Preparing for a Storm: Your Short Guide to Readiness

Do You Have a Hurricane Supply Kit?
As you are well aware, the more you prepare for Hurricane Season, the better off you'll be. However, being prepared involves more than just collecting canned goods and bottled water. There are a lot of useful items that are easy to forget about as you put your supply kit together. Use the list below to make certain you're truly ready for the worst.

Water - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 days

Food - at least enough for 3 days
- non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices
- foods for infants or the elderly
- snack foods
- non-electric can opener
- cooking tools and fuel
- paper plates and plastic utensils

Blankets / Pillows, etc.

Clothing - seasonal/rain gear and sturdy shoes

First Aid Kit/Medicines/Prescription Drugs

Special Items - for babies and the elderly

Toiletries/Hygiene items/Moisture wipes

Flashlight/Batteries

Radio - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio

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Cash - Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.

Keys

Toys, Books and Games - to occupy your time while you wait out the storm or to help put children at ease

Important documents - in a waterproof container
- insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.

Tools - keep a set with you during the storm

Vehicle fuel tanks filled

Pet care items - proper identification, immunization records and medications
- ample supply of food and water
- a carrier or cage
- muzzle and leash

Emergency Essentials Checklist: Important Family Documents

One of the most important elements that needs to be added to your emergency essentials is often the most overlooked: family documents. Records, contracts, deeds and other important documents need to be protected during an emergency situation. Your emergency essentials should include these family documents stored in a waterproof, portable container:

✔ Will
✔ Insurance policies
✔ Contracts
✔ Deeds
✔ Stocks and bonds
✔ Passports, social security cards, immunization records
✔ Bank account numbers
✔ Credit card account numbers and companies
✔ Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
✔ Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Preparing for a Hurricane

If you are under a hurricane watch or warning, here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the storm:

- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters.
- Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before the hurricane strikes. Be prepared to turn off electrical power when there is standing water, fallen power lines, or before you evacuate. Turn off gas (you will need a professional to turn the gas back on at a later date) and water supplies before you evacuate. Secure structurally unstable building materials.
- Buy a fire extinguisher and make sure your family knows where to find it and how to use
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it.

• Locate and secure your important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, licenses, stocks, etc.

• Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.

• Inform local authorities about any special needs, i.e., elderly or bedridden people, or anyone with a disability.

• Make plans to ensure your pets' safety.

If You Are NOT Ordered to Evacuate

The great majority of injuries during a hurricane are cuts caused by flying glass or other debris. Other injuries include puncture wounds resulting from exposed nails, metal, or glass, and bone fractures.

To get through the storm in the safest possible manner:

• Monitor the radio or television for weather conditions, if possible.

• Stay indoors until the authorities declare the storm is over.

• Do not go outside, even if the weather appears to have calmed---the calm “eye” of the storm can pass quickly, leaving you outside when strong winds resume.

• Stay away from all windows and exterior doors, seeking shelter in a bathroom or basement. Bathtubs can provide some shelter if you cover yourself with plywood or other materials.

• Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or to a neighbor’s home if your home is damaged, or if you are instructed to do so by emergency personnel.

If You Are Ordered to Evacuate

Because of the destructive power of a hurricane, you should never ignore an evacuation order. Authorities will be most likely to direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the storm. Be aware that most shelters and some hotels do not accept pets. If a hurricane warning is issued for your area or you are directed by authorities to evacuate the area:

• Take only essential items with you.

• If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity, and water. Note that when you return home, you will need a professional to turn the gas back on.

• Disconnect appliances to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.

• Make sure your automobile’s emergency kit is ready.

• Follow the designated evacuation routes---others may be blocked---and expect heavy traffic.