

Hurricane Preparedness Guide and Checklist



Gather Protection for Your House

Having protection handy is key to preparing for a hurricane. If you do hear about a hurricane watch, the last thing you want to do is scramble for supplies, running to the nearest store, which is likely already wiped out as people panic buy for their own hurricane supplies list.

Purchase these items well in advance:

- Equipment to tie down outside furniture
- Storm shutters for your windows
- Something to bar the doors with
- Sandbags to prevent flooding
- A fire extinguisher and knowledge of how to use it
- Home insurance and flood insurance, of course

Safely Store Your Important Documents

Take some time to store all of your essential documents in a water-proof folder or container in a safe place that you won't forget. Digitally doesn't count! Some governmental agencies require physical copies. Be sure to include:

- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates
- Printouts of insurance policies
- Immigration documentation
- Health records
- School records

Gather Supplies for Your Family

You should also make sure that you have an emergency kit ready to grab and go, even if there's no hurricane threat yet. This can save time in an evacuation, but it can also be helpful if you need to hunker down and wait the storm out. You can't exactly go running for supplies in the middle of huge winds.

Thus, your hurricane preparedness checklist should also include:

- Water bottles or containers (fill them with filtered water in advance)
- Non-perishable food and snacks (to last a few days)
- Manual can opener if you have canned food
- Any medication your family needs
- First-aid supplies
- Flashlights and batteries
- Portable phone charger
- Battery-operated radio, should you lose your cell signal
- Any pet supplies

If You're Staying

All of the items you bought to protect your house are about to come in handy. Use the following checklist to prepare your home and family:

- Go outside and tie down all outdoor furniture or store it in a shed. While the shed may not protect it entirely, it gives it a better chance of staying put and not blowing off and damaging others' property—or worse, injuring someone.
- Have any trees in your yard trimmed.
- Establish that you have all of the supplies you need, including those listed above. If you don't, and you have time before the hurricane hits your area, make a run to the store. Medication, non-perishable snacks, and water are the most important—don't rely on tap water, as it can become contaminated during the storm.
- Put storm shutters over the windows and barricade the doors.
- If you have time, charge all of your devices, and try to restrict their use. Checking for updates is fine; don't stay on TikTok for hours, draining the battery. You might need it later.
- Make sure you know where the fire extinguisher is and have taught your family how to use it safely.
- Be ready to turn your power off if power lines come down or there's flooding.
- Find a safe room to settle down in that's away from windows and doors in case they get damaged in the storm. This is especially true if there's a possibility of tornadoes in your area, which often come hand in hand with hurricanes.
- Stay inside until official sources say the storm has completely passed over. The eye of the storm can be calm and deceiving.

If You're Leaving

All of the items you bought to protect your house are about to come in handy. Use the following checklist to prepare your home and family:

- Follow steps 1-5 under the "If You're Staying" section.
- Set up sandbags if you anticipate flooding.
- Make sure your car has a full tank of gas or that you've charged it if it's electric.
- Put your emergency kit in the car and ensure everything's inside it.
- Call ahead again to the places you plan on staying and confirm there's room for you. Some places may not be able to guarantee it, which is why it's always good to have a backup.
- Turn your power off and grab your important documents on the way out.
- Call friends and family to let them know where you'll be going, so they can contact you if you lose signal on your cell phone.