

HURRICANE AWARENESS - BE PREPARED

"Prevent loss of life and minimize damage to property from hurricanes"

Disaster prevention should include:

1. Development of a Family Plan
2. Creation of a Disaster Supply Kit
3. Having a Place to Go
4. Protection of your Home
5. Development of a Pet Plan

One of the most important decisions you will have to make is "Should I Evacuate?" If you are asked to evacuate, you should do so without delay. That means it is important for you and your family to HAVE A PLAN that makes you safe wherever you are. Disaster prevention includes modifying your home to strengthen it against storms so that you can be as safe as possible. It also includes having the supplies on hand to weather the storm. The suggestions provided here are only guides. You should use common sense in your disaster prevention.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A FAMILY PLAN

Your family's plan should be based on your vulnerability to Hurricane Hazards. You should keep a written plan and share your plan with other friends or family. Evaluate the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding and wind.

- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones
- Check your insurance coverage. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Check out the National Flood Insurance Program - 1-888-CALL-FLOOD, ext. 445 or Tampa Office (813) 788-2624
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and prepare a Disaster Supply Kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Have fresh and spare batteries.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes from the Red Cross.

2. CREATION OF A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

During a hurricane, a disaster supply kit is an invaluable resource in your home as well as when you evacuate.

- Water - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 7 days
- Food - at least enough for 7 days
 - non-perishable packaged or canned food/juices
 - special foods for infants or the elderly
 - snack foods
 - non-electric can opener
 - cooking tools /fuel
 - paper plates/cups/plastic utensils
- Radio - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio with extra batteries
- Telephones - Fully charged cell phone with an extra battery and/or car charger and a traditional (wired - not cordless) telephone set
- Blankets/Pillows, etc.
- Clothing - seasonal /rain gear/sturdy shoes
- First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs for 14 days
- Special Items - Walker/canes/ wheel chairs for the elderly
- Toiletries / Hygiene items/Personal Hygiene wipes
- Flashlights/fresh and spare batteries

- Cash (sufficient quantity with some small bills) and Credit Cards - Banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods
- Books and games to pass time
- Important documents - place in a waterproof container /Ziploc plastic bag) - insurance, medical records, legal papers, bank account numbers, Social Security card, passports, drivers license, etc.
- Important basic hand tools - keep a set with you during the storm
- Vehicle(s) - fill with gas before storm arrives
- Pet care items
 - proper identification/immunization records/medications
 - ample supply of food and water for 7 days
 - a carrier or cage
 - muzzle and leash

3. HAVING A PLACE TO GO

Determine escape routes from your home and set up places to meet family members.

- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact so that all family members have a single point of contact.
- Establish a strategy for your pet's care if you need to evacuate.

4. PROTECTION OF YOUR HOME

- Commercial Shutters/ High Impact Wind Screens/ Lexan Storm Panels will protect your home from damage in windstorms from wind-borne objects. These products can reduce damage caused by sudden pressure changes should a window or door break. Laminated window systems (plastic bonded to glass) can be another choice when building a new home or upgrading an older home.
- Impact Resistant Windows/Doors - these products look no different than standard windows and doors. They offer more protection from wind-borne debris and are capable of resisting impacts from large objects. Temporary shutters do not need to be installed before a storm strikes with these products. The frame and glazing work together to protect your home from the elements and significant internal pressure changes which lead to structural damage. While large wind-borne debris may crack the impact resistant glass during the course of the storm, the window is designed to retain its integrity and not break apart. Should either the frame or glass be damaged, it can be repaired after the storm has passed.
- Securing Existing Entry Doors

If you are not sure your entry doors are strong enough, take these precautions:

 1. Have a professional install additional head and foot bolts on both doors of double-entry doors.
 2. Be sure the surface bolt extends into the door header and through the threshold into the sub floor.
 3. Make sure your doors have at least three hinges and a dead bolt security lock which has a minimum one inch bolt throw length.

4. Bracing Your Garage Door - THIS IS A CRITICAL ISSUE!!

Double-wide garage doors, because of their width, are more susceptible to wind damage than single doors. Unless you have a tested hurricane-resistant door, the wind may force it out of the roller track - especially if the track is light weight or some of the anchor bolts are not in place. Reinforce your double-wide garage door at its weakest points. Install horizontal and/or vertical bracing onto each panel, using light gauge metal girds bolted to the door mullions. You may also need heavier hinges and stronger end and vertical supports for your door.

