

The American Legion Department of Florida



Hurricane Planning Guide

Before a Hurricane



- Know where you will go if you have to evacuate.
- Plan your evacuation route.

Contact the local emergency management office or other disaster preparedness organization, and ask for the community hurricane preparedness plan. This plan should include information on the safest evacuation route and nearby shelters. Have disaster supplies on hand in the event of a storm, or if you have to evacuate:

Flashlight and extra batteries

Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries

First aid kit and first aid manual

Food (non-perishable) and water (one gallon of water per person per day)

Non-electric can opener

Essential medicines

Baby supplies (diapers, non-perishable milk, baby food)

If you are ordered to evacuate, you should also take:

Personal items, such as toilet paper, toothbrush, towel, tampons, soap

Books, small games and other small entertainment items

Important papers and valuables in a waterproof container

Names and addresses of relatives, friends and other important contacts

Clothing and bedding

Cash and credit cards

Sturdy shoes

- Make arrangements for pets.

Pets may not be allowed into emergency shelters for health and space reasons. Contact your local humane society for information on local animal shelters.

- Make plans for your boat.

Decide what to do with your boat if a storm hits. Choices include taking it out of the path of danger, securing it on a trailer and leaving it parked in a safe area, securing it in a marina or mooring it in a "safe" harbor. If you decide to leave the Keys with your boat, make sure to leave early because after the advent of storm force winds, trailers will no longer be allowed on the highway.

- Protect valuable documents and property, including:

Birth certificates

Marriage certificates

Social security cards

Passports

Immunization records

Bank account and credit card numbers

Photos/video of your home and valuable property

Vehicle titles

Military service papers

Wills

Insurance policies, including personal, homeowners and disaster insurance

Deeds

Stocks

Bonds

Irreplaceable photos

Computer back up of important electronic data

Jewelry

- Make sure that all family members know how to respond after a hurricane. Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- Teach children how and when to call 911, police, or fire department and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.
- Protect your windows.

Do this long before the storm. Get window covers. 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, around the windows, every 18 inches for screws. Trim back dead or weak branches from trees. Trim coconuts from palms so they don't become deadly missiles during a storm.

- Check into disaster insurance.

If you do not already have flood and windstorm insurance, you should consider getting it. Remember: Windstorm insurance policies are not sold when a storm threatens, so think far enough ahead. 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.

- 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.

- Take pictures of your house and property.

Take photos and/or video of your house, its contents and the surrounding property. This will make it easier to prove loss to your insurance company following landfall.

Hurricane Watches and Warnings

A hurricane watch is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 36 hours. A hurricane warning is issued when hurricane conditions (winds of 74 miles per hour or greater, or dangerously high water and rough seas) are expected in 24 hours or less.

During a Hurricane Watch

- Listen to local radio or television stations for hurricane progress reports and emergency orders.
- Check emergency supplies.
- If you have not already done so, fuel your car.
- If you have not already done so, stock up on water, non-perishable food, water and ice.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys, and garden tools and anchor objects that cannot be brought inside.
- Secure buildings by closing shutters and/or boarding up windows. Remove outside antennas.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly.
- Fill bathtubs, washing machines, sinks and other containers with clean water.
- Review evacuation plan.
- Moor boat securely or move it to a designated safe place. Use rope or chain to secure boat to trailer. Use tie downs to anchor trailer to the ground or house.

During a Hurricane Warning

- Listen to local radio and television stations constantly for official instructions.
- If you are in a mobile home, check tie downs, then evacuate immediately to a safe location.

- Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home, or take them with you if you evacuate.
- Avoid elevators.

If you are at home:

- Stay inside, away from windows, skylights, and glass doors.
- Keep your emergency supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid using open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light.
- If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is restored.

If officials indicate evacuation is necessary:

- Secure your home by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity and the main water valve.
- Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going.
- If time permits, and you live in an identified surge zone, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding or better yet, move it to a higher floor.
- Gather pre-assembled emergency supplies, warm protective clothing, blankets and sleeping bags. Review directions to the nearest shelter.
- Leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.

After the Hurricane passes.....

