at a low-rise inland hotel or motel outside of flood zones. Leave early to avoid heavy traffic, roads blocked by early flood waters, and bridges made impassable due to high winds.
- ___ Hurricane shelters will be available for people who have no other place to go. Shelters may be crowded and uncomfortable, with no privacy and no electricity. Do not leave your home for a shelter until government officials announce that a particular shelter is open.

What to bring to a shelter:

- ___ First-aid kit, medicines, baby food and diapers, cards, games, books, toiletries, battery-powered radio, flashlights, extra batteries, blankets or sleeping bags, identification, valuable papers (insurance) and cash.
- ___ Pets: remember that only certain emergency shelters will allow pets. Keep veterinary records with you to prove vaccinations are current.

If you are staying in a home:

(Reminder! Only stay in a home if you have not been told to leave. If you ARE told to leave, DO SO IMMEDIATELY.)

- ___ Make sure all windows and doorways are covered by hurricane-proof shutters or 5/8-inch plywood
- ___ Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- ___ Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities. Turn off propane tanks. Unplug small appliances.
- ___ Stay inside your home at all times and away from windows and doors.
- ___ If you lose power, use flashlights rather than candles or open flames to move around in the darkness.

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If winds become strong:

- ___ Take refuge in an interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest floor away from doors or windows. Take a battery-powered radio, a NOAA Weather Radio and a flashlight with you.
- ___ Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.
- ___ Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors. Keep curtains and blinds closed.
- ___ If you are in a multiple-story building and away from the water, go to the first or second floors and take refuge in the halls or other interior rooms away from windows. Interior stairwells and the areas around elevator shafts are generally the strongest part of a building.

NOTE: Be alert for tornadoes which often are spawned by hurricanes. Also, if the "EYE" of the hurricane should pass over your area, be aware that the improved weather conditions are only temporary and that the storm conditions will return with winds coming from the opposite direction sometimes in a period of just a few minutes.

STEP IV: AFTER THE STORM

- ___ Stay in your protected area until announcements are made on the radio or TV that the dangerous winds have passed. Stay off the streets unless absolutely necessary.
- ___ If you have evacuated, do not return home until officials announce your area is ready. Remember, proof of residency may be required in order to re-enter the evacuation areas.
- ___ Be aware of the surroundings when returning as extreme damage could render a familiar landscape unrecognizable.
- ___ If your home or building has structural damage, do not enter until it is checked by officials. Do not enter your home if you smell gas, floodwaters remain around the building, or if authorities have declared it unsafe. In a damaged home, have the electrical system checked out by an electrician before turning it back on. If water pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with authorities before using any water as it may have become contaminated during the storm.
- ___ Beware of outdoor hazards such as downed power lines and any water they may be lying in, poisonous snakes driven from their dens by high water, weakened bridges, washed out roads, weakened limbs on trees and/or damaged overhanging structures.
- ___ Do not use the telephone unless absolutely necessary. The system is usually jammed with calls during and after a hurricane.
- ___ Guard against spoiled food. Use dry or canned food. Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated with flood waters. Throw out any food, water, or supplies that have been contaminated or come in contact with flood waters.
- ___ When cutting up fallen trees, use caution, especially if you use a chain saw. Serious injuries can occur when these powerful machines snap back or when the chain breaks.
- ___ Call your insurance agent. Take video or still pictures of damaged property. Keep records of your repair and clean up costs.

Coping with post-disaster stress:

- ___ Maintain a normal family and daily routine, limiting responsibilities on yourself and your family.
- ___ Seek help from professional counselors for yourself and your family if needed. Talk to someone about your feelings even though it may be difficult. Make sure to get help for your children as well.
- ___ Use existing support groups of family, friends, and religious institutions.
- ___ Take steps to promote physical and emotional well-being such as healthy eating, rest, relaxation, and meditation.

NOTE: These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive. You must decide what supplies are best suited for you and your family's survival. These lists contain only suggestions for your consideration.