



# Hurricane Preparedness Tips

## Hurricanes

Hurricanes are severe tropical storms that form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists can now predict hurricanes, but people who live in communities affected by these storms should plan what they will do if they are told to evacuate.

“Every family should have a basic supply kit that could be used for any emergency,” stated MEMA Director Cristine McCombs. “Everyone should keep certain items around the house in the event of a hurricane or other severe weather. A portable radio, flashlight, extra batteries, and extra non-perishable food and water are all essential to help your family weather the storm.”

Every household should have a supply of canned goods and other non-perishable foods that do not need cooking, along with bottled water, extra prescription medication, and extra food and supplies for infants and pets. A manual can opener and a basic first aid kit are also essential.

“Every family should develop a ‘Family Communication Plan’ to help ensure everyone is safe. You should call your local authorities to learn about potential evacuation routes and the location of emergency shelters in your community,” said McCombs. “It is important to familiarize yourself with your community’s emergency plans before an emergency situation occurs.”

## Prepare for Hurricanes

- Get a kit of [emergency supplies](#) and prepare a portable kit in case you have to evacuate.
- Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a hurricane.
  - A **hurricane watch** means a hurricane is possible in your area. Be prepared to evacuate. Monitor local radio and television news outlets or listen to [NOAA Weather Radio](#) for the latest developments.
  - A **hurricane warning** is when a hurricane is expected in your area. If local authorities advise you to evacuate, leave immediately.
- Prepare to secure your property.
  - Cover all of your home's windows with pre-cut ply wood or hurricane shutters to protect your windows from high winds.
  - Plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything else that is not tied down.
  - Keep all trees and shrubs well trimmed.
- If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to evacuate.

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## Plan to Evacuate

- Plan how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to [evacuate](#).
- If you do not have a car, plan alternate means of evacuating.
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- Identify several places you could go in an emergency, a friend's home in another town, a motel or public shelter.
- If you have a car, keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.
- Become familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.
- Take your [emergency supply kit](#).
- Lock the door behind you.
- Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan [how you will care for your pets](#) in an emergency.

If time allows:

- Call or email the "out-of-state" contact in your family communications plan.
- Tell them where you are going.
- Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- If you are not able to evacuate, stay indoors away from all windows. Take shelter in an interior room with no windows if possible. Be aware that there may be a sudden lull in the storm as the eye of the hurricane moves over. Stay in your shelter until local authorities say it is safe.

## Stay informed

- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should listen to [NOAA Weather Radio](#), watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.
- Stay out of flood waters, if possible. The water may be contaminated or electrically charged. However, should you find yourself trapped in your vehicle in rising water get out immediately and seek higher ground.
- Be alert for [tornadoes](#) and [flooding](#). If you see a funnel cloud or if local authorities issue a tornado warning take shelter underground, if possible or in an interior room away from windows. If waters are rising quickly or local authorities issue a floor of flash flood warning, seek higher ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines to avoid the risk of electric shock or electrocution.
- Do not return to your home until local authorities say it is safe. Even after the hurricane and after flood waters recede, roads may be weakened and could collapse. Buildings may be unstable, and drinking water may be contaminated. Use common sense and exercise caution.

For more information on hurricane preparedness and how to protect your property from hurricane damage visit:

- [National Hurricane Center](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#)
- [Your State's Preparedness Organizations](#)