



# Weather Safety: Hurricanes

## Safety and Preparedness Fact Sheet

### Before the Hurricane Season

- ▶ Determine safe evacuation routes inland.
- ▶ Learn location of official shelters.
- ▶ Make emergency plans for pets.
- ▶ Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators and battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards and cell phones.
- ▶ Buy food that will keep and store drinking water.
- ▶ Buy plywood or other material to protect your home.
- ▶ Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- ▶ Trim trees and shrubbery.
- ▶ Decide where to move your boat in an emergency.
- ▶ Review your insurance policy.

### During the Storm

#### When in a **Watch** area...

- ▶ Listen frequently to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for bulletins of a storm's progress.
- ▶ Fuel and service your vehicles.
- ▶ Inspect and secure mobile home tie-downs.
- ▶ Board up windows in case the storm moves quickly and you have to evacuate.
- ▶ Stock up on batteries, food that will keep, first aid supplies, drinking water and medications.
- ▶ Store lawn furniture and other loose, light-weight objects, such as garbage cans and garden tools.
- ▶ Have cash on hand in case power goes out and ATMs don't work.

#### Plan to evacuate if you...

- ▶ Live in a mobile or manufactured home. They are unsafe in high winds no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- ▶ Live on the coastline, an offshore island or near a river or flood plain. In addition to wind, flooding from storm surge waves is a major killer.
- ▶ Live in a high-rise. Hurricane winds can knock out electricity to elevators, break windows and more.

#### When in a **Warning** area...

- ▶ Closely monitor radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for official bulletins.
- ▶ Close storm shutters.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Hurricane Watch:** Hurricane conditions are possible within the specified coastal area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.

**Hurricane Warning:** Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the warning. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.

**Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings:** Take these alerts seriously. Although Tropical Storms have lower wind speeds than hurricanes, they often bring life-threatening flooding and dangerous winds. Take precautions!

- ▶ Follow instructions issued by local officials. **Leave immediately if ordered!**
- ▶ If evacuating, leave as soon as possible. Stay with friends or relatives, at a low-rise inland motel or at a designated public shelter outside the flood zone.
- ▶ **DO NOT** stay in a mobile or manufactured home.
- ▶ Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
- ▶ Take pets with you if possible, but remember, most public shelters do not allow pets other than those used by the handicapped. Identify pet-friendly motels along your evacuation route.

#### If Staying in a Home...

- ▶ Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and keep closed.
- ▶ Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- ▶ Turn off propane tanks.
- ▶ Unplug small appliances.
- ▶ Fill bathtub and large containers with water in case tap water is unavailable. Use water in bathtubs for cleaning and flushing only. **Do NOT** drink it.

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## Tips for Staying Safe **Before**, **During** and **After** a Hurricane!



### If Winds Become Strong...

- ▶ Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway.
- ▶ Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.
- ▶ If you are in a two story house, go to an interior 1st floor room.
- ▶ If you are in a multi-story building and away from water, go to the 1st or 2nd floor and stay in the halls or other interior rooms away from windows.
- ▶ Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object.

### Be Alert For...

- ▶ Tornadoes. They are often spawned by hurricanes.
- ▶ The calm "eye" of the storm. It may seem like the storm is over but after the eye passes, the winds will change direction and quickly return to hurricane force.

### After the Storm

- ▶ Keep listening to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio.
- ▶ Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- ▶ Watch for closed roads. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, **Turn Around Don't Drown!**<sup>TM</sup>
- ▶ Avoid weakened bridges and washed out roads.
- ▶ Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from power lines.
- ▶ Once home, check gas, water and electrical lines and appliances for damage.
- ▶ Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Never use candles and other open flames indoors.
- ▶ Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until

### What to Bring to the Shelter

- First aid kit
- Medicine, prescriptions
- Baby food and diapers
- Games, books, music
- Toiletries
- Battery-powered radio and cell phone
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- A blanket or sleeping bag for each person
- Identification
- Copies of key papers such as insurance policies
- Cash, credit card

