

HURRICANES

PREPARING | SURVIVING | RECOVERING



EMERGENCY READY

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Hurricanes are powerful forces of nature capable of causing widespread destruction and loss of life across entire states and coastlines. No other severe weather event in the U.S. has the capacity to create such intense, far-reaching damage.

Fortunately, science has the capability to predict the severity of hurricanes days in advance giving you and your loved ones ample time to prepare and evacuate if needed. Use this guide to get a head start in preparing for these dangerous, costly, and deadly storms.





PREPARING

LEARN ABOUT HURRICANES

The more you understand about these powerful forces of nature, the better you can prepare for them.

WHAT IS A HURRICANE?

Hurricanes are violent tropical storms with sustained winds of at least 74 mph. They form over warm ocean waters, usually starting as storms in the Caribbean or off Africa's west coast. As they drift slowly westward, the warm waters of the tropics fuel their power as warm, moist air moves toward the center of the storm spiraling upward. This releases torrential rains. As updrafts suck up more water vapor, it triggers a cycle of strengthening power that can be stopped only when contact is made with land or cooler water.

HURRICANE SEASON

Hurricane season officially begins June 1st and ends November 30th.

KNOW YOUR AREA'S RISK

Hurricanes threaten the entire southern and eastern seaboard of the United States. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 40% of hurricanes make landfall in Florida making Floridians the most at-risk population to experience a deadly hurricane. Louisiana experiences the 2nd highest number of storms followed by the Carolinas.



KNOW THE TERMS

Tropical Depression - An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 mph (33 knots) or less.

Tropical Storm - An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph (34-63 knots).

Hurricane - A warm-core tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 74 mph (64 knots) or greater.

Eye - The center of a hurricane with light winds and partly cloudy to clear skies. The eye is usually around 20 miles in diameter but can range between 5 and 60 miles.

Eye Wall - location within a hurricane where the most damaging winds and intense rainfall are found.

Tropical Storm Watch - issued when tropical storm conditions may threaten a specific coastal area within 36 hours, and when the storm is not predicted to intensify to hurricane strength.

Tropical Storm Warning - winds in the range of 39 to 73 mph can be expected to affect specific areas of a coastline within the next 24 hours.

Hurricane Watch - a hurricane or hurricane conditions may threaten a specific coastal area within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning - a warning that sustained winds of 74 mph or higher associated with a hurricane are expected in a specified coastal area in 24 hours or less.

ACCESS THE NOAA WEATHER ALERT SYSTEM

Download the NOAA Weather Radar Alert System app on your Smart Phone or purchase a radio that can broadcast the NOAA Weather Alert stations.



BUILD A KIT

Assemble your hurricane survival kit before hurricane season begins. Waiting until forecasters predict an incoming storm puts you at risk of panic buying and supply shortages. Even if you plan to evacuate, bring your survival kit with you to the emergency shelter.

Food and Water: a 7-day supply of fresh water and non-perishable food for each person in your family. Include food and water for your pets.

Shelter Supplies: thermal mylar blankets, sleeping bags, portable tents, tarps, and plastic sheeting

Hygiene Items: waterless shampoo and toothpaste, comb, toilet paper, tissue paper, wipes, portable toilet, disposable bags

First Aid: family-sized first aid kit and extra prescription medications

PPE: masks for each family member, sanitation wipes, hand sanitizer

Lighting: hand-crank/solar-powered flashlights, extra batteries, candles

Communication Device: Hand-crank/solar-powered radio with access to the NOAA weather-band emergency alert channels. Do not rely on your cell phone for news and evacuation bulletins.

Tools: shovels and pry bars for performing search and rescue operations, gas/water shut-off wrench

Clothing: keep a pair of rubber boots, and extra clothing in your kit for each family member

SURVIVING

As the storm approaches, be alert to changing weather conditions and listen to local radio and TV stations or the NOAA Weather Alert System for further updates.

EVACUATION

Follow the instructions issued by local emergency managers. If you live in a mandatory evacuation zone, identify the quickest evacuation route and make immediate plans to transport your family and pets from the area or to an emergency shelter. Check with your local shelter if pets are allowed. If not, make plans to shelter them with friends or family who reside outside the evacuation zone. Review your shelter's COVID-19 guidelines.

Bring your Survival Kit with you to the emergency shelter or in your vehicle if you plan to leave the city.





EVACUATION GUIDELINES

- Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely.
- Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.
- Make transportation arrangements with friends or your local government if you do not own a car.
- Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.
- Gather your family and go if you are instructed to evacuate immediately.
- Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather or in long lines of traffic.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.
- Bring your Survival Kit.
- Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a cap.
- Secure your home by closing and locking doors and windows.
- Unplug electrical equipment, such as radios and televisions, and small appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.
- Notify your emergency contact(s) of your plans.



SHELTERING-IN-PLACE

DAYS LEADING UP TO THE STORM

- Identify a safe room/space within your home away from exterior glass windows and doors such as a closet or hallway.
- Store your survival kit, food, and water in your safe room.
- Board or shutter all windows.
- Secure or store inside all outdoor furniture and decor.
- Install heavy bolts on all doors.

DURING THE STORM:

- Secure and brace all exterior doors, close all interior doors.
- Shut all windows and cover them with curtains or blinds.
- Stay away from doors and windows and remain in your safe room.
- If there is a tornado, lie flat on the floor under a heavy piece of furniture.
- If floodwaters breach the home, move to a higher floor, do not attempt to leave the home, and do not shelter in an attic - you may become trapped.
- Do not leave the house during a lull in the storm.



RECOVERING

AFTER THE STORM

CHECK FOR INJURIES AND DAMAGE

- Be aware of falling debris, broken glass and downed power lines.
- Do not light a match in the event there is a gas leak in your house or shelter. If you smell gas, evacuate the building.
- Treat superficial injuries with your first aid kit. Do not move seriously injured people.

COMMUNICATE

- Use your cell phone only to call for emergency help.
- Text loved ones, don't call. Leave the phone lines free for emergency calls.
- Listen to the radio for emergency updates and safety advisories.

FILE CLAIMS & RECOVER

- When the danger has passed, injuries are treated, and you receive the all-clear to return to your home, contact your insurance company to begin the claims process.
- Begin documenting and taking photos of damaged property.
- Do not throw anything away - all damage must be documented in order to file a complete claim.



DIRECT ASSISTANCE

Direct assistance to individuals and families may come from any number of organizations, including: the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other volunteer organizations. These organizations provide food, shelter, supplies and assist in clean-up efforts.

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

In severe disasters, the federal government assists individuals and families with temporary housing, counseling (for post-disaster trauma), low-interest loans and grants, and other assistance. The federal government also has programs that help small businesses and farmers recover.

Most federal assistance becomes available when the President of the United States declares a “Major Disaster” for the affected area at the request of a state governor. FEMA will provide information through the media and community outreach about federal assistance and how to apply.

RESOURCES

[READY.GOV/HURRICANES](https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes)

**[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT \(HUD.GOV\)](https://www.hud.gov)**

[DISASTERASSISTANCE.GOV](https://www.disasterassistance.gov)

[FEMA.GOV/ASSISTANCE](https://www.fema.gov/assistance)

[WEATHER.GOV](https://www.weather.gov)

[REDCROSS.ORG/GET-HELP](https://www.redcross.org/get-help)

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