

# How To Prepare for a Hurricane

By Curt Hagedorn

If you live in an area which has experienced extreme weather like a hurricane in the past, or which consistently has hurricane warnings, odds are that one day a hurricane may come your way. And even though this article is titled “how to prepare for a hurricane” remember, if it’s you against the hurricane, the hurricane will win – the stories you’ve heard about people surviving under extraordinary circumstances are just that, extraordinary stories, and by no means represent increase in your odds of surviving a major storm. So the first step in preparing for a hurricane is to listen – to the radio, to local authorities, to the news, the National Weather service – and if conditions warrant it, get yourself and your loved ones out of the path of the oncoming storm. There is nothing in your home that your presence will save from damage or destruction, nor is there any thing worth your life and future or that of your family. That being said, that doesn’t mean that you should leave home with the doors unlocked and all the windows open.

Remembering that getting out of the way of the storm is your first response, plan one or more ways out of town – make sure you have appropriate maps and that your car radio, cell phones, etc. are in good working order – if you have a CB radio in your car or truck so much the better. Making sure that you and your family have a reliable escape route as well as someplace to call in case you are separated – in other words, if your parents live out of town, everyone should call in to them from wherever they are – are vital first steps.

Second, make sure you have emergency supplies – clean water, water, canned or otherwise preserved food, candles, dry matches (put them in an airtight jar), batteries, flashlight and so on as well as a good first aid kit. It’s a great idea to check out your local camping, hardware or sporting goods store – they can help you put together a family survival kit that can live in the garage or the trunk of the car to be ready at a moment’s notice and include things like lights and radios powered by generators you wind up on the side, actual k-rations and sophisticated first aid tools. Also, you might want to have a supply of cash, a spare credit card and identification in your survival kit, and perhaps a securely stored spare can or two of gasoline.

To prepare your home as much as you can, makes sure you turn off all gas, electricity and other fuel and power to the home before you leave. Either board up your home or, if you live in a hurricane prone zone, invest in permanent storm shutters. Make sure that trees near your home are well trimmed, are free of dead branches and at least unlikely to fall upon your home during a storm. If there is time and you live in an area where there has been flooding due to storm surge,

move valuable to an upper floor or elevate them off the floor on overturned trash cans or other waterproof or expendable items to keep them dry.

If a hurricane is approaching but evacuation orders have not been issued, for example during a hurricane watch or warning, board up or shutter your home, fill up available containers as well as your (clean) bathtub and sinks with clean water, turn your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings and try to avoid opening them in order to preserve the food inside, and of course make sure all family member stay indoors and monitor news or emergency channels for instructions.

Finally, check out flood insurance or other local programs that exist to help citizens and homeowners in hurricane areas. There is a National Flood Insurance program that your local insurance agent should have information on, and a great deal of useful information (like that listed above) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Copyright © 2005 Publishers-Edge

