



10 Tips to help you during this Hurricane Season

What does that mean exactly? What are the necessary steps that should be taken for hurricane preparedness? Most things are usually on hand but should be stocked up and easily accessible. If it turns out the hurricane has changed its path, at least you will have known you were ready.

If your city or town is in imminent danger of a hurricane, most likely evacuation announcements have been made, and should be taken seriously. Here is a checklist to consider before you leave:

1. First, get important papers and special photos in order and secured in plastic. Identification is difficult and time-consuming to replace: so be sure to include social security cards, birth certificates, high school diplomas or GED certificates, titles or deeds to property. Photos of special occasions or loved ones cannot be replaced, so including these is important as well.
2. Think ahead and take video or photos of your property before you leave. This will help later on with any insurance checklist claims for damage that may need to be filed.
3. If staying with relatives is not an option, consider booking a room in a hotel or motel in another nearby town or state. Make sure to get directions and put them in the car ahead of time. It is easy to forget that piece of paper in the rush out the door. A cheaper route might be to find temporary hurricane shelters. Usually nearby towns not in the direct path of the hurricane will provide these for people in need.
4. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that your pet will have a place in a motel or hotel. Keep this in mind, and try to find alternate housing like pet-friendly hotels and motels or dog boarding kennels in areas out of the path of the storm until it is safe to return home.
5. Designate a spot, in the hall closet, to keep a bag of clothes for each person in the household. Make sure to include sleeping gear if you plan on going to a temporary shelter.
6. Along with overnight clothes, consider stocking your Hurricane Kit with the following: extra cash, generator, batteries, flash lights, battery operated radio/television, bottled water, toilet paper, non-perishable foods such as cereal or crackers, canned goods, a can opener, a small cooler, candles, prescription medicines and any over-the-counter remedies you use regularly; and if you have small children - diapers, baby wipes, formula, baby food.

7. Count on the power being out for at least a day or two. Remember that ATM's will be non-operating, so have at least some hard cash in your Hurricane Kit (see no. 6, above) to see you through the storm.

When TV and computer games no longer operate, board games or a deck of cards come in handy! Arts and crafts, crayons and downloadable coloring pages are always great distractions for the kids - so make sure you've stored some of these supplies in a tote bag or in the car trunk.

8. If you decide to tough out the storm, stay downwind in your home. This means if the wind is hitting the living room windows, go to the room opposite the living room.

9. Plywood is a 'hot' commodity for those of who decide to stay. Boarding up windows that will take the brunt of the wind and rain is a wise decision. If board is not available, protect your windows from the wind by criss-crossing them with layers of duct or packing tape. This will be enough protection for light-to-medium winds, but learning how to build and install plywood hurricane shutters is your safest bet. If you can afford it, have them installed by a professional.

10. Finally, **STAY INSIDE**. However tempting it may be to videotape or take photos of the storm, be sure to shoot from indoors - where it's safe, and dry!

Hurricanes are serious business. Weather forecasters can only predict so much. Educate yourself and stay on top of weather updates in your area. There is no harm in being overly cautious. In most cases where a hurricane is concerned, it truly is better to be safe than sorry.

