

## Hurricane Survival Family Action Guidelines

Hurricanes and Tropical Storms originate in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean sea. On an average, hurricanes are large, powerful storms that have a counterclockwise wind and cloud circulation of 74 MPH or greater. The more intense hurricanes may have gusts up to 200 MPH or more.

Florida, with a coastline of 1,350 miles, is more susceptible to hurricanes than any other state. A large percent of Florida residents live on or near the coast and many of them have never experienced the forces of a hurricane or tropical storm. It is imperative that you and your family establish an emergency plan and review it periodically, considering that you may have to alter it due to changing conditions.

The following information can act as a checklist in making your plans. Know the meaning of terms used by the National Weather Service. Then consider what to do when a "Hurricane Watch" or "Hurricane Warning" is given, what to do before and during the hurricane and what action to take after the all clear is given. Special instructions are included if it is necessary for you to evacuate to an emergency shelter and for those who live in and are responsible for mobile homes and high rise apartment buildings.

### Terms and Definitions

**Tropical Disturbance** - A moving area of thunderstorms in the tropics.

**Tropical Depression** - An area of low pressure, rotary circulation of clouds and winds to 38 MPH.

**Tropical Storm** - Counterclockwise circulation of clouds and winds 39 MPH - 73 MPH. The storm is assigned a name.

**Hurricane** - When a Tropical Storm reaches winds of 74 MPH or more it is classified as a Hurricane.

**Advisory** - A method for disseminating hurricane & storm data to the public every 6 hours. Small craft warnings are released as necessary.

**Special Advisory** - Warning given anytime there is a significant change in weather conditions or change in warnings.

**Intermediate Advisory** - A method of updating regular advisory information every 2 to 3 hours as necessary.

**Gale Warning** - Wind speed of 39 - 54 MPH expected.

**Storm Warning** - Wind speed of 55 - 73 MPH expected.

**Hurricane Watch** - A hurricane may threaten your area.

**Hurricane Warning** - A hurricane is expected to strike your area within 24 hours or less.

**Tornado Watch** - Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.

**Tornado Warning** - Tornado detected in your area, TAKE SHELTER.

**Storm Surge** - The strong winds associated with Hurricanes and Tropical Storms cause the sea level to rise above normal tidal heights, with giant wind-driven waves and strong unpredictable currents, sometimes covering 50 miles.

### Before a Hurricane

#### Hurricane Watch - what to do when a hurricane may threaten your area

- Monitor NOAA Weather Radio, television, or commercial radio for latest weather advisories.
- Put together a portable disaster survival kit. (See Back page)
- Check your storm shutters or other protection materials for windows and doors, such as plywood, pressboard and masking tape.
- Remove any tree limbs near electrical wires and your home. "BE CAREFUL".
- Collect and place indoors all loose objects.
- Keep a full tank of fuel in your car or boat and check your battery.
- If you intend to leave your home, make plans to secure it ahead of time.
- Make preparations to moor, anchor and store your boat. Florida Marine Advisory Fact Sheet (MAFS-24), "Hurricane and Severe Weather Checklist for Boaters" is available from the Marine Advisory Program, Building 803, P. O. Box 110409, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611-0409.
- Check your transistor radio and obtain extra batteries. Your auto radio can also be used to keep you informed.

- Do not use the telephone unnecessarily.
- Obtain adequate supply of special or prescription medicines, baby food, diapers, and sanitary needs.
- Stock up on non-perishable foodstuffs.
- Check flashlights, batteries, and supply of candles or lantern fuel.
- Locate the main turnoffs for electricity, water and gas.
- Package your valuables such as jewelry, titles, deeds, insurance papers, licenses, stocks, bonds, inventory, etc., for safe keeping in waterproof containers. Consider a safety deposit box.
- Check with the Humane Society to arrange for safeguarding your pets and animals.
- Make a complete inventory of ALL your possessions.

