

# PREPARING FOR A STORM



Having a plan for natural disasters such as hurricanes is vital to the protection and safety of you, your loved ones, and your belongings. While it is important to have an emergency kit and evacuation or shelter plan, there are some other overlooked storm preparation activities that are just as important. The following suggestions are not a full list of all activities to prepare for storms.

## OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

Clean leaves, branches, and other debris out of the storm drains near your house and avoid blowing grass clippings into the drains. Keeping drainage areas clear will allow water to drain more easily and potentially reduce flood risk.

Clean out your gutters. You should also check the gutter guards or screens if you have them. Make sure the down spouts direct water away from your home.

Clean your yard of debris that could become airborne in high winds. Move loose objects like furniture, potted plants, and toys inside or in a garage to prevent them from becoming projectiles. Remove items that may need to be disposed of and picked up well ahead of the storm.

Well before hurricane season, inspect and trim trees and other greenery that may be dead or at risk of breaking off. Do not wait until a storm is approaching - doing this ahead of time will allow the debris to be picked up and not cause additional damage during a storm.

## INSIDE YOUR HOME

If there is a power outage during a storm event, it is important to check the food in your refrigerator and freezer. An easy method to determine if food thawed and refroze is the frozen cup and coin test.

1. Fill a small cup with water and freeze it.
2. When the water has frozen completely, place a coin on top of the ice.
3. If you return home after evacuating and the coin is still on top, food in the freezer should be safe.
4. If the coin sank, your food may have thawed and refroze. Food may be unsafe to consume.
5. This method is not a guarantee, and food should be examined thoroughly. If in doubt, throw it out.

Before you evacuate, place frozen items in garbage bags in case of a power outage. This will allow you to keep thawed food from leaking in your freezer and aid in clean-up.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

Scan the QR Code below



It is a myth that you should store important documents and items in your dishwasher. Your dishwasher is not waterproof, and flood waters can get into the dishwasher. You should scan all important documents to create an electronic back-up and keep the originals in a waterproof, fireproof folder or safe. Bring your important documents with you when evacuating.

Important documents you may want to bring with you or protect include, but are not limited to:

- Forms of identification (driver's license, passports, social security cards, birth certificates)
- Insurance documents (copies of policies, home insurance, flood insurance, car insurance, life insurance, health insurance cards)
- Videos or photos of property condition and contents

## SHELTERING IN PLACE

It is not recommended to shelter in place if there is an evacuation order. If you do choose to shelter in place, make sure you have sufficient supplies, such as water and food, in your emergency kit. Consider including an ax to access the roof if flood waters rise in the house.

Put a permanent marker in your kit. If flooding becomes life threatening, you can use it to write your name and emergency contact phone number on your arm in case you are injured and cannot respond to questions from first responders.

Keep your emergency kit in the highest part of your house that is still accessible in case of floodwaters.

## PLAN FOR YOUR PETS

If you are evacuating, make sure you know which lodging accommodations allow pets. It is a myth that hotels are legally required to allow pets during a hurricane.

Also, check the pet policies at community or government shelters prior to the storm.

## MAKE MEDICAL PLANS

If you take medication daily, you should put them in a waterproof bag and keep the original containers and copies of prescriptions. Keep extra glasses, contacts, other eye care supplies, and copies of eye prescriptions. You may not have access to doctors or pharmacies following a disaster event. Pharmacies may also have limited supplies.

Remember, hurricane season officially runs from June 1 to November 30. However, hurricanes may occur outside of these dates. Many of these tips also apply to a range of other natural and manmade disasters.

## RESOURCES

*Preparing for Natural Hazards Factsheet Number 5*

Visit our project website: [www.laseagrant.org/resources/be-prepared](http://www.laseagrant.org/resources/be-prepared)

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