

# American Red Cross preparedness guide for hurricane season

## What To Do Now

- ▶ Read this guide carefully.
- ▶ Decide where you plan to go if you are requested to evacuate. You may go to a hotel or motel, stay with friends or relatives in a safe location or go to a Red Cross shelter.
- ▶ Put together your disaster supplies kit as recommended in this guide.
- ▶ Plan for pets. Pets are not allowed in public shelters. If you need to make arrangements for your pet, contact your vet, local SPCA or Humane Society.

## When the Storm Approaches

- ▶ Listen for weather updates. Hurricanes are unpredictable, so remain informed.
- ▶ Have your car ready. Check gas, oil, water and maintenance.
- ▶ Check your emergency evacuation supplies.
- ▶ Board up or put storm shutters on windows. When windows break, homes are destroyed.
- ▶ Clear your yard of loose objects, bicycles, lawn furniture, trash cans, etc.
- ▶ Secure your boat. Remember that most drawbridges and swing bridges will be closed to all boat traffic after the evacuation order is issued.
- ▶ Leave swimming pools filled. Super-chlorinate the water and cover pump and filtration systems and intakes.



## If You Can Stay Home

- ▶ Obtain and mark clean containers for storing water. You should have a minimum of one gallon per person per day for seven days.
- ▶ Obtain a week's supply of non-perishable foods. Don't forget a non-electric can opener.
- ▶ Check your disaster supplies kit.
- ▶ Be a good friend. Offer your home as shelter to friends or relatives who live in vulnerable areas or mobile homes.
- ▶ Stay inside, away from windows.
- ▶ Wait for official word that the danger is over. Don't be fooled by the storm's calm eye.

## If a Warning Has Been Issued

In the event of a hurricane warning for this area, your local TV will provide frequent updates about the storm as well as advice from local officials. Keep listening to local radio and television for information, as the intensity and the path of the hurricane can change quickly, and without notice.



## If You Must Evacuate

- ▶ Pack what you will need.
- ▶ Turn off water and electricity at the main valve, breakers or fuses.
- ▶ Turn off propane gas tanks that serve individual appliances like a stove or grill. Do *not* turn off natural gas unless local officials advise to do so. While you may turn water and electricity back on, only a professional should turn gas back on, to avoid the possibility of a leak leading to explosion. Since it can take weeks for a professional to respond, do not turn off the gas unless you are told to do so, or you suspect a leak.

## Hurricanes: What you need to know

### Electrical Safety Tips

The following tips will help you weather the storm:

- ▶ Observe electrical safety measures. If your home has been flooded, have an electrician check your electrical systems before you turn it back on. Stay as faraway as you can from downed power lines. You don't have to touch a downed power line to be electrocuted—if the line is touching any object, including the ground, it poses a deadly hazard. Be alert and be careful.
- ▶ Know what to do if your power is out. Once the storm is over and restoration efforts begin, stay tuned to radio stations for regular reports about the status of electric service restoration efforts. If your home is still without power once electricity has been restored to your neighborhood call the power company. Do not call 911 to report a power outage.
- ▶ Prepare yourself for safety after a hurricane. The best thing to do, if at all possible, is to stay away from home until basic services like electricity, sewer, water and telephone are restored. If you do have to return, bring battery-operated flashlights and radios. Camping equipment, such as a fuel-operated stove and lantern, can be used for cooking and lighting. Have plenty of non-perishable food and drinking water stored. If someone in your household is dependent on electric-powered life-sustaining equipment, remember that you will need an alternate power source.
- ▶ Please review this important information if you plan to use a portable generator. The use of portable generators has increased dramatically. While these generators can be helpful during periods of prolonged power outages, they can damage appliances and threaten the lives of crews trying to restore service.
  - Always ground the generator in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
  - Turn off the power at the main circuit breaker of your electrical panel before you connect any appliances to the generator, and keep it turned off the entire time the generator is in operation.
  - Never connect the generator to your home's wiring system.

## Build Your Disaster Supplies Kit

### Water

- Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarters for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation)
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household

### Food

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples: sugar, salt, pepper
- High-energy foods: peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Food for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods, cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

### Tools and supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Emergency preparedness manual
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil, plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil, needles, thread and medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench (to turn off household gas and water)
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of area (for locating shelters)
- Fully charged cell phone and extra batteries

### Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes, soap, liquid detergent, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items, plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses), plastic bucket with tight lid, disinfectant and household chlorine bleach

### Clothing and bedding

- Sturdy shoes or work boots and rain gear
- Hat and gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses
- Blankets or sleeping bags

### Special items

#### For baby:

- Formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk and medications

#### For adults:

- Heart and high-blood pressure medication, insulin, prescription drugs, denture needs, contact lenses and supplies, extra eyeglasses, entertainment games and books and important family documents

#### Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, Social Security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers and companies, credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

**Keep disaster checklist in your disaster supplies kit.**

## After a Storm

- ▶ Have valid identification. You will not be allowed back into your area unless you can show proof of residency.
- ▶ Stay at home and avoid sightseeing, which can impede emergency and recovery response from officials.
- ▶ Beware of snakes, insects and animals driven to higher ground.
- ▶ Avoid downed or dangling utility wires.
- ▶ Enter your home with caution.
- ▶ Be cautious with fires. Do not strike matches until you are certain there are no gas leaks.

