Are You Ready for a Hurricane?

Here's what you can do to prepare for such an emergency

Know what a hurricane WATCH and WARNING means

- ✔ WATCH: Hurricane conditions are *possible* in the specified area of the WATCH, usually within 36 hours.
- ✔ WARNING: Hurricane conditions are *expected* in the specified area of the WARNING, usually within 24 hours.

Prepare a Personal Evacuation Plan

- ✔ Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places—a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter.
- ✔ Keep handy the telephone numbers of these places as well as a road map of your locality. You may need to take alternative or unfamiliar routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- ✔ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit containing—

- ✔ First aid kit and essential medications.
- ✔ Canned food and can opener.
- ✔ At least three gallons of water per person.
- ✔ Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- ✔ Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- ✔ Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- ✔ Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)

Prepare for high winds

- ✔ Install hurricane shutters or purchase precut 1/2" outdoor plywood boards for each window of your home. Install anchors for the plywood and predrill holes in the plywood so that you can put it up quickly.
- ✔ Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs, then strategically removing branches so that wind can blow through.

Know what to do when a hurricane WATCH is issued

- ✔ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for up-to-date storm information.
- ✔ Prepare to bring inside any lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, and anything else that can be picked up by the wind.
- ✔ Prepare to cover *all* windows of your home. If shutters have not been installed, use precut plywood as described above. *Note:* Tape does not prevent windows from breaking, so taping windows is not recommended.
- ✔ Fill your car's gas tank.
- ✔ Recheck manufactured home tie-downs.
- ✔ Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first aid supplies, drinking water, and medications.

Identify what to do when a hurricane WARNING is issued

- ✔ Listen to the advice of local officials, and leave if they tell you to do so.
- ✔ Complete preparation activities.
- ✔ If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, away from windows.
- ✔ Be aware that the calm "eye" is deceptive; the storm is not over. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds.
- ✔ Be alert for tornadoes. Tornadoes can happen during a hurricane and after it passes over. Remain indoors, in the center of your home, in a closet or bathroom without windows.
- ✔ Stay away from flood waters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car and climb to higher ground.

Know what to do after a hurricane is over

- ✔ Keep listening to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for instructions.
- ✔ If you are evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.
- ✔ Inspect your home for damage.
- ✔ Use flashlights at all times; avoid using candles.

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Hurricanes are most threatening to residents along our nation's coastlines. But such fierce storms also have been known to build up enough momentum to carry their destructive winds inland for hundreds of miles. Heavy rains, flooding, and tornadoes add to the damage hurricanes can inflict on your home and community.

Prepare for a hurricane by completing each item on the checklist below. Then meet to discuss and finalize your Family Disaster Plan.

_____ **Put together a Disaster Supplies Kit in a clearly labeled, easy-to-grab container.**

Location of Disaster Supplies Kit: _____

_____ **Call your local emergency management or planning and zoning office to find out if you live in an area that could flood during a hurricane or heavy rains.**

Flood area: ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____ **Prepare an evacuation plan in case you must leave. Share your plan with the relatives or friends you plan to stay with—or plan to go to a Red Cross shelter. Add to your Disaster Supplies Kit a map marked with two alternative routes to your destination.**

Evacuation plan completed: _____
(date)

_____ **Write instructions on how to turn off your home's electricity, water, and gas if advised to do so by local authorities. (A professional must turn gas service back on.)**

Instructions written: _____
(date)

_____ **Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a storm. Keep this list in your Disaster Supplies Kit.**

List completed: _____
(date)

_____ **Buy any items needed to board up windows and protect your home well ahead of time. Precut plywood to fit windows so that you can quickly cover windows.**

Items purchased to protect home: _____
(date)

_____ **Have an engineer check your home and advise you about ways to make it more resistant to hurricane winds.**

Engineer checked home: _____
(date)

Changes recommended: _____

And remember . . . when a hurricane, earthquake, flood, tornado, or other emergency happens in your community, you can count on your local American Red Cross chapter to be there to help you and your family. Your Red Cross is not a government agency and depends on contributions of your time, money, and blood.

For more information, contact your local Red Cross chapter, National Weather Service office, or emergency management agency. You can also visit these Web sites:

American Red Cross: **www.redcross.org**

National Weather Service: **www.nws.noaa.gov**

Federal Emergency Management Agency: **www.fema.gov**

Personal Workplace Disaster Supplies Kit

For the workplace, where you might be confined for several hours, or perhaps overnight, the following supplies are recommended. More information is at:
http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/

Flashlight with extra batteries

Use the flashlight to find your way if the power is out. Do not use candles or any other open flame for emergency lighting.

Battery-powered radio

News about the emergency may change rapidly as events unfold. You also will be concerned about family and friends in the area. Radio reports will give information about the areas most affected.

Food

Enough non-perishable food to sustain you for at least one day (three meals), is suggested. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. The following items are suggested:

- Ready-to-eat canned meals, meats, fruits, and vegetables.
- Canned juices.
- High-energy foods (granola bars, energy bars, etc.).

Water

Keep at least one gallon of water available, or more if you are on medications that require water or that increase thirst. Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles.

Medications

Include usual non-prescription medications that you take, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, etc.
If you use prescription medications, keep at least three-day's supply of these medications at your workplace. Consult with your physician or pharmacist how these medications should be stored, and your employer about storage concerns.

First Aid Supplies

If your employer does not provide first aid supplies, have the following essentials:
(20) adhesive bandages, various sizes.
(1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing.
(1) conforming roller gauze bandage.
(2) triangular bandages.
(2) 3 x 3 sterile gauze pads.
(2) 4 x 4 sterile gauze pads.
(1) roll 3" cohesive bandage.
(2) germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
(6) antiseptic wipes.
(2) pair large medical grade non-latex gloves
Adhesive tape, 2" width.
Anti-bacterial ointment.
Cold pack.
Scissors (small, personal).
Tweezers.
CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield

Tools and Supplies

- Emergency "space" blanket (mylar).
- Paper plates and cups, plastic utensils
- Non-electric can opener.
- Personal hygiene items, including a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, soap, contact lens supplies, and feminine supplies.
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses) .
- Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear, including a long sleeved shirt and long pants, as well as closed-toed shoes or boots.
- If you wear glasses, keep an extra pair with your workplace disaster supplies.

General Information

- Your kit should be adjusted based on your own personal needs.
- Do not include candles, weapons, toxic chemicals, or controlled drugs unless prescribed by a physician.