#### Hurricane Warning - when a storm is expected to strike within 24 hours

- Listen only to official announcements on the radio, television, and NOAA Weather Radio or the Civil Defense and Red Cross. Do not pay attention to rumors.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to their coldest setting (store plastic bottles of water and newspapers in the vacant areas of your freezer, cover your freezer with blankets). Open only when necessary.
- Sterilize containers, and fill containers, bathtub and washing machine with water. You should have one quart of water per person, per day, for drinking.
- Double check your Portable Disaster Kit; it can be used in a shelter.
- Remove pictures and bric-a-brac from walls tape windows and doors that are not boarded or have shutters, and wedge sliding glass doors with a bar. Draw all drapes and blinds to stop flying glass.
- Lower television antenna and store it in a safe place.
- Turn off all electricity to your pool and add chlorine to the water. You can put your aluminum furniture in the pool.
- Stay at home, if it is sturdy and on high ground and you feel secure, unless advised to evacuate by government officials.
- Double check your area for loose objects before the storm strikes.
- If you do not have a car, arrange ahead of time for transportation should you have to evacuate. This is especially important for the elderly and handicapped.
- Do not use the telephone unnecessarily.
- Bring your pets inside and protect livestock.

#### During the Hurricane

- Remain indoors during the hurricane. (If the calm center passes directly overhead, there will be a lull in the wind lasting from a few minutes to an hour or more.) Do not go outside unless emergency repairs are absolutely necessary. Remember, at the other side of the eye the winds rise very rapidly to hurricane force winds, and come from the other direction.
- Prepare for storm surge and flooding. (Storm surges, flooding and tornadoes are the worst killers associated with hurricanes.)
- The electricity, water, gas and telephone service may be interrupted – stay calm and listen to your radio for the all clear.
- DO NOT leave your house and do not sight-see.

#### After the "All Clear" is Given

- Leave your shelter only after being officially released.
- Stay away from the disaster area unless you live or work there. Don't sight-see. DRIVE CAREFULLY.
- Advise interested friends and relatives that you are safe. It may be impossible for them to contact you.
- If you arrived at a public shelter on a public bus, return transportation will be provided.
- If your home was damaged, enter with extreme care.
- Avoid downed wires, escaping gas, downed trees, structurally damaged buildings, etc.
- Check all utility systems to be sure they are safe before turning them back on.
- Check to insure that your water is safe.
- Check for the possibility of food spoilage. Bury spoiled items.
- High-water can drive snakes, animals and insects to high ground. Expect them and be prepared to protect yourself.

## If You are Officially Advised to Evacuate

Local authorities will officially advise by television and radio when specific areas should be evacuated and which American Red Cross Shelters will be opened and staffed.

- Act immediately – in daylight, if possible. Do not get marooned.
- Store perishables – take reasonable amounts of nonperishable foodstuffs.
- Turn off main switch for utilities (consider that you may want some utilities left on as long as possible for refrigeration, etc.).
- Lock your home securely.
- Travel with care, leave early, and follow recommended routes. Stay away from low lying areas. Avoid obstructions, wires and trees. Keep listening to the radio.
- Carry your transistor radio, flashlight and valuables with you.
- Pack medicines, baby foods, diapers and personal hygiene requirements and bring them with you.
- Bring bedding you feel is necessary. None will be immediately available.
- Prepare a lunch and a snack for your family because it may be some time before food or beverages can be provided.
- If you expect to be gone for some time you may want to bring a change of clothing.
- Do not attempt to bring intoxicating beverages, pets or firearms. You will not be admitted if you do.
- Recognize that an American Red Cross Shelter will not have all the comforts of home.
- If you suffer from more than minor medical problems or are pregnant, perhaps you should check with the hospital.
- If you do not have your own transportation, plan to travel with friends or neighbors. This is especially important for elderly and the handicapped.
- A minimum number of buses will be made available for those without transportation. Mass transportation pickup points and schedules will be broadcast on television and radio.
- Only seeing-eye dogs will be allowed in shelters, so arrange for the safekeeping of your pet or animal. Contact the Humane Society for guidance.

