

# HURRICANE GUIDE

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## INTRODUCTION

[The National Weather Service](#) reports that approximately three hurricanes make landfall along the U.S. coastline every two years, bringing with them additional weather hazards like flooding, high winds, and even offshoot tornadoes. The destructive power of even a single hurricane requires careful preparation before, during, and after tropical storm season to protect your family and your home.

This guide will explain the essential things you can do now to be ready for hurricane season. You'll learn how to strengthen common weak points in your home, strategies for safety and communication, and the necessary supplies for riding out the storm.



## BEFORE THE STORM



### FORTIFY YOUR HOME

Officially, the annual hurricane season begins on June 1, spanning the summer and fall months before ending November 30.

During these high risk-months, you can protect your home by preparing well in advance.

#### Preparing for a hurricane includes two types of precautions:

1. Passive protection, such as the installation of impact-resistant windows, prepares you for potential damage well in advance and doesn't require immediate action as a storm approaches.
2. Active protection, such as boarding up doors and windows, applies to actions that may need to be taken in the event of an approaching storm when more advanced preparations are not available.

The combination of these protective measures will enable you to better establish a safe shelter from storms and feel more confident in your home's ability to withstand a natural disaster.

Before word of a major storm reaches you, there are several preventative measures you can take to fortify your home's weak points and mitigate significant damage. These practices are often termed "home hardening."

Storms bring high winds, torrential rain, and extreme pressures that test your home's structural integrity. The more vulnerable points of a home generally include the roof, windows, and doors (especially garage doors). Hardening these points is key to keeping safe throughout the hurricane season and avoiding the panicked rush to prepare as a storm approaches. Consider hiring a professional to properly anchor your roof to the foundation of the house, check regularly to ensure all doors and windows are properly sealed, and invest in wind-rated garage doors.



## HOME HARDENING TIP: IMPACT-RESISTANT WINDOWS

Impact-resistant windows provide several advantages over typical glass panes. They are engineered specifically to withstand windborne debris and avoid shattering into dangerous shards when broken. If struck, the glass in impact-resistant windows can crack, but the broken glass will hold together and avoid spilling into the house.

This particular function of impact-resistant windows offers an additional measure of safety, keeping the intense buildup of pressure caused by storms from entering your house and blowing out other openings. Remember to keep all windows and entry points locked at all times during a storm. Do not crack a window to help “stabilize” pressure.

Impact-resistant windows also eliminate the need to spend money and time on purchasing and installing plywood and shutters. Plywood installation is a time-consuming process requiring specific anchorage, code-approved materials, and specialty equipment to place properly. They also

pose a potential fire hazard by making entering and exiting the home difficult, and can limit access to outside light in the event of a power outage.

### **OTHER PERKS OF IMPACT-RESISTANT WINDOWS INCLUDE:**

- Lower energy bills due to reduced heat and cold transfer
- Protects artwork, furniture, carpet, and drapes from harmful UV damage
- Potential discounts on home insurance
- Up to 65% reduction of exterior noise\*

If you're unsure whether or not your home's windows are impact-resistant, try locating the purchase receipt, contacting the manufacturer or calling the dealer who installed the windows.

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\*Sound reduction percentage is based upon the WinGuard® Aluminum Picture Window's (PW7720A) OITC rating compared to a single-pane window with an OITC rating of 19. Actual results may vary.



## PREPARE YOUR FAMILY

Hardening your home before hurricane season is half the battle. It's also critical to properly prepare loved ones for emergencies. This includes stocking emergency preparedness kits, knowing your area's evacuation zone, and having a plan to communicate in the event of a major storm.

**Ready.gov suggests that a family emergency plan address the following four questions:**

1. How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
2. What is my shelter plan?
3. What is my evacuation route?
4. What is my household communication plan?

### Receiving Emergency Alerts and Warnings

Cell phone and internet service may not be reliable in the event of a natural disaster. Aim to secure your family a backup means of receiving emergency alerts, such as a battery-powered weather radio. Tune into continuous weather forecasts and emergency warnings through the [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\) broadcast](#). This station can also transmit non-weather emergencies through the Emergency Alert System.

### Developing a Shelter Plan

Your family should have multiple options for shelter. When sheltering within your own home, it's important to have emergency supplies stocked for the storm and its aftermath.

Before taking shelter indoors, clear the area outside your home from as many movable objects as possible. Bring in garbage cans, planters, outdoor furniture, vehicles, and pets before locking up. After your immediate outdoor area is secure, lock all doors and windows. Even if your home maintains power, turn off the air conditioning, fans, and heat.

Keep your emergency supply kit in an easy-to-access location, and if possible, ride out the storm in an interior room or hallway away from doors and windows. Hurricanes can cause local panic, making emergency supplies harder to come by as the storm nears. Maintaining a stock of non-perishable food and other essentials can mitigate the busy run on supplies at local stores.

**Before the storm arrives, check the following items off your list to make sure you're prepared to take shelter:**

- Place your refrigerator and freezer on their coldest settings. Keep them closed as much as possible, so food inside will last longer if power goes out.
- Fill clean, large containers with water for drinking. Fill bathtubs with water to be used for flushing toilets and for other sanitation purposes (NOTE: This water is not safe for drinking).
- Secure propane tanks, so they will weather the storm, but keep them accessible in case you need them to boil water and cook food.
- If you have a generator, fill all gas containers and secure them safely in a place that's easily accessible.
- Fill the gas tanks of all vehicles in case gasoline supplies run out after the storm.
- Unplug small appliances that won't be used during and right after the storm so they aren't damaged by a possible power surge when electricity is restored.
- Fully charge all cell phones and other rechargeable devices.





## EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST

**You cannot prevent an emergency, but you can prepare now with an emergency kit of supplies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) compiled the following Emergency Supply List:**

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- At least a 72-hour supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape for sheltering-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids, or laxatives
- Glasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification, and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper to disinfect water
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels, and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children

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Source: [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov)



### **Knowing Your Evacuation Route**

When emergency strikes your area, you can be prepared with an escape plan. In extreme circumstances, authorities may instruct certain areas to evacuate. In these scenarios, it helps if you've already planned a specific rally point for your family, particularly if communication is proving difficult.

Identify potential locations to take shelter, such as a parent or a friend's home in another town. Keep in mind that evacuation routes, motels, and other highly trafficked areas may be difficult to navigate in the wake of a pending storm. FEMA recommends choosing multiple destinations in different directions, providing you options during an emergency.

Remember to take your weather radio and emergency supply kit with you, and keep a tank's worth of extra gas in your car if you plan to travel in a vehicle. In the course of your evacuation, keep a sharp eye out for standing water, downed power lines, and other potential hazards. It's important to follow recommended evacuation routes and avoid shortcuts.

### **Establishing a Communication Plan**

Your household should have hard copies of each family member's updated contact information written down and in each emergency supply kit. Written copies are especially important in disasters causing extensive power outages, as your mobile device or computer battery may run down.

While hurricanes are often preceded by warnings and some measure of notice before making landfall, it's possible one may strike during school or work hours. Be aware of these locations and their respective emergency response plans, and let children know where and how they will be picked up in an emergency.

FEMA also recommends having a designated emergency contact somewhere out of your local area. Long-distance calls may get through easier than local calls due to local phone lines being jammed. Make sure your family knows who to contact and has hard copies of their phone number and address.





## DURING THE STORM



### STAY SAFE AS THE STORM PASSES

Now that you're stocked with supplies and your home is fortified against extreme

weather, riding out the hurricane is largely a measure of patience and conserving energy. Keep close to your NOAA weather radio for updates on when the coast is clear, and avoid using cell phones and other devices to conserve battery life. In addition to securing all windows and doors, it's recommended to retreat to an interior room without windows on the lowest floor of your home, such as a bathroom or closet. Use flashlights rather than candlelight, as open flames pose a potentially serious hazard if the storm causes a gas leak. If using a generator, remember to keep it outdoors and away from any windows.



### 2020 STORM NAMES (ATLANTIC)

- Arthur
- Bertha
- Cristobal
- Dolly
- Edouard
- Fay
- Gonzalo
- Hanna
- Isaias
- Josephine
- Kyle
- Laura
- Marco
- Nana
- Omar
- Paulette
- Rene
- Sally
- Teddy
- Vicky
- Wilfred



## AFTER THE STORM



### WATCH FOR HAZARDS

Even as a hurricane dissipates, it's important to remain cautious. Floods can cause unseen damage that can lead to significant harm. [The American Red Cross emphasizes the importance of avoiding floodwater](#), as even six inches of fast-flowing water can knock a person over and two feet will float a car.

### Other [Red Cross recommendations for dealing with hurricane aftermath include the following](#):

- If caught on a flooded road with rapidly rising waters, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground.
- Don't walk on beaches or riverbanks.
- Don't allow children to play in or near flood water.
- Avoid contact with floodwater. It may be contaminated with sewage or contain dangerous insects or animals.
- Stay out of areas subject to flooding. Underpasses, dips, low spots, canyons, washes, etc. can become filled with water.

Floodwater from heavy rains and the hurricane's initial storm surge can travel miles inland and persist for several days after the storm disappears. Flooding is the [leading cause of hurricane-related deaths](#) in the US. Avoid touching electrical equipment, and be cautious of standing water, as downed power lines can still be live.

Once it is safe to do so, photograph any damage to your home or property, and contact your insurance company for further information. If you are returning from an evacuation, take careful stock of the state of your home and potentially damaged areas before entering – gas leaks, live wires, and fire damage can still occur days after the storm passes.









## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE: HURRICANE TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ

1

TRUE OR FALSE

**The eye is the most dangerous part of a hurricane.**

(False. The eye of a storm is actually calm in comparison to the severe conditions surrounding it. The most destructive forces of a hurricane are found just outside of the eye in the eye wall.)

2

TRUE OR FALSE

**A tropical storm becomes a hurricane when sustained winds exceed 74 mph.**

(True. This is known as a Category 1 hurricane. There are five total categories of hurricanes, each with increasing wind speed and destructive power. Category 5 hurricanes experience winds of more than 157 mph!)

3

TRUE OR FALSE

**Impact-resistant windows are a form of active home protection.**

(False. Impact-resistant windows are an advanced form of home fortification requiring installation before the imminent threat of a storm and, therefore, considered passive protection.)





4

TRUE OR FALSE

**A tropical storm watch means tropical storm conditions are possible in the area.**

(True. Tropical storm watches are issued by a weather agency to alert a local area there is a chance of a tropical storm hitting within 48 hours.)

5

TRUE OR FALSE

**App games on your cell phone are the best way to keep kids entertained while a hurricane passes.**

(False. In the event of a power outage, it's important to preserve your device's battery life for as long as possible and to be able to communicate potential dangers after the storm passes.)

6

TRUE OR FALSE

**Keeping one window slightly open is a good way to normalize the pressure in your home as a hurricane passes.**

(False. Letting a storm into your home through a window will only exaggerate the damage the intense conditions can cause. Homes are not entirely airtight and do not require pressure stabilization.)



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