

Storm Prep Guide

WHEN IS HURRICANE SEASON?

In the United States, the Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. While storms are most likely to occur during this period, hurricanes can happen any time the weather conditions are right. If you live in a hurricane-prone area, preparation can be key to minimizing storm damage.

TIPS FOR BEFORE THE START OF HURRICANE SEASON

- Make an emergency plan. Making a plan will help ensure your family is all on the same page if a hurricane strikes. A plan can help you make decisions faster & reduce fear in young children. Visit www.ready.gov/plan for resources.
- Know your evacuation route. If a hurricane is headed your way, you may be asked to evacuate your home. Knowing your final destination & route in advance can help you evacuate quickly when time is of the essence.
- Sign up for trusted alerts & warnings. During a hurricane, you'll need access to timely, reliable information. So it's best to identify several methods to receive alerts or warnings before a hurricane. Download the [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) app](#) on your phone to receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service. It's also wise to familiarize yourself with how the Emergency Alert System (EAS) & Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) work in your area.
- Find a trusted radio news station. If utilities go down, a radio may be your only reliable source of information. Purchase a battery-operated or hand-crank radio to have on standby & write down your local National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio station frequency.
- Locate important documents. Store copies of your medical information, insurance policies, passports, birth certificates & proof of address together in a waterproof container so you'll have them on hand if needed. Also take pictures of important documents & save them to the cloud.
- Check your insurance policy. Typically, a hurricane watch is called about 48 hours ahead of tropical storm force winds. Once that happens, it's unlikely you'll be able to get a new policy or make a policy change at the last minute. To ensure your home & property are covered, check in with your insurance agent before hurricane season starts.
- Create a home inventory. In the event you have to file an insurance claim, you'll need to document everything you've lost. That's where a home inventory can help. It's a list of all your personal possessions, along with their estimated value & it's a great way to help protect the contents of your home.
- Build an emergency kit. It can be hard to imagine several days (or weeks) without power, internet or running water. But during a hurricane, anything can happen. That's why your family should have supplies ready for any type of disaster.
- Invest in a generator, when a hurricane is on its way, backup power generators are one of the first things to sell out in stores. Also one of the best things you can add to your home is a hookup for the generator, LECE offers *GenerLink* [here](#), Kyle is very happy he did this at his home. Read some safety tips [here](#).
- Protect your pets. During & after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of pets were abandoned because their owners had no plans to evacuate them.

TIPS TO PREPARE DURING HURRICANE SEASON

- Gather supplies. Stock up on essential supplies for a hurricane. This includes plenty of water, non-perishable food & batteries.
- Clean your gutters. To help reduce water damage, ensure your gutters, downspouts & drains are clear before the storm. This will help divert as much rain as possible away from your home.

Storm Prep Guide

- **Prepare windows & doors.** One of the best ways to prepare a home for a hurricane is by protecting your windows & doors from broken glass. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection, but you can also cover them with one-half inch marine plywood, if needed.
- **Turn down the temperature.** If you don't have a generator, turning your refrigerator & freezer to the coldest setting will help your food stay cool if the power goes out.
- **Fill up your tank.** If damage in your area is severe, it may be difficult to find an open gas station for days or weeks after a hurricane. Make sure all your vehicles are gassed up & fill up any portable gasoline cans you have in advance.
- **Charge your devices.** Mobile devices like smartphones & tablets are your link to critical information during a disaster. Make sure they're fully charged when a hurricane watch is announced. For extra peace of mind, consider purchasing a battery-powered portable charger or power bank.
- **Store outdoor items.** Patio furniture, trash cans & bicycles can easily be carried away by high winds, so bring them indoors before the storm hits.
- **Check in with neighbors.** See if anyone in your neighborhood can use an extra hand preparing for the storm. This is especially important if you have neighbors who are elderly or have a disability.
- **Fill sinks & bathtubs.** If your utilities get shut off, having extra water on hand can help with tasks like flushing the toilet or washing clothes.
- **Move your valuables.** If you have time, move valuables & furniture to the highest point in your home to prevent water damage.
- **Notify friends & family.** Before the storm hits, let those closest to you (outside the storm zone) know your plans. During the storm itself, try to limit your phone calls. Wireless networks are often overtaxed during an emergency.
- **Evacuate if directed.** If local authorities issue an order to evacuate, take it seriously & act quickly. Avoid flooded roads & watch for washed-out bridges. If an evacuation order is in place, riding out the storm could put you & your family in danger. If you can't stay with friends or family, head to an emergency shelter.

LAST-MINUTE TIPS FOR A HURRICANE WATCH OR WARNING

A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions are possible within the specified area. They are typically issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.

A hurricane warning means conditions are expected within a specified area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph), hurricane warnings are issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of the storm. When that happens, keep these tips in mind.

- **Stay indoors.** If you're sheltering in place, avoid the temptation to go outside & watch the storm. By far, the safest place to wait out a hurricane is inside your home.
- **Avoid floodwaters.** Don't walk, swim or drive through floodwater. Not only could the current sweep you off your feet, but the water can contain harmful contaminants & bacteria.
- **Unplug appliances.** If you lose power, unplug your appliances. This will protect them from power surges, which can cause permanent damage.
- **Turn off utilities.** If directed by your utility provider, turn off your electricity, water & gas at the main shut-offs.
- **Stay alert.** When it's safe to head outdoors, watch out for downed power lines & other dangerous obstacles.
- **Don't return until it's safe.** If you've been evacuated from your home, only return when local authorities say it's safe to do so.

Storm Prep Guide

SUPPLIES - THE BASICS

1. Water (one gallon per person, per day, & one liter per pets, per day)
2. Non-perishable food
3. Pet food & supplies
4. Flashlight
5. Extra batteries & power banks
6. Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio
7. First aid kit and/or trauma kit
8. Cash (especially for Generator Fuel) & change (in a waterproof container)
9. Manual can opener
10. Flares or whistle to signal for help
11. Dust masks for contaminated air
12. Wrench, pliers & other tools (to turn off utilities)
13. Plastic sheeting & duct tape to shelter-in-place (if you are stuck at home, work or elsewhere)
14. Local maps
15. Cell phone with battery-powered or solar charger.
16. Moist towelettes, garbage bags & plastic ties for personal sanitation

SUPPLIES - THE EXTRAS

Once you've got the essentials, personalize your kit based on the needs of your family (including pets!) & the weather conditions where you live.

1. Prescription medications
2. Non-prescription medications (pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives)
3. Eyeglasses & contact lens solution
4. Infant formula & supplies (diapers, wipes, etc.)
5. Feminine supplies & personal hygiene items
6. Important family documents in a waterproof container (copies of insurance policies, identification & bank account records)
7. Complete change of clothing for each person
8. Unscented household bleach & medicine dropper (bleach is an effective disinfectant & can also be [used to treat drinking water](#))
9. Extra food & water
10. Life raft for areas with severe flooding
11. Matches in a waterproof container
12. Fire extinguisher
13. Emergency reference material ([order these for free at Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov))