

This publication is based on materials prepared by the Georgia Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission, under a cooperative agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The National Hurricane Center near Miami, Florida, constantly watches the North Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico ocean waters for tropical disturbances. These disturbances become tropical storms when wind speeds reach 39 miles per hour and move in a circular pattern. Storms that continue to grow having wind speeds above 74 miles an hour and moving in a counter-clockwise direction are hurricanes.

Strong winds, heavy rains, thunder, lightning, and sometimes tornadoes accompany the hurricane storm. But a hurricane's most deadly force is usually the storm surge. Ocean tides rise dramatically, creating large waves which hit the shore with great force and far beyond the reach of normal waves. Most hurricane deaths can be attributed to storm surge.

A hurricane can also create flooding far inland.

HURRICANE SEASON IS JUNE 1 - NOVEMBER 30

Following is a checklist of actions you can take before, during, and after a hurricane strikes. Check this list each spring to be better prepared for the hurricane season.

BEFORE THE SEASON BEGINS

Stock Your Home

It's a good idea to stock a supply of food, water, and supplies for any emergency. Any season can bring disaster. Winter storms or summer heat waves could affect your ability to get to the store for food or medication. Even a simple water main break could leave you without vital water for a few days.

Water. Each person's need for drinking water varies, depending on age, physical condition, and time of year. The average person needs at least one quart of water or other liquid to drink per day, but more would be better. Also keep a couple of gallons on hand for sanitary purposes.

Store water in plastic, airtight containers and replace every two months to be sure it is pure.

Food. Supplies should include enough nonperishable, high-energy foods to feed you and your family for up to three days. You may be stranded in your home for several days or local stores may run low on supplies. Also, if you go to a public shelter, it is helpful to take as much non-perishable food as you can carry.

A suggested supply of foods for emergencies includes:

- whole dry milk*
- canned fruit juices
- canned meats and fish, like vienna
sausage, meat spread, or tuna
- meat substitutes, like beans
- bread and crackers*
- peanut butter
- dried fruits
- dry cereals*
- granola bars or cookies*

*Place paper or waxed packages in a water-tight container, such as a larger plastic bag. This will keep them dry and make them easier to carry.

Supplies and Equipment. Keep the following items in one place so you can get to them easily:

A battery-operated radio (with extra batteries)

A flashlight (with extra batteries)

Blankets or sleeping bags

Paper plates and utensils, including a bottle and can opener

Candles and matches (in a waterproof container) or an oil or kerosene lantern

Toilet articles and sanitary needs

Medicines. It is very important to keep an adequate supply of any medicines you take. If you are stranded in your home, or are

asked to go to a public shelter, you may not be able to get more medication easily. If possible, you should also keep an extra pair of glasses on hand for emergencies.

Even though you have emergency supplies, don't make the mistake of trying to "ride out" a hurricane at home. EVACUATE if local authorities tell you to do so, especially if you live in low-lying areas which could be easily flooded. Leave early before roads become flooded and you cannot get out.

Arrange for a ride with nearby neighbors or relatives if you do not have a car. You can also call a local senior citizens group, your church, or your community emergency services office for help in arranging a ride.

Plan for Evacuation

When you evacuate, you may wish to take some of the supplies listed on the previous with you, but don't take more than you can carry. If you are going to a public shelter, the most important items to take are your medication, a blanket, the portable radio, an extra change of

clothing, and perhaps a small supply of packaged quick-energy foods like raisins and granola bars.

You can take certain actions ahead of time to make an evacuation easier:

Keep your gas tank as full as possible during hurricane season. In an evacuation, fuel may be difficult to get.

Team up with a “partner”—a neighbor or friend living nearby—to plan your evacuation together. By sharing supplies and a ride, each of you can help the other.

If possible, make plans in advance to stay with friends or relatives living inland on higher ground if you need to evacuate.

Learn the recommended evacuation route from your home to safer, higher ground. Local broadcasts will tell you where to go during an evacuation, but you can learn the safest route ahead of time by watching for a pre-season distribution of a local evacuation plan or by calling your local emergency services office.

