

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Things to do now

- Establish a family emergency plan. Discuss how to prepare for and respond to a hurricane, what to bring if you are evacuated.
- Make an emergency kit that includes a three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day), food that won't spoil, a manual can opener, flash-light, portable radio, a phone with a cord, plenty of extra batteries, prescription medicines, valuable documents, cash, bedding, first-aid kit, first-aid manual, change of clothing, an extra set of car keys, and special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- Make an inventory of possessions. Take pictures or video of each room; in case of damage, the images will help you identify what is lost. Make an additional copy to give to your insurance claims adjuster. Store photos or discs in a secure, dry place where you can retrieve them after the storm.
- Assess your storm preparations. Learn safe routes inland and plan where you'll go if you evacuate.
- Make arrangements for pets. Registration for the two pet-friendly shelters in Miami-Dade and the one in Broward is required and space is limited.
- Obtain and store materials such as hurricane panels or, as a last resort, plywood, to secure your home.
- Consider your roof and the structure of your house and make necessary repairs.
- Remove coconuts and other yard debris.
- Check your fire extinguisher.
- Make arrangements to move your boat to safe harbor or secure it.
- Review your wind- storm, flood and home- owner's insurance policies.

If a hurricane watch is issued

- Begin listening for storm updates or check National Hurricane Center updates online at www.nhc.noaa.gov. Fill the car's gas tank and keep it topped off. Make sure the battery is in good condition.
- Fill propane tanks for gas grills and camp stoves.
- Check your battery-powered equipment. A radio could be your only link with the outside world during and after a hurricane.
- Review your preparedness plan with your household.
- Pick two places for your family to meet: a spot outside your home in case of emergency, such as fire, and a place away from your neighborhood, in case you can't return home.
- Establish an out-of-town phone number with family or friends to relay messages about your whereabouts after the storm.
- Refill prescriptions.
- Stock canned foods, soft drinks and water.
- Collect medical and property insurance papers, immunization records and medical records of anyone with special needs in a rugged, waterproof container. Include a few cherished mementos. If you evacuate to a shelter, take these items with you.
- If you are not in an evacuation zone, determine your "safe room" or a room that is away from windows and has walls close together.
- Put shutters, window and door protection in place if instructed by local officials.

- Do not trim branches or limbs from trees. These could become dangerous missiles if picked up by the wind.
- Locate the turnoff valves for electricity, water and gas.
- Inspect and secure mobile home tie-downs.

If a hurricane warning is issued

- Follow instructions issued by local officials.
- Fill bathtubs and jugs with water. Figure on using a gallon of water per person per day.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer settings to the coldest levels. Freeze water in plastic containers. If electricity fails, you can use the blocks of ice to help keep food cold.
- Bring in any outdoor objects that could become projectiles in high winds: mail boxes, garbage cans, lawn furniture and garden tools. Anchor anything that cannot be brought inside. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.
- Install your shutters or cover all your windows and doors. Install braces on your garage doors if they do not meet the current building code.
- Keep all windows closed during the storm.
- Disconnect natural gas to individual appliances at the supply valves near each unit. Do not turn off the main gas line. Disconnect propane gas to individual appliances.
- Remove external antennas.
- Remove valuable pictures and bric-a-brac from walls.
- Wedge sliding glass doors with a bar.
- Draw drapes and blinds.
- Turn off electricity to the pool and cover the pump equipment with waterproof material. Remove and store child safety fences.
- Gather your hurricane kit and stay in your safe room. Essentials for the room include sturdy shoes, something to cover your head such as a pillow or mattress and a fire extinguisher.

High rises

- Residents of high-rise apartments should know that winds are stronger at higher elevations. Glass doors and windows may blow out of their casings and weaken the structure.
- If you live in an evacuation area, you'll have to leave when the order is given.
- If you live outside the evacuation area, seek shelter between the third and 10th floors to stay safe from the storm surge and high winds.
- Know the location of all exit stairways. Count the number of steps and direction to the closest exit in case the lights in the hallway aren't operating.
- Don't use the elevator.
- Decide where the family will meet if you are separated.
- Bring in all loose items from the patio or balcony. Close and lock all windows, sliding glass doors and shutters.
- If you are renting, make sure you know what the owner is responsible for, such as putting up shutters.
- Building managers or condo associations should organize a group of responsible residents to develop a plan to secure the grounds.
- Set up guidelines for storing cars and boats.
- Condominium or high-rise building boards should find out if their buildings have back-up generators.

