

GENERAL DISASTER AND HURRICANE SAFETY TIP SHEET

Monitor NOAA weather radio and/or keep your radio or television turned on and listen for the latest warnings and advisories. If power fails, use your car radio or a portable transistor radio. Have extra batteries on hand.

Develop and exercise a personal and family disaster plan.

Include all family members in developing your plan.

Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity and water.

Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, for police, fire and ambulance.

Teach children which radio station to tune to for emergency information.

Locate the safest places with-in your home.

Develop an emergency communication plan.

Make sure that all family members know how to respond before, during and after an emergency.

Designate several family meeting locations and family contact persons.

Designate a location on your property or adjacent to your property as a meeting location. Ask a neighbor, relative or friend with-in your immediate area and out-of-state to serve as a family contact person. A person and location that family member can contact to leave messages and/or go in case of emergency.

Know and review the safety guidelines for a fire, hurricane, tornado, winter storm earthquake, hazardous material spill or other problem, a terrorist incident and/or any other emergency.

Keep flashlight with extra batteries and/or other emergency lights in working order and keep them immediately available. Flashlight should be kept by your bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen, by doors and at other convenient locations.

If your house is out of danger from high tides, storm surge, flooded streams, is not in the path of the overflow of a pond or dam and is well built, then it is probably the safest place to weather the storm. Always check with local officials. Never remain in a mobile home.

Make your plans early. Develop your emergency evacuation plan and make plans where you will be staying during and after the emergency. Don't wait until the storm is near. The roads will be blocked.

Keep your gas tank filled. If electric power is off, filling stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.

Never travel on flooded roads or in any area that is or has recently been flooded.

Have ID and proof of residency. Public safety officials may not allow you back into your area until after it is safe and only with proper identification.

Board up, put on storm shutters, tape or otherwise protect windows. Danger to small windows is chiefly from flying debris. Larger windows may be broken by wind pressure and flying debris if unprotected. Pre-cut 1/2 inch marine plywood that is pre-drilled every 18 inches around the edges for screws for all windows will save time. Be sure to mark each piece of plywood for its designated location.

Be sure that a door or window can be opened on the lee side of the house. The lee side is the opposite side that is facing the wind.

Stay indoors away from windows.

Gather supplies, including medication, special dietary and baby foods, clothing, personal items and bedding that would be required if you had to evacuate your home and move to a shelter. Check your 72-hour emergency supplies and emergency kit.

Store extra food, especially canned or dry food items, which can be eaten without cooking or with very little preparation. Remember that electric power may be off and you may be without refrigeration. Have a manually operated can opener and cooking utensils.

Sterilize clean jugs, bottles and fill with drinking water as municipal water service may be interrupted. If available, use unbreakable containers such as plastic. . Have a minimum of one gallon of water per person. Don't forget the needs of your pets and animals.

Clear yard and secure everything that might blow away or be torn loose. Garbage cans, garden tools, bicycles, toys, signs, porch furniture, awnings and other objects that can become weapons of destruction in hurricane winds. Store inside if at all possible.

Be alert for high water in any areas where streams or rivers may flood after heavy rains. Hurricanes are almost always accompanied by torrential rains.

In the case of a hurricane, if the center or "eye" of the storm passes directly over; there will be a lull in the wind lasting from a few minutes to half an hour or more. Stay in a safe place. Make emergency repairs during the lull if necessary, but remember the wind will return suddenly from the opposite direction, frequently with greater violence.

Have at least 14 days supply of necessary medications, baby formula and supplies on hand.

Make arrangements for pets.

Pets may not be allowed into emergency shelters. Contact your local humane society for information on local animal shelters that will accept pets during an emergency. Check with motels that will accept pets. Have an airline approved portable kennel for your pet. In planning for food, water, medical and other supplies and materials don't forget the needs of your pets.

If you plan to leave your home and go to an evacuation shelter:

Don't leave home without unplugging electrical appliances, except for refrigerator/freezers. Shut off gas appliances.

If you decide to leave the area:

Plan to stay away at least 2 -3 weeks. It could take that long or longer for Public Safety officials to secure the area for re-entry.

Let your friends and relatives know where you are going.

Have a plan!

If you are planning to go to a hotel or motel, call ahead and make reservations.

Check to see if they accept pets or will recommend a veterinarian or kennel in the area.

Leave on your trip early before the wind builds up, (roads and bridges are often closed when there is high wind), roads become flooded and the roads become congested with other evacuation traffic.

Have cash, traveler's checks and credit cards.

Have current road maps and travel instructions.

Have a full tank of fuel and a safe vehicle.

Place pets in an airline approved type of carrier. Check with your veterinarian about tranquilizer and their use to calm pets. Bring along plenty of food, water, medication, pet medical records, leashes and other restraints.

Have emergency cooking facilities on hand for use after the storm has passed.

Turn refrigerator / freezer to the coldest setting to preserve food as long as possible in case of a power failure. Keep a cooler handy with ice available.

Wedge sliding glass doors and brace garage doors to prevent them from being lifted from their tracks.

Protect appliances and furniture by elevating them off floor level.

Early in the season have storm shutters or exterior plywood (minimum of 5/8" thick that is cut to fit each window and sliding glass door.

Trim surrounding trees of dead or overhanging branches.

Check your insurance coverage. Make sure that you are covered for flood and windstorm damage. You may not be able to change your coverage once a storm threatens your area, as most insurance have a time waiting period before coverage becomes effective.

Investigate the Federal Flood Insurance Program offered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Pack important papers, valuables and memorabilia in a waterproof container and have available in the event that you must evacuate your home.