- ▶ If a power outage occurs, turn off or disconnect all motor-driven appliances and fixtures to avoid damage from sudden surges when power is restored.
- ▶ Avoid using candles, as they may result in fire. Use a flashlight.
- ▶ Fill clean containers with water for drinking and cooking. You can store water in a bathtub for washing and to flush toilets.
- ▶ Turn the refrigerator and freezer controls to the coldest settings.
- ▶ To keep spoiling and thawing of food to a minimum, open the refrigerator or freezer as seldom as possible during a blackout. Food will stay frozen for up to 48 hours if a freezer is full and tightly packed and the door is kept closed. Food in a partly filled freezer may keep for 24 hours.
- ▶ Fill empty freezer spaces with reusable ice containers, or fill empty milk containers about four-fifths full of water, cap the containers loosely and place in empty space.
- ▶ If food in freezer does defrost, use it within one or two days. Never refreeze food that has thawed completely. How do you tell if food has gone bad? The rule of thumb is, "If in doubt, throw it out!"

## Helping Children Cope With Disasters

- ▶ During a disaster, your family may have to leave your home and daily routine.
- ▶ As an adult, you'll need to cope with the disaster in a way that will help children avoid developing a permanent sense of loss.
- ▶ How you react to an emergency gives them clues on how to act. If you seem overcome with a sense of loss, a child may feel losses more strongly.
- ▶ Children's fears may also stem from their imagination, and you should take these feelings seriously. A child who feels afraid is afraid.
- ▶ When talking with your child, be sure to present a realistic picture that is both honest and manageable.
- ▶ When you're sure that danger has passed, concentrate on your child's emotional needs by asking the child what's uppermost in his or her mind. Having children participate in the family's recovery activities will help them feel that their life will return to "normal."
- ▶ Children are most afraid—
  - The event will happen again.
  - Someone will be injured or killed.
  - They will be separated from the family.
  - They will be left alone.
- ▶ Teach your children how to call for help.
- ▶ Help your child memorize important family information such as family name, address and phone number.



## Lessons Learned From Past Hurricanes

- ▶ Remember that some areas of your state may have been asked to evacuate before yours, so even if you leave early, roads may be congested.
- ▶ If possible, you should know where you are going and how you plan to get there before you leave home.
- ▶ Using alternate routes may lessen your travel time. Know what alternate routes are viable before you leave. Don't assume that you are the only person who may take a certain shortcut. Small towns can become big traffic jams.
- ▶ Leaving early will shorten your travel time. Leaving later may not allow you enough time to reach safe shelter. Assume that every hour you delay your start will add several hours to your evacuation travel time, even if you plan on staying in the county.
- ▶ You will need a full tank of gas, and cash.
- ▶ Assume you will be in your car for long periods without the opportunity to find a rest area or restaurant. Take along drinks and snacks, and water for pets. Persons evacuating with children should take items such as books and games to help keep them amused.
- ▶ Persons evacuating with large animals, boats, travel-trailers, RVs or other large vehicles that may be at risk due to high winds should evacuate early.
- ▶ Public officials do monitor traffic. Their primary focus is to get you to safety. They will be trying to get information on traffic conditions to travelers. Scan your car radio for information. Local radio stations will be broadcasting evacuation information.
- ▶ Wait until you receive word from officials in your home area before returning home.



## Become a Volunteer

The American Red Cross is able to meet the needs of disaster victims through its cadre of Red Cross volunteers. Red Cross volunteers are people from all walks of life and are as diverse as our community.

As we enter into another hurricane season, we would like you to consider donating some of your time to help others. The commitment can range from as little as a few hours of training and working with disaster victims on a regular basis to being available when a large disaster strikes. Volunteers are needed to assist in hurricane shelters, to work with families, to prepare and serve food and to assess damage.

Red Cross volunteer opportunities are open to everyone. There are special youth programs as well as other opportunities for people who may be homebound. To find out more, contact your local Red Cross.



## How to Prepare for a Tornado

### What to listen for

**Tornado watch:** Tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms.

**Tornado warning:** A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety.

**Severe thunderstorm watch:** Severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.

**Severe thunderstorm warning:** Severe thunderstorms are occurring.

### What you can do before the storm

- ▶ Develop a plan for you and your family for home, work, school and when outdoors.
- ▶ Have frequent drills.
- ▶ Know the county in which you live, and keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins.
- ▶ Have a NOAA weather radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup to receive warnings.
- ▶ Listen to radio and television for information
- ▶ If planning a trip outdoors, listen to the latest forecasts and take necessary action if threatening weather is possible.

