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Hurricane Check List

How To Prepare:

Make A Plan

Make a plan with your family or office personnel. Devise a system with each person doing specific tasks to get ready for the hurricane. Pick a “safe spot” to meet in, in case of bad weather. You can practice going to this spot several times a year so everyone will know exactly what to do when a hurricane hits.

Making an Emergency Kit

Although there is not much you can do during a hurricane, you may need an emergency kit for after the storm. You should create a box to put in your “safe spot”. This box should include first aid items, fresh water, snacks, candles, matches, medication, and a radio with batteries. Your power, water, and phones may be out during the storm, so you will need these items. Emergency community services will not help you for a minimum of several days.

Know Your Area

One part of being prepared for a hurricane involves knowing your town’s emergency routes for evacuation and emergency shelters. There may be storms that simply should not be weathered.

Supplies

If you live in a disaster prone area, make sure you have an adequate supply of food and water set aside. Making sure your medications are always up to date is also a great habit. If you think a storm is coming, be sure to fill up buckets, sinks, and bathtubs with as much water as possible. Emergency community services will not help you for a minimum of several days.

Have at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food on hand. Focus on high-nutrition foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. Your foodstuffs might include:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples, including sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods, including peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, the elderly or people on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods, including cookies, hard candy, instant coffee, tea

Optimally, a two-week supply of nonperishable food is recommended. Though it is unlikely that an emergency would cut off your food supply for that long, such a stockpile can relieve a great deal of inconvenience and uncertainty until services are restored. You don't need to go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples on your cupboard shelves.

Keep canned foods in a dry place where the temperature is fairly cool. To protect boxed foods from pests and extend their shelf life, store the boxes in tightly closed cans or metal containers.

Rotate your food supply. Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

Keep a supply of cooking and eating implements that can be used in the absence of running water or electricity, including:

- Plastic utensils, paper cups and plates
- Manual can and bottle openers
- A heating source, such as a camp stove or canned heat stove, and extra fuel.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Emergency food and water
- Nonelectric can opener



- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Sturdy shoes

Develop an emergency communication plan.

In case family members are separated from one another during a disaster (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person. Cell phones may or may not work.

Educate Your Family

Children need to be taught how to be part of the "team."

Take a Class

Taking a first aid class in CPR or other basic skills is a great way to always be prepared.

Prepare Your Structure

If you are aware the hurricane is coming, it is always a great idea to begin preparing the outside of your home for the wind and debris. You can board up windows and other glass portions of the home in order to get the most protection.

Get Your Gas

When you live in an area near the water, it is always a great idea to never let your gas tank fall below half full. This is partially because you may need to flee town quickly. It can also be done to ensure that if your town does go under and the gas stations are inoperable, you will still have enough gasoline to get out of town.

Grab n' Go Box

Important docs, photos, legal papers, prescriptions, scrapbooks, creative/intellectual material. Have a copy of these essentials in another location (city or state). Keep a camera handy.

Remember Your Pets

If you are a pet owner, you may be skeptical about leaving them during a storm or a hurricane. Remember to always think of yourself first, but if you are a pet owner, you can always pack them up in the car with you. Many hotels along the highway will allow pets to stay as well. It is much better to bring them along than to stay behind with them.



Insurance

Keep a copy of all insurance papers in another location or on an online back up service. Remember, insurance needs may include water damage and mold. Keep a camera handy.

Take Inventory

A quick check list, photograph valuables, appraisals- keep a copy someplace else. Have a camera handy for, during and after.

Special Assistance

Small children? Mentally or physically handicapped? Senior citizens with mobility problems? Needs may include special care and handling, service, equipment. Do you need to be registered with a community service, church or other organization that can provide special help in the moment of need? Emergency community services will not help you for a minimum of several days.

Securing your home

Board up windows or attach storm shutters. Taping windows will not prevent breakage, but will help reduce shattering.

- Permanent shutters are the best protection. A lower-cost approach is to put up plywood panels. Use 1/2 inch plywood--marine plywood is best--cut to fit each window. Remember to mark which board fits which window. Pre-drill holes every 18 inches for screws. Do this long before the storm.
- Trim back dead or weak branches from trees.
- 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 normally a 30-day waiting period before a new policy becomes effective. Homeowners polices do not cover damage from the flooding that accompanies a hurricane.)

Electric power may be off, so have a supply of extra food, especially things that can be eaten without cooking, and a hand-operated can opener.

Thoroughly clean the bathtub, jugs, bottles and cooking utensils, and fill containers with drinking water. Allow a minimum of 3 gallons of water for each person.

Check flashlights and radios. Make sure you have batteries.

Check trees and shrubbery, and remove limbs that could damage your house or utility lines.



Secure anything that might tear loose or blow away, including garbage cans, grills, potted plants, garden tools, toys, signs, porch furniture, awnings.

Do not lower the water level in your swimming pool, or it may pop out of the ground. Remove pumps from underground pits after all valves have been closed and the electricity has been shut off. If the filter pump is exposed, wrap it in a waterproof material and tie it securely. Add extra chlorine to the pool to help prevent contamination (3 gallons of chlorine per 5,000 gallons of water).

Fill your car's gas tank.

Preparing your boat

Take action early -- don't wait until a hurricane warning is declared. The storm's fringe activity will make preparations difficult.

If your boat is stack-stored in dry storage and you have a trailer, consider securing the boat at home. If you have a trailer and are in an evacuation zone, consider taking the boat with you.

If your boat will remain in berth, before hurricane season check the strength of primary cleats, winches and chocks. They should have substantial back plates and adequate stainless steel bolts.

Purchase extra mooring lines and chafing gear in advance; they may not be available just before a hurricane.

Protect lines from chafing by covering rub spots with leather or old garden hose. Double all lines, with rig crossing spring lines fore and aft. Attach lines high on piling to allow for tidal rise or surge.

Seal all openings with duct tape to make the boat as watertight as possible.

Charge batteries for automatic bilge pumps.

Reduce dock or piling crash damage by securing old tires along the sides of the boat.

Remove loose gear from the deck. Store it securely inside or at home.

For a boat stored on a trailer, lash the boat and trailer down in a protected area. Let the air out



of tires before tying the trailer down. Place blocks between the frame members and the axle inside each wheel. Secure with heavy lines to fixed objects from four different directions, if possible.

If you prefer, remove the boat from the trailer and lash down each separately.

Remove the outboard motor, battery and electronics, and store them.

Small boats can be filled with water to give them added weight after lashing down.

If you like your boat more than you like your car, put the boat in the garage and leave the car outside.

Plan ahead for when everyone will be accounted for, calmed down and you feel you are in no further danger:

- Look ahead to food and water needs. Will you need to ration?
- Clean up spilled messes. Watch out for hazardous or toxic materials (for example; among the home cleaning supplies or where the paint supplies are kept). Protect yourself! Use gloves, masks etc.
- Take photographs and write descriptions for insurance claims.
- Got a camera? Start shooting pictures of your stuff – insurance claims! Don't start throwing stuff in the trash till you are sure. It could be the difference of many thousands of \$ of claims.
- Offer a helping hand to others in need. Check with your church, the Red Cross and other relief organizations, your local public institutions (museums, libraries, historical societies). Helping others is the best way to keep your mind off your own mental anguish.

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This situation was completely avoidable.

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