

Emergency Management

How to prepare for a Hurricane

With National Preparedness Month two months away, now is a good time to start planning.

Emergency managers at Navy installations conduct preparedness outreach year-round, but many choose to make a special push during September to coincide with the National Preparedness Month. Tools and ideas you can use in your planning are available through the Operation Prepare Tool kit located at http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site/WhatWeDo/EmergencyManagement/OperationPreparedness/index.htm.

Hurricanes are dangerous events. Those of us who have lived through one of these fierce storms are aware of their awesome potential. In this article, we look at the simple measures you can take now to ensure that your family is ready for hurricane season.

Here's how:

Select a safe place for the family to weather the storm.

This may be a location in your home -- consider a window free room on the bottom floor. If your home doesn't have a safe area, you should know the locations of at least two emergency shelters near your home. If you have special medical needs and don't think you'll be able to get to the shelter on your own, contact the county in advance to make prior arrangements.

Stock up on food and water. You should have enough non-perishable food and water in your home to last the family for at least two weeks. If your stock of supplies is old, be sure to refresh it. You might want to purchase new canned goods every few years and rotate the rest through your pantry. Water should be replaced annually.

Prepare other disaster supplies. You'll need to stock up on batteries, flashlights, rope, tarps, plastic bags, bad-weather clothing and other essentials to help you through the aftermath of a bad storm.

Get your home ready. If you have hurricane shutters, make sure that you have all of the parts and have some extra screws/washers handy. If you don't, have a supply of plywood precut to fit your windows. Gather anything loose from your yard and store it in the garage. Watch the news when a storm is approaching and protect your home when advised by local author-

ities. If you wait until the rain starts, it may be too late.

Develop a family communications plan. You might become separated before or after the storm. It's a good idea to have an out-of-state contact (a relative up north?) to act as the point of contact for all family members in the event of an emergency. Make sure everyone in the family knows who that person is and carries their phone number in their wallet or purse.

Check your insurance coverage. Companies stop writing coverage when a storm is approaching. Ensure that your homeowner's insurance has enough windstorm coverage to rebuild your home in today's market. Also, remember that standard insurance doesn't cover flooding. You'll need special flood insurance from the federal government.

Plan for the family pets. Shelters will not accept pets. If you want to ensure your pet's livelihood, you may wish to consider evacuating early to a friend's home that's in a safe area.

Keep your vehicles fueled to at least half a tank at all times throughout hurricane season. When a storm approaches, lines will get very long and gas stations will run out of gas before the storm hits. You need to have enough gas to safely evacuate if the situation warrants.

What You Need:

Non-perishable food

Drinking water

Batteries

Medication for all family members

First aid kit

Flashlights

Battery-operated radio

Cash

Toiletries

Clothing

With a little preparation and forethought, you needn't lose sleep over hurricanes. Protect your home and family with these simple steps, and you can sit back and relax in the calm before the storm!

-- From Emergency Management Staff