### If a warning is issued or if threatening weather approaches

- ▶ In a home or building, move to a designated shelter.
- ▶ If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.
- ▶ Stay away from windows.
- ▶ Get out of automobiles.
- ▶ Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car.
- ▶ If caught outside or in a vehicle, lie flat in a ditch or depression.
- ▶ Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes and should be abandoned.



- ▶ Make plans of what you will do and where you will go in a flash-flood emergency.

### When a flash-flood watch is issued for your area

- ▶ Listen to area radio and television stations and NOAA weather radio for possible flash flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress from the National Weather Service and public safety agencies.
- ▶ Be prepared to move out of danger's way at a moment's notice.
- ▶ If you are on a road, watch for flooding at highway dips, bridges and low area.
- ▶ Watch for signs (thunder, lightning) of distant heavy rainfall.

### When a flash-flood warning is issued for your area

- ▶ Act quickly to save yourself and those who depend on you. You may have only seconds.
- ▶ Do not attempt to cross a flooding stream on foot where water is above your knees.
- ▶ If you are driving, don't try to drive through water of unknown depth. If your vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground. Rapid rising water may sweep the vehicle and its occupants away. Many deaths have been caused by attempts to move stalled vehicles.
- ▶ Keep children away from floodwaters near culverts and storm drains.
- ▶ Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood danger.
- ▶ When you are out of immediate danger, tune in to area radio and television stations and NOAA weather radio for additional information as conditions change and new reports are received.

## Pet Safety

### Before the storm

Make arrangements well in advance for where your pets can stay. Use veterinary hospitals and boarding kennels as a last resort because they have limited space and can be costly. Make sure your pets are vaccinated before hurricane season. Many pet shelters require the following:

### Pet supplies needed at pet shelter:

- ID tag/rabies tag on pet
- Leash
- ID on all belongings
- Water, food and food bowls
- Carrier or cage
- Medication
- ▶ If you have to evacuate, take your pet with you. Take extra food, water and medication in your supply kit for your pet.
- ▶ Make sure all large animals have current immunizations, necessary papers and some brand or tattoo identification.
- ▶ Make arrangements to evacuate your valuable animals at least three days before the storm may strike. If you can't evacuate animals, let livestock out of enclosures. They have a better chance of survival in open pasture.
- ▶ Secure livestock trailers and other vehicles with mobile home tie-downs in open areas away from trees. Inventory all livestock and equipment on video, and store with insurance information.



### After the storm

- ▶ After the storm has passed, take caution in allowing your pet outdoors. Downed power lines and stray and wild animals seeking higher ground pose a danger. Familiar landmarks and scents may be altered, and your pet may become confused and lost.

## Red Cross First Aid Kit

Contact your local Red Cross chapter to obtain a kit.

- ▶ Absorbent compress 5" x 9" dressing
- ▶ Adhesive bandages, assorted sizes
- ▶ Adhesive tape (cloth)
- ▶ Antibiotic ointment packets
- ▶ Antiseptic wipe packets
- ▶ Aspirin (Chewable/Baby)
- ▶ Blanket (Space Blanket)
- ▶ Breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- ▶ Cold pack
- ▶ Gloves (Non-latex Average Sizes)
- ▶ Hydrocortisone ointment packets (rashes)
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ Roller bandage 3" and/or 4"
- ▶ Sterile 3" x 3" or 4" x 4" Pads
- ▶ Thermometer, oral (Non-Mercury/Non-Glass)
- ▶ Triangular bandage
- ▶ Tweezers
- ▶ First aid instruction booklet (*First Aid Fast*)
- ▶ First aid instruction card/booklet

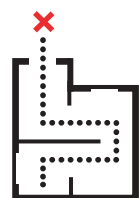
## Tips on Flooding

### Before the flood

- ▶ Know the elevation of your property in relation to nearby streams and other waterways.

## TOGETHERWE PREPARE

The American Red Cross *Together We Prepare* campaign challenges individuals, businesses and communities to take responsibility for their safety and that of their families, homes and neighborhoods. By following five basic steps, we can all move toward greater safety. To find out more, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).



### Make a plan

Design a family (home) disaster plan. Work with neighbors and co-workers to create community and workplace disaster plans.



### Build a kit

Assemble a disaster supplies kit, which contains items that you may need in an emergency.



### Get trained

Learn to save lives. The Red Cross offers classes year-round to individuals and businesses on first aid, CPR, defibrillator use and much more.



### Volunteer

Give of yourself. Sharing your time or money means that the Red Cross will be there to respond whenever needed.



### Give blood

Become a regular and frequent blood donor to ensure a blood supply that meets all needs, all of the time.