

Hurricane Preparedness

To prepare for a hurricane, you should take the following measures:

Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.

Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.

Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.

Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.

Determine how and where to secure your boat

Be Prepared - Protect Your Family

You can begin this process by gathering family members and making sure each person is well-informed on potential hazards and community plans. Discuss with them what you would do if family members are not home when a warning is issued.

Evacuation Plans

When community evacuations become necessary, local officials provide information to the public through the media. There may be circumstances under which you and your family feel threatened or endangered and you need to leave your home, school, or workplace to avoid these situations.

The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. If the event is a weather condition, such as a hurricane that can be monitored, you might have a day or two to get ready. However, many disasters allow no time for people to gather even the most basic necessities, which is why planning ahead is essential.

Evacuation: More Common than You Realize

Evacuations are more common than many people realize. Hundreds of times each year, transportation and industrial accidents release harmful substances, forcing thousands of people to leave their homes. Fires and floods cause evacuations even more frequently. Almost every year, people along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts evacuate in the face of approaching hurricanes.

Ask local authorities or local media outlets such as Channel 4, Channel 6 and channel 12 about evacuation route maps and Hurricane tracking charts. These can usually be picked up at those stations and local food stores after June 1.

Evacuation Guidelines

Always:

Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.

Make transportation arrangements with friends or your local government if you do not own a car. Call 211 NOW to get registered if you need transportation.

Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions. KFDM Channel 6 news can be heard at 87.7 f.m. and KLVI radio can be heard at 560 am.

Gather your family and go if you are instructed to evacuate immediately.

Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.

Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.

Be alert for washed-out roads and bridges. Do not drive into flooded areas.

Stay away from downed power lines.

If time permits:

Gather your disaster supplies kit.

Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a cap.

Secure your home:

Close and lock doors and windows. Unplug electrical equipment, such as radios and televisions, and small appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.

Let others know where you are going.

Utility Shut-off and Safety

[Natural Gas](#)

[Water](#)

[Electricity](#)

In the event of a disaster, you may be instructed to shut off the utility service at your home.

Below is some general guidance for shutting off utility service. You should modify the information provided to reflect your shut off requirements as directed by your utility company.

Natural Gas

Natural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following disasters. It is vital that all household members know how to shut off natural gas.

Because there are different gas shut-off procedures for different gas meter configurations, it is important to contact your local gas company for guidance on preparation and response regarding gas appliances and gas service to your home.

When you learn the proper shut-off procedure for your meter, share the information with everyone in your household. Be sure not to actually turn off the gas when practicing the proper gas shut-off procedure.

If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out quickly. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home.

CAUTION - If you turn off the gas for any reason, a qualified professional must turn it back on. **NEVER** attempt to turn the gas back on yourself.

Water

Water quickly becomes a precious resource following many disasters. It is vital that all household members learn how to shut off the water at the main house valve.

Cracked lines may pollute the water supply to your house. It is wise to shut off your water until you hear from authorities that it is safe for drinking.

The effects of gravity may drain the water in your hot water heater and toilet tanks unless you trap it in your house by shutting off the main house valve (not the street valve in the cement box at the curb—this valve is extremely difficult to turn and requires a special tool).

Preparing to Shut Off Water

Locate the shut-off valve for the water line that enters your house.

Make sure this valve can be completely shut off. Your valve may be rusted open, or it may only partially close. Replace it if necessary.

Label this valve with a tag for easy identification, and make sure all household members know where it is located.

Electricity

Electrical sparks have the potential of igniting natural gas if it is leaking. It is wise to teach all responsible household members where and how to shut off the electricity.

Preparing to Shut Off Electricity

Locate your electricity circuit box.

Teach all responsible household members how to shut off the electricity to the entire house.

FOR YOUR SAFETY: Always shut off all the individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker

Safety Skills

It is important that family members know how to administer first aid and CPR and how to use a fire extinguisher.

Learn First Aid and CPR

[Take a first aid and CPR class.](#) Local American Red Cross chapters can provide information about this type of training. Official certification by the American Red Cross provides, under the "good Samaritan" law, protection for those giving first aid.

Learn How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

[Read about fire extinguisher selection, location and use.](#) Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguisher(s) and where it is kept. You should have, at a minimum, an ABC type fire extinguisher.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit

You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days.

Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer. Or, you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You probably will not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you need.

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of a disaster

Water

[How Much Water do I Need?](#)

[How Should I Store Water?](#)

[If You are Preparing Your Own Containers of Water](#)

[Filling Water Containers](#)

How Much Water do I Need?

You should have at least a three-day supply of water and you should store at least one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs at least one-half gallon of water daily just for drinking.

Additionally, in determining adequate quantities, take the following into account:

Individual needs vary, depending on age, physical condition, activity, diet, and climate.

Children, nursing mothers, and ill people need more water.

Very hot temperatures can double the amount of water needed.

A medical emergency might require additional water.

[How Should I Store Water?](#)

To prepare safest and most reliable emergency supply of water, it is recommended you purchase commercially bottled water. Keep bottled water in its original container and do not open it until you need to use it.

Observe the expiration or "use by" date.

