

# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS FOR HOMEOWNERS

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# PREPARING FOR A HURRICANE

Hurricane season runs from June through November in the Atlantic and Caribbean. They are dangerous and can harm more than those living along the coast.

## GETTING PREPARED

**Know the warning signs.** Understanding hurricane terminology will help you anticipate your risk.

- **Hurricane watch** means hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are possible in a stated area. Experts announce hurricane watches 48 hours before they expect tropical-storm-force winds (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) to start.
- **Hurricane warning** is more serious. It means hurricane-force winds are expected in a stated area. Experts issue these warnings 36 hours before tropical-storm-force winds are expected in the area to give people enough time to prepare for the storm.

**Sign up for a warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, become familiar with the warning tone.

**Create your communication plan.** Landline and cellular phone systems are often overwhelmed following a disaster, so you may need to use text messages and social media. Designate an out-of-town contact who can help your household reconnect, and be sure to practice your plan with your family.

**Create an emergency kit.** Keep this kit in an easily accessible location so you'll have it on hand if you ever need to evacuate. These kits tend to include non-perishable food, bottled water, essential medications, blankets, a radio, flashlights, and batteries.

**Fill your vehicle's gas tank** and make sure you have a car charger for your cell phone.

## PREPARE YOUR HOME

**Inspect and reinforce your roof.** Inspect the roof to make sure it is sealed tight. Consider reinforcing the roof with hurricane clips. These clips can help prevent the roof from lifting off of the home.

**Bring items inside** that could be blown away by strong winds. Trim trees, branches, and bushes around the home to help minimize debris damage.

**Know how to turn off utilities.** Locate the home's gas and water shut-off valve. If damage occurs, know how to shut these valves off to prevent further loss.

**Secure large furniture and appliances:** Anchor down large pieces of furniture to the wall and/or floor with zip ties or furniture straps.

**Close windows, doors and hurricane shutters.** If you don't have hurricane shutters, board up windows and doors with 1/2" marine plywood.





# EMERGENCY SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Hurricane season runs from June through November in the Atlantic and Caribbean. They are dangerous and can harm more than those living along the coast.

## PRIORITY ITEMS

- Medications
- Cell Phones
- First Aid Kit
- Flashlights
- Extra Batteries or Charger
- Battery Operated Radio
- Cash/ Credit Cards

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

TIP: Be sure to place important documents in a sealed bag so they are not damaged.

- Insurance Cards
- Social Security Cards
- Passports
- Drivers' Licenses
- List of Illnesses/ Allergies/ Medications
- Mortgage Paperwork
- Local Maps

## FOOD AND WATER

- Bottled Water (at least one gallon of water per person for at least three days)
- Non-Perishable Foods:
  - Granola Bars
  - Canned Food
  - Food in sealed bags
- Pet Food (if necessary)
- Baby Food (if necessary)

## HYGIENE ITEMS

- Change of Clothes
- Garbage Bags
- Soap
- Toilet Paper
- Bleach
- Paper Towels

## BASIC TOOLS

- Wrench
- Knife
- Scissors
- Pens/Paper
- Pliers
- Hammer/Nails
- Can Opener

## OTHER ITEMS

- Sleeping Bags or Blankets
- Fire Extinguisher
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disposable Utensils
- Activities for Children (Books, Games, Puzzles)





SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

# STEPS TO TAKE AFTER A HURRICANE

Hurricane season runs from June through November in the Atlantic and Caribbean. They are dangerous and can affect more than those living along the coast.

## SAFETY FIRST

**If you are trapped, draw attention to yourself.** Send a text, bang on a wall or pipe, or use a whistle to help rescuers find you.

**Check for injuries.** Ensure that you and everyone in your shelter is okay. If a person is hurt, call 911 immediately. Don't try to move a person unless they are in an unsafe area.

**Contact friends or family.** Let them know you are okay, but keep phone lines open for emergency calls.

**If you have become separated from your family,** contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit the American Red Cross Safe and Well site at [www.safeandwell.org](http://www.safeandwell.org).

**Stay informed.** Continue to monitor local radio or TV stations, or a NOAA weather radio for updated information or special instructions.

**Be careful during clean-up.** Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.

## ASSESS YOUR HOME

**Clean up your home safely.** Document any damage with photographs. Be sure to wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes when walking through storm damage to avoid injury.

**Carefully check your home's walls, floors, doors, windows, and staircases for damage.** If you see structural damage, like cracks in the foundation or missing support beams, you may need to relocate to a shelter or another safe location.

**Check gas, electrical, and water lines for damage.** If you smell gas or see a broken line, shut off the main valve from the outside. (Note: if gas is turned off, a professional must restore service.)

**Check for frayed wiring or sparks.** If there is an odor of something burning, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker.

**Do not use matches, lighters, appliances, or light switches until you are sure there are no gas leaks.** Sparks from electrical switches could ignite gas, causing an explosion.

**Listen to reports from local officials for advice on water precautions in your home.** Do not use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to make baby formula, make ice, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, or wash dishes. Throw out any food including canned items that were not maintained at a proper temperature or have been exposed to floodwaters.