- If you evacuated, return home only after authorities advise that it is safe to do so.
- If you evacuated, and your house has been vacant for a period of time, enter with caution.
- Stay tuned to local radio and/or television for information. Emergency officials will announce when you may return to your home, or when it is safe to go outside.
- Help injured or trapped persons if you can do so without injury to yourself. Give first aid where appropriate.
- Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help if possible, otherwise wait and help will come to you.
- Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately if possible to the power company, police, or fire department.
- Beware of snakes, insects, and animals driven to higher ground by flood water.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Check refrigerated foods for spoilage.
- Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges.
- Use telephone only for emergency calls.
- Take pictures of the damage, both to the house and its contents and for insurance claims.

Preparedness Checklist



Buy supplies early to prepare for the storm. When the storm threatens, lines will be long and supplies short.

FOOD SUPPLIES

Early get enough nonperishable foods for two weeks. Then, put the supplies in a box and leave them alone. Do not buy foods that are salty or dry or high in fat or protein; they will just make you thirsty.

- Water: 2 quarts to 1 gallon per person per day (get a 2 week supply)
- Ice
- Shelf-package juice and milk boxes
- Canned and powdered milk
- Beverages (powdered or canned, fruit juices, instant coffee, tea)
- Prepared foods (canned soups, beef, spaghetti, tuna, chicken, ham, corned beef hash, packaged pudding)
- Canned vegetables and fruits
- Dried fruits
- Snacks (crackers, cookies, hard candy, nuts)
- Snack spreads (peanut butter, cheese spreads, jelly)
- Cereals
- Raw vegetables
- Sugar, salt, pepper
- Bread
- Dry and canned pet food
- Extra formula, baby food

HARDWARE

- Hand tools - hammer, screwdrivers to use now, shovel and pickax for after the storm
- Power screwdriver

- 4-by 8-foot sheets of plywood 3/8-inch to 1/2-inch thick to put over your windows. Make sure you ask for exterior plywood.

HARDWARE (continued)

- 1/4-inch machine screw sockets and screws
- Plastic sheeting to cover furniture
- Rope
- Sturdy working gloves
- Duct tape to waterproof items. Masking tape isn't strong enough
- Canvas tarps
- Nails. There are many kinds, so look over your home now and determine what you will need. A nail too small, the wrong shape or hammered in wrong will fail, and that will give the storm the breach it needs to get into your home.

BABY NEEDS

- Disposable diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper-rash ointment, petroleum jelly
- Baby medicines (pain, cold, cough)
- Medicine dropper
- Extra formula, baby food

EMERGENCY TOILET

- Small can or garbage can with tight lid
- Plastic bags for liners
- Disinfectant or bleach
- Deodorizer

PREPAREDNESS KIT



Assemble this now. Put aside in a special box. Keep heat-sensitive items inside home and rotate stock throughout season. Batteries can go in refrigerator.

- An inexpensive rabbit-ears television antenna to use when cable goes out
- Flashlights and extra bulbs
- Battery-operated Radio or TV
- Several fully charged battery-operated lanterns. Do not get candles and kerosene lanterns. They are fire hazards.
- Extra batteries
- Matches
- Clock (wind-up or battery- operated)
- Plastic garbage bags, large – Garbage may not be restored for several days. This is a good all purpose item (make-shift ice chest, protection from getting wet, etc.).
- Working fire extinguishers
- Scissors
- Toilet paper
- Map of the area
- List of important phone numbers
- Copy of insurance policies
- Clean change of clothes, rain gear, sturdy swamp boots you won't mind throwing away.

KITCHEN SUPPLIES

- Manual can opener
- Bottle opener
- Matches in a plastic bag
- Pocket knife - preferably Swiss Army-style
- Camp stove or other cooking device and plenty of canned fuel, not charcoal or gas.
- Ice chests or coolers
- Paper plates, napkins
- Plastic cups, knives, forks, spoons

MEDICAL NEEDS

Drugstores will be mobbed just before a storm and closed for days after. Keep a 2-week supply of prescription drugs.

- Medic Alert tags
- Insect repellent sprays and candles
- Feminine hygiene items
- Insect bite lotion
- Sunscreen
- Soap
- First-aid kit
- First-aid handbook
- Extra over-the-counter medicine (for colds, allergies)
- Children's medicines
- Aspirin
- Diarrhea medication
- Bandages
- Adhesive tape
- Cotton-tipped swabs
- Antiseptic solution
- Sterile rolls, bandages
- Tweezers
- Needles
- Disinfectant
- Plastic bags, jugs or containers to store water and ice.
- Water purification tablets
- Plastic to line bathtub.