Stay Aware of Weather Conditions

Listen to daily weather forecasts during hurricane season. As hurricanes develop, they

are monitored closely by the National Weather Service. The Weather Service issues two types of notices about approaching hurricanes: a HURRICANE WATCH and a HURRICANE WARNING.

A HURRICANE WATCH means a hurricane may threaten coastal and inland areas, and that hurricane conditions are a real possibility; it does not mean they are imminent. However, you should take preparatory action.

When a WATCH is issued for your area, you should:

- Stay tuned to local stations for the latest weather information.

- Contact your “partner” to review your plans.

- Be sure your car is fueled and ready to go, or contact the person who agreed to give you a ride in an evacuation to re-confirm your arrangements.

- Gather your emergency supplies, placing them in your car or near the front door if you are riding with someone else.

- Store away all objects on your lawn or patio which could be picked up and carried by the

wind. Lawn furniture, garbage cans, garden tools, toys, signs, and a number of other harmless items can become deadly missiles in hurricane winds.

Gather up important papers in your home such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, insurance policies, deeds, etc. Place them in a waterproof container with your non-perishable food supply or in your safe deposit box.

A HURRICANE WARNING is issued when a hurricane is expected to strike within 24 hours. A hurricane warning may also include an assessment of flood danger in coastal and inland areas, small craft warnings, gale warnings, and recommended emergency procedures.

WHEN A STORM THREATENS

Evacuation

If a hurricane WARNING is issued for your area and an evacuation is ordered, local radio and television stations will announce information on where you should go and the best route to take. Call your “partner” and make arrangements to leave.

Don't panic if you cannot get a ride. In a hurricane evacuation, local emergency services personnel or police usually patrol each street to warn those people who may not have a radio or television. You can stop one of these officers, and they will help you.

Leave early! Do not wait, especially in low-lying areas. Roads can flood quickly, leaving you stranded.

You should not use elevators to leave your building. The electricity could cut off and leave you stranded.

Before you leave your home:

Run wide waterproof tape from corner to corner in a large X on each window and glass door to keep glass from shattering.

Close and lock your windows and glass doors, lowering blinds and closing curtains to keep flying rubble out. If possible, you may wish to nail boards over larger windows.

Fill bathtubs and other clean containers with water for later use should water become unavailable.

Follow the approved evacuation route from your home to safe higher ground.

Do not stay in a mobile home during a hurricane. Even if a mobile home is anchored, there is no guarantee it will withstand the strong winds of a hurricane.

DURING THE HURRICANE

If you are unable to evacuate before the hurricane hits, stay inside. Do not be fooled by the eye of the hurricane and its temporary period of peaceful weather conditions. The length of time within the eye varies from several minutes to a couple of hours, depending on the size of the storm. The larger and more intense the hurricane, the larger the eye.

Stay away from windows and glass doors. You could be struck by flying debris.

Continue to listen to your radio or television for hurricane updates and emergency information.

AFTER THE HURRICANE

Local authorities will announce when it is safe to return to your home. Stay tuned to local stations for current information. When you get home:

Look for visible structural damage before you go inside. Watch for loose or dangling electrical power lines and broken sewer,

water, or gas lines. Notify local officials immediately if you see any.

Make sure all electrical outlets and appliances are dry and free of water before using them.

Do not drink water from the faucet until officially notified that it is safe from contamination. Use your emergency supply or boil tap water before drinking it.

Without electricity, food in your refrigerator could spoil in a few hours. Don't eat it. Food in a freezer could partially thaw, but would be safe to eat for several days. Food should not be refrozen once it begins to thaw.

Snakes, animals, and insects instinctively travel inland to higher ground to escape approaching flood waters. Expect them and be prepared to protect yourself.

Careful planning and quick response to a hurricane threat will reduce damage to your home and could save your life. Most importantly, you must EVACUATE if you are told to do so by local officials. Material possessions are replaceable, your life is not.

Take action now to be better prepared for hurricane season.