

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

DURING THE HURRICANE SEASON

Complete these steps prior to and during the hurricane season.

- Keep your vehicle gas tank above ½ full through the season.
- Test run generators monthly under a load to insure proper working order.
- Consider the purchase of flood insurance, even if outside of a floodplain.
- Have cash on hand in small denominations as ATMs do not work without power.
- Maintain portable battery powered AM/FM Radio or Television.

BEFORE THE STORM HITS

When there is a heightened risk of hurricane or tropical storm impact, take the proper measures below to secure your property and prepare for a potential ride out or evacuation.

- Trim the trees and shrubs around your home.
- Board up your windows or close storm shutters.
- Brace garage doors and unplug garage door openers.
- Clear clogged downspouts and rain gutters.
- Complete a home inventory (electronics, jewelry, family heirlooms, appliances, clothing, etc.) and store in a waterproof container in a secure location.
- Take detailed photos(s) or videos(s) of personal property and store in a waterproof container in a secure location.
- Secure or remove all items outside your home (grill, hanging plants, potted plants, etc.) that could potentially become flying objects. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.
- Secure outdoor ceiling fans by removing blades or strapping with straps or tape.
- Tie down small or young trees to prevent uprooting.
- Store all important documents (insurance papers, etc.) in a waterproof container and in a secure location.
- Tarp cardboard boxes in attic spaces or move contents into a plastic container with lid to avoid water damage.
- Prepare your Bug Out Bag and/or INCH Bag. [Click here to find our free Bug Out Bag Checklist.](#)
- Prepare your evacuation kit using the pertinent items in our [Home Emergency Supply \(HES\) Kit Checklist.](#)
- Turn off propane tanks and secure.
- Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water in case your local water supply gets contaminated.
- Test your family communication plan.

EVACUATION PLANNING

If you plan to evacuate, don't forget these extra steps which are crucial to have completed before you get on the road.

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- Know if you are located in an area known for mandatory evacuations.
- Identify the location you plan to evacuate to (i.e. out of town relative, hotel, etc.)
- Identify and document your primary and secondary contacts at your evacuation destination and make sure they know you are coming.
- Identify and document their contact information.
- Identify a backup evacuation location in case your primary falls through.
- Identify and document your point of contact at your secondary location and make sure they know they are the backup plan.
- Identify and document their contact information.
- Pack a copy of all your important documentation (insurance documents, prescriptions, home inventory list) in a waterproof container and take them with you.
- Top off your gas tank before you hit the road.
- Take gas can(s) if possible. Make sure they are secured on the exterior of the vehicle, do not transport inside the vehicle. Be sure to fill them up before leaving.
- Listen to local media for weather updates and potential calls for evacuation.
- Identify family heirlooms (photos, etc.) that could be damaged due to storm. Package them and secure in an elevated location or take them with you if possible.

PLANNING TO RIDE IT OUT

- Watch/listen to local media for weather updates
- Prepare your Home Emergency Supply (HES) Kit. Use [our Home Emergency Supply Kit Checklist](#) to help you identify any gaps.
- Fill up vehicle gas tanks before the storm makes landfall.
- Fill all gas cans for gas-operated equipment that will be needed after the storm (generators, chain saws, etc.)
- If you own a camper or RV, fill all fuel tanks and water tanks. They can serve as a secondary supply or potential shelter after the storm.
- Ensure extra motor oil is on hand for gas-operated 4 cycle tools, as high run times will require an oil change to avoid damaging the equipment.
- Identify the "safe room" in your home to ride out the storm. This should be a room, closet, or hallway, closest to the center of the structure as possible and on the first floor with no windows.
- Locate your Bug Out Bag and/or INCH Bag in a readily accessible location close to your safe room in the event you need to access it quickly.
- Turn the refrigerator and freezer to the lowest setting
- Have a fire extinguisher readily available in the case of a fire.

RIDING OUT THE STORM

- Watch/listen to local media for weather updates.
- Ride out the storm in your safe room. Avoid doors and windows.
- Understand what happens during the eye of the storm. If you have to go out in the eye, be sure to be sheltered before it passes over.

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RETURNING FROM AN EVACUATION

- Do not start your return trip until you know your route is passable and safe.
- Fill up your gas tank and gas cans before starting your return trip.
- Be on the lookout for debris or downed power on the roadway.
- Refill any used items from your emergency bags before returning home (Bug Out Bag, Get Home Bag, INCH Bag, etc.)
- Watch for and avoid displaced wildlife and loose animals.

AFTER THE STORM

- Carefully perform a 360° exterior safety assessment of your home.
- Carefully check the roof, foundation, and chimney for damage.
If the building looks unstable or there are significant safety issues, turn off utilities and do not enter the structure until having your home inspected by a qualified building inspector or engineer
- If safe to do so, carefully enter the structure and perform an interior assessment.
- Have a fire extinguisher readily available in the case of a fire.
- If you smell natural gas, leave the structure immediately and contact your local utility company or fire department.
- Use a broomstick to sift through debris or wear work gloves.
- Use a battery powered flashlight as needed when inspecting the structure. Do not use candles or fuel lanterns.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning hazards. Do not run gas operated appliances indoors.
- Do not use electrical appliances that have been wet or damaged until they are checked or repaired by a certified professional.
Check with local authorities to ensure municipal water supplies are safe to drink. Have well water tested before consumption. Do not assume any water supply is safe until it is confirmed.
- Unless water is confirmed safe, boil all drinking water for at least 1 minute at a rolling boil to disinfect before consumption.
- If possible, check for sewage and/or water line damage. Turn off water utilities and avoid using toilets if damage is found.
- Service damaged sewer systems as soon as possible as a leak from them can present serious health hazards.
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are functioning properly. Have replacement batteries on hand.
- If any damage is found in your home, contact your insurance company to file a claim.
- Photograph and document any damage that is found. Inventory any damaged contents.
- Throw out spoiled food items or any food items that have come in contact with flood waters.