If You are Preparing Your Own Containers of Water

It is recommended you purchase food-grade water storage containers from surplus or camping supplies stores to use for water storage. Before filling with water, thoroughly clean the containers with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely so there is no residual soap. Follow directions below on filling the container with water.

If you choose to use your own storage containers, choose two-liter plastic soft drink bottles – not plastic jugs or cardboard containers that have had milk or fruit juice in them. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be adequately removed from these containers and provide an environment for bacterial growth when water is stored in them. Cardboard containers also leak easily and are not designed for long-term storage of liquids. Also, do not use glass containers, because they can break and are heavy.

If storing water in plastic soda bottles, follow these steps

Thoroughly clean the bottles with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely so there is no residual soap. Sanitize the bottles by adding a solution of 1 teaspoon of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water. Swish the sanitizing solution in the bottle so that it touches all surfaces. After sanitizing the bottle, thoroughly rinse out the sanitizing solution with clean water.

Filling Water Containers

Fill the bottle to the top with regular tap water. If the tap water has been commercially treated from a water utility with chlorine, you do not need to add anything else to the water to keep it clean. If the water you are using comes from a well or water source that is not treated with chlorine, add two drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to the water. Tightly close the container using the original cap. Be careful not to contaminate the cap by touching the inside of it with your finger. Place a date on the outside of the container so that you know when you filled it. Store in a cool, dark place and replace the water every six months if not using commercially bottled water.

Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Avoid foods that will make you thirsty. Choose salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals, and canned foods with high liquid content.

*Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

Note: Be sure to include a manual can opener.

Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables

Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)

Staples--sugar, salt, pepper

High energy foods--peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix

Vitamins

Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons with special dietary needs

Comfort/stress foods--cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. A first aid kit* should include:

Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes

2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)

4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)

Hypo-allergenic adhesive tape

Triangular bandages (3)

2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)

3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)

Scissors

Tweezers

Needle

Moistened towelettes

Antiseptic

Thermometer

Tongue blades (2)

Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Assorted sizes of safety pins

Cleansing agent/soap

Latex gloves (2 pair) Sunscreen

Non-prescription drugs

Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever

Anti-diarrhea medication

Antacid (for stomach upset)

Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Laxative

Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

[Contact your local American Red Cross chapter](#) to obtain a basic first aid manual.

Special Items

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

For Baby

Formula

Diapers

Bottles

Pacifiers

Powdered milk

Medications

For Adults

Heart and high blood pressure medication

Insulin

Prescription drugs

Denture needs

Contact lenses and supplies

Extra eye glasses

Hearing aid batteries

Important Family Documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container.

Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds

Photo I.D.'s, passports, social security cards, immunization records

Bank account numbers

Credit card account numbers and companies

Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers

Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Photocopies of credit and identification cards

Pictures of family and friends

Animal shot records

Cash, coins and credit cards.

Entertainment--games and books.

Clothing and Sanitation Supplies

Clothing - If evacuating, take enough clothes for a week with anticipation of having to stay longer.

Sanitation - Have on hand for evacuation or to shelter in place

Toilet paper

Soap, liquid detergent

Feminine supplies

Personal hygiene items

Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)

Plastic bucket with tight lid

Disinfectant

Household chlorine bleach

Tools

Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils

[Emergency preparedness manual](#)

Portable, battery-operated radio or television 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
Medicine dropper
Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
Whistle
Plastic sheeting
Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Disaster Supplies Kit Locations

Home

Your disaster supplies kit should contain essential food, water, and supplies for at least three days.

Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.

Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks.

Make sure you have food and water in the kit.

Car

In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.

This kit should contain food, water, first aid supplies, flares, jumper cables, and seasonal supplies.

Disaster Supplies Kit Maintenance

Just as important as putting your supplies together is maintaining them so they are safe to use when needed. Here are some tips to keep your supplies ready and in good condition:

Keep canned foods in a dry place where the temperature is cool.

Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect from pests and to extend its shelf life.

Throw out any canned good that becomes swollen, dented, or corroded.

Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies.

Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in the front.

Change stored food and water supplies every six months. Be sure to write the date you store it on all containers.

Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family needs change.

Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as an unused trashcan, camping backpack, or duffel bag.

Individuals with Special Needs

Preparing and Planning

If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.

Disability/Special Need

Additional Steps

Visually impaired	May be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger. A guide dog could become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster.
Hearing impaired	May need to make special arrangements to receive warnings.
Mobility impaired	May need special assistance to get to a shelter. CALL 211
Single working parent	May need help to plan for disasters and emergencies.
Non-English speaking persons	May need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed.
People without vehicles	May need to make arrangements for transportation. CALL 211.
People with special dietary needs	Should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.
People with medical conditions	Should know the location and availability of more than one facility if dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.
People with mental retardation	May need help responding to emergencies and getting to a shelter.
People with dementia	Should be registered in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program

If you have special needs: In Southeast Texas, those persons with Medical or Physical special needs and for those persons who just need transportation, you are urged to call **211** now. You will be able to get registered to receive a ride to a safe location should a hurricane occur. This should be done now so your Emergency Officials can get an accurate count and began preparations. If you have a family member or friend with special needs, please make arrangements to get them out early to a safe and comfortable location. If they are in a nursing home or assisted living facility and can ride in a car, please take responsibility and take them yourself. Let the facility know in advance that you will be taking responsibility for their transportation and needs. They would be much more comfortable with you than on a school bus and staying with strangers.