- Elevator cars should be stopped at the top of the shaft so that they are less likely to be damaged by water or debris.
- Find a structurally safe area to congregate, such as a hallway above the third floor.
- Set up a system to keep track of residents who plan to leave, so that everyone can be accounted for.

During a hurricane

- Stay indoors away from doors and windows, in an area with the walls close together such as a hallway or closet. Keep something with you such as a mattress or pillow to protect your head.
- If you are in a two-story house, go to an interior first-floor room.
- Leave an accessible exit in case of fire.
- Don't go outside, even during the lull when the eye passes, unless it is an emergency.
- Prepare for storm surge and flooding.
- If you have a pet, consider keeping it in the room with you in a travel carrier.
- Listen to a battery- powered radio or TV.

Special instructions

- Pregnant women in their last month or at high risk must ask their doctors if hospitalization is necessary. Most hospitals will not admit pregnant women without authorization from a physician. If approved, make arrangements for children; hospitals likely won't allow children or spouses to come along.
- Children should help with the storm preparations, which will allow them to talk about their fears and share in the family's responsibilities.
- Residents who need assistance with daily living or have electrically dependent medical equipment may need assistance evacuating. They must be registered with the appropriate county agency before the storm. They should contact their local emergency management office and request an application.
- For diabetics, find a cool place for insulin supply. It will keep safely for a month at 85 degrees. Diabetics should monitor their blood sugar more often during the emergency. Have candy or juice available for insulin reactions.
- Dialysis patients should make arrangements to have dialysis as soon as possible.
- Elderly residents of high-rises should not stay there if instructed to evacuate. Even inland, power failures after the storm could trap them.

If you must evacuate

- Authorities will issue an evacuation order over television and radio. They also will release lists of evacuation shelters and times they will open. Follow recommended routes to the evacuation center, and if possible, travel during daylight.
- Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
- Take your own supplies to the shelter, including food, a change of clothes and shoes, medicine, diapers and other sanitary needs. Bring a radio, pencil, notebook, important papers, flashlight, bedding, plastic bags for dirty clothes and items to keep yourselves amused.
- Remember that pets (except guide dogs), fire-arms and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in most evacuation centers. Find an inland kennel for pets or pet-friendly hotels in a safe area. Only two shelters in Miami-Dade and one in Broward will allow pets and space is limited.

- Register at the desk when entering. The Red Cross keeps records of the people they shelter. That list can be searched nationally. This will help family and friends find you if you can't contact them.
- Volunteer to assist shelter workers.
- Keep your area as clean and neat as possible. Bring your sense of humor; tensions can run high.

Mobile homes

- Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable so they should be evacuated in advance of any tropical storm or hurricane.
- Bring in all outdoor objects.
- Lower all awnings. Shutter or board windows and doors.
- When a hurricane warning is issued, evacuate. Go to the home of a friend or family member or evacuation center.

After a hurricane

- If you evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe. Officials on the scene are your best source of information on accessible areas and passable roads.
- Venture outdoors carefully. Power lines are likely to be down; be careful where you step. Keep your pets inside as much as possible.
- Help a neighbor who may require special assistance -- infants, elderly people and people with disabilities.
- Stay away from disaster areas; don't sight-see.
- Do not drive through a flooded area. Approach every intersection as a four-way stop. Avoid weakened bridges and washed-out roads.
- If possible, let friends, relatives and your employer know you are safe.
- Keep all calls, land-line and wireless, to a minimum to allow emergency calls to get through. If you hear a fast busy signal, phone use may be at capacity. The Web may also be affected.
- Find out if your water supply is safe.
- Watch out for wildlife and insects that have been driven to higher ground.
- Local, state and federal agencies will respond as quickly as possible, but count on being self-sufficient for at least three days.
- If you do not have the supplies you need, go to a relief site as quickly as possible. Public, private and volunteer agencies may be able to get you water, food, medical attention and shelter.
- Monitor local media for vital information such as recovery facilities, insurance company field offices and shelter if you need it.
- Keep all receipts for items you buy before power is restored. Your insurance or governmental assistance may cover some expenses.