*** Check with your local building supplier or garage door retailer to see if a retrofit kit is available for your garage door. Have the kit professionally installed!

*** If you use the kit - be sure to release the red cord so the door cannot be inadvertently opened!!

- NOT SO OBVIOUS PREPARATION

1. Pool preparation - add chlorine and *do not lower water level*.
2. Flood preparation - excessive rain results from slow moving tropical storms!
* Raise important items off the floor.
3. Remove electrical extension "strips " from the floor
4. FLOOD INSURANCE??? Home insurance will not cover flooding or water damage. For \$300 or less you can obtain flood insurance!
There is a 30 DAY waiting period once purchased!!

5. DEVELOPMENT OF A PET PLAN

- BEFORE THE DISASTER

1. Make sure your pets are current on their vaccinations. Pet shelters may require proof of vaccines.
2. Have a current photograph of your pet(s).
3. Keep a collar with identification on your pet and have a leash on hand to control your pet.
4. Have a proper-sized pet carrier for each animal. Carriers should be large enough for the animal to stand and turn around.
5. Animals brought to a pet shelter are required to have: Proper identification collar and rabies tag, proper identification on all belongings, a carrier or cage, a leash, an ample supply of food, water and food bowls, any necessary medications, specific care instructions and news papers or trash bags for clean-up. Pet shelters are filled on first come, first served basis. Call ahead to determine availability.
6. If you plan to shelter your pet, work it into your evacuation route planning. Specialized pet shelters, animal control shelters, veterinary clinics, friends and relatives are ALL potential refuges for your pet during a disaster.

- AFTER THE DISASTER

Walk pets on a leash until they become re-oriented to their home. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and pets could easily be confused and become lost. Downed power lines, reptiles and snakes brought in with high water and debris can all pose a threat for animals after a disaster. Animals can become aggressive or defensive when they are disoriented. Monitor their behavior.

PROTECTING YOUR POOL - 2010

Even if you have a salt pool with a chlorine generator, keep extra chlorine on hand to help prevent contamination in the event of a hurricane.

BEFORE THE STORM:

1. DON'T lower your pool's water level. Excessive rain causes the ground to be saturated. The pool could be lifted out of the ground causing expensive structural damage. (Hydrostatic Pressure)
2. Turn off electrical power to the pool at the pool circuit breaker.
3. If your filter pump is in an unsheltered area, wrap it securely in a waterproof plastic bag. Tie down the electrical box lid.
4. Remove loose items from your pool area and store them in your garage or house. DON'T put furniture in the pool. This could damage your pool's surface, and the chemicals in pool water may corrode outdoor furniture finishes.
5. Add extra chlorine to your pool water. Remember, you can use water from your pool for bathing and flushing toilets. Do not drink this water after the hurricane.
6. Take down the removable child safety fence and store inside the house or garage.

AFTER THE STORM:

1. Replace the child safety fence.
2. DON'T empty your pool. Excessive rain causes the ground to be saturated. The pool could be lifted out of the ground causing expensive structural damage. (Hydrostatic Pressure)
3. Super-chlorinate (shock) your pool.
4. Remove all plant debris as soon as possible because organic materials dilute chlorine quickly.
5. Before restarting your pool system, make sure you have removed all debris using your pool rake and skimmer. This will prevent clogging the lines.
6. IMPORTANT- Check the pump motor. Be sure to remove any plastic covering from the pump motor and be sure it has dried out before trying to restart it. If the motor has been flooded or submerged, have it removed and cleaned professionally.
7. Some chlorine generators/chemical feeders require special care before starting the pump motor. If you have any questions, check with your pool company before restarting the motor.
8. Make sure your pump is operating normally and that water is circulating.
9. Run the motor/filter continuously until the pool water is crystal clear. Then reset your timer clock.
10. Check and clean the filter frequently.
11. Be sure to check the chemical balance as soon as possible and adjust accordingly.
12. For other questions about pool care before and after a storm, contact your pool service, a retail pool store or the Florida Swimming Pool Association (800) 569-6774.