Check for hazards in the home

During and right after a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause fire is a home hazard. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall in high winds or shift and block an escape path.

Be ready to evacuate

Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary). Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and coworkers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.

Discuss your needs with your employer.

If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you leave the building.

Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, prescriptions, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.

Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.

Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability.

Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment. **MAKE THESE PLANS NOW.**

Additional Resources

[Emergency preparedness information from DisabilityInfo.gov](#)

Find links to additional preparedness information, grants, assistance, government policies, initiatives and much more.

Information for Pet Owners

[Plan for Pet Disaster Needs](#)

[Prepare to Shelter Your Pet](#)

[During a Disaster](#)

[After a Disaster](#)

If you evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Pets most likely cannot survive on their own; and if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

For additional information, please contact [The Humane Society of the United States](#).

*****NOTE*****If you plan to evacuate on public transportation, it is required that you have your pet in a pet carrier. You will also be required to have a leash and a muzzle for the animal. Bring enough food and water for your animal on the bus ride.

Plan for Pet Disaster Needs

Identifying shelter. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Find out which motels and hotels in your area allow pets -- well in advance of needing them. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers -- they might be able to provide information concerning pets during a disaster.

Take pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they're not available later.

While the sun is still shining, consider packing a "pet survival" kit which could be easily deployed if disaster hits.

Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.

Make sure you have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if he panics, he can't escape.

Prepare to Shelter Your Pet

Call your local animal shelter, or animal control office to get advice and information. If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Find out where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside your local area in case local facilities close. If an evacuation is called, there will not be local shelters available to board your animal.

Most boarding kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need your pet's medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current. Include copies in your "pet survival" kit along with a photo of your pet.

NOTE: Some animal shelters will provide temporary foster care for owned pets in times of disaster, but this should be considered only as a last resort.

If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take, but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in great danger! Confine your pet to a safe area inside -- NEVER leave your pet chained outside! Leave them loose inside your home with food and plenty of water. Remove the toilet tank lid, raise the seat and brace the bathroom door open so they can drink. Place a notice outside in a visible area, advising what pets are in the house and where they are located. Provide a phone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.

During a Disaster

Bring your pets inside immediately.

Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes. Feed the animals moist or canned food so they will need less water to drink.

Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can stop them from running away. Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm.

Separate dogs and cats. Even if your dogs and cats normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally. Keep small pets away from cats and dogs.

In an emergency, you may have to take your birds with you. Talk with your veterinarian or local pet store about special food dispensers that regulate the amount of food a bird is given. Make sure that the bird is caged and the cage is covered by a thin cloth or sheet to provide security and filtered light.

After a Disaster

If after a disaster you have to leave town, take your pets with you. Pets are unlikely to survive on their own.

In the first few days after the disaster, leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused and lost. Also, snakes and other dangerous animals may be brought into the area with flood areas. Downed power lines are a hazard.

The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard with access to shelter and water.

During a Hurricane

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should:

Listen to the radio or TV for information. KLVI @ 560 am and KFDM @ 87.7 f.m. offered partnership should a hurricane strike out area.

Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.

Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.

Turn off propane tanks. Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.

Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

You should evacuate under the following conditions:

If you are directed by local authorities to do so, be sure to follow their instructions.

If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure—such shelters are particularly hazardous during hurricanes no matter how well fastened to the ground.

If you are unable to evacuate, go to your safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:

Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.

Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.

Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.

Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.

Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

EMERGENCY FIRST RESPONDERS will not be able to assist you during the storm.

If you choose to stay rather than evacuate, you do so at your own risk.

REMEMBER - After a Hurricane, there will be no electricity. Depending on the severity of the storm, this electrical outage could last from days to weeks. During that time, water and sewer services could be affected as well.

FOOD - possibly not available for several days.

FUEL - possibly not available for several days

HOSPITAL SERVICES - possibly only minor care for several days

EMERGENCY ROUTES - First responders may not know that you need help or may have extreme difficulty reaching you.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION - Not available

MEDICATION AVAILABILITY - possibly not available for several days.

CLEARED ROADWAYS - Could be days to weeks.

If an evacuation is called, residents should already have plans in place to leave. If you can leave during a voluntary evacuation order, that is recommended. If you have to wait for the mandatory evacuation order, please do not evacuate until your designated time line. Those living closest to the coast will evacuate first, followed by the middle of the counties and the northern part of the counties. If everyone leaves at once, the roadways become clogged.

If you are taking public transportation out of town, you should get to the designated location sites as soon as possible. There will be a cut-off time for the public transportation evacuations and you shouldn't miss your opportunity to leave. If there is a mandatory evacuation order called, there **WILL NOT** be any local shelters set up for those who choose to stay. If you choose to stay, you will be responsible for yourself, your safety and your personal needs.