## What to do at the Shelter

- Register at the registration desk as soon as you enter the building, listing your entire group.
- If you are able, volunteer to assist the shelter workers in any way possible.
- While using the shelter keep the building clean and sanitary.
- Only emergency rations are provided in the shelter. Be sure to eat something before you leave home.
- Do not forget medication, diapers and sanitary needs. (Diabetics – Do not forget your insulin!)
- Bring your own portable disaster kit if you have one. It will make your stay in the shelter much more comfortable.

## Special Instructions

In addition to following the instructions listed, residents of mobile homes, residents of high-rise apartments and those responsible for high-rise apartment buildings should follow the instructions below.

### Residents in Mobile Homes

- Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to winds of hurricane force.
- Secure all outdoor objects. Tie them down or bring them inside.
- Secure all awnings over doors and windows. Tape or board windows and doors.
- Be sure that your home's tie down system meets local and/or state laws.
- When the "Hurricane Warning" is given, go to a more secure shelter. Do not stay in your mobile home during a hurricane. Your local Civil Defense and Red Cross will advise you which shelters are to be opened.

### Residents in High-Rise Apartments

- If you have a floor captain, know him or her, and listen to their suggestions.
- Be familiar with the location of all exit stairways. Count how many steps you are from your door to the exit door in case the lights are out in the hall.
- Do not use the elevator, it will be used for disabled residents.
- Predetermine a location outside the building for members of your family to meet if asked to evacuate.
- Rehearse your evacuation plan. It may save your lives during threat of a hurricane.
- Take all loose items from your terrace or patio. They can cause damage.

- Close and lock all windows, sliding glass doors and shutters. If you do not have shutters, tape the glass in an "X" fashion with cloth-backed tape. Glass that is coated with a plastic sunscreen is already somewhat protected.

## Boards of Directors and Managers of High-Rise Buildings

Retain a reputable engineering firm to inspect the building and foundation to determine if the building can withstand the erosion and battering of water, wind and waves that a hurricane brings. If the foundation is safe and the building is sound, then the residents can consider staying unless the local officials recommend evacuation. If the safety of the building is in doubt, then all occupants must plan on going to a shelter. If your building is structurally sound it may be used for vertical evacuation.

Organize a group of responsible residents to develop a plan that will:

- provide for monitoring the hurricane's course by use of the information from NOAA Weather Radio and local officials.
- secure grounds by setting up guidelines for the safety of cars and boats.
- provide for emergency power that will function in case the storm surge floods the building.
- make certain that elevators are not operated during the storm.
- locate a safe area for the occupants to congregate, encouraging them to stay away from windows and to wedge patio doors to prevent the vibration from ripping them loose.
- consider a provision for sheltering other people who are in the area and might be trapped when the evacuation routes are closed by the effects of the approaching hurricane.
- provide each floor with a floor captain or captains who have been educated in hurricane preparedness and evacuation procedures and are able to instruct the occupants of their floor on what to do in the event of a hurricane.

## Emergency Phone Numbers that can Help You

Civil Defense \_\_\_\_\_

American Red Cross \_\_\_\_\_

Local Police \_\_\_\_\_

Highway Patrol \_\_\_\_\_

County Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Rescue \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Gas or Fuel Company \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Company \_\_\_\_\_

Water Company \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Bank \_\_\_\_\_

## A Portable Disaster Kit Should Contain:

food (Non-Perishable)  
drinking water (1 qt./person/day),  
eating and cooking utensils  
toilet articles  
sanitary needs (diapers, etc.)  
prescription medications  
portable radio and batteries  
flashlight and batteries  
bedding (sleeping bag, etc.)  
clothing  
portable ice chest

LISTEN TO NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR THE LATEST WEATHER INFORMATION