**REMINDER: If you do so imm**

NWS hurricane links, forecasts, assessments:

<http://www.weather.gov/os/hurricane>

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards:

<http://www.weather.gov/nwr>

National Hurricane Center:

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>

Central Pacific Hurricane Center:

<http://weather.gov/cphc>

NOAA Hurricane Website

<http://hurricanes.noaa.gov/>

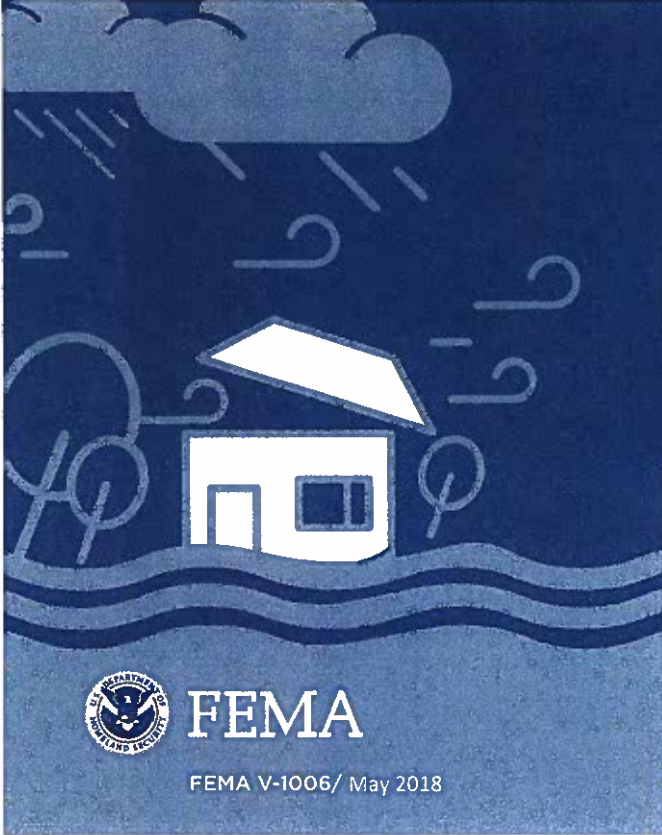
American Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org>

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

<http://www.fema.gov>

# BE PREPARED FOR A HURRICANE



Threats from hurricanes include powerful winds, heavy rainfall, storm surges, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, tornadoes, and landslides.

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over warm ocean waters and move toward land. The Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30. The Pacific hurricane season runs May 15 to November 30.



Can happen along any U.S. coast or territory in the Atlantic or Pacific



Can affect areas more than 100 miles inland



Most active in September

## IF YOU ARE UNDER A HURRICANE WARNING, FIND SAFE SHELTER RIGHT AWAY



Determine your best protection for high winds and flooding.



Evacuate if told to do so.



Take shelter in a designated storm shelter or an interior room for high winds.



Listen for emergency information and alerts.



Only use generators outdoors and away from windows.



Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters.

# HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A HURRICANE THREATENS

## Prepare NOW

**Know your area's risk of hurricanes.**

**Sign up for your community's warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.

**If you are at risk for flash flooding,** watch for signs such as heavy rain.

**Practice going to a safe shelter** for high winds, such as a FEMA safe room or ICC 500 storm shelter. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level that is not subject to flooding.

**Based on your location and community plans,** make your own plans for evacuation or sheltering in place.

**Become familiar with your evacuation zone,** the evacuation route, and shelter locations.

**Gather needed supplies for at least three days.** Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Don't forget the needs of pets.

**Keep important documents in a safe place** or create password-protected digital copies.

**Protect your property.** Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves in plumbing to prevent backups. Consider hurricane shutters. Review insurance policies.

## Survive DURING

**If told to evacuate, do so immediately.** Do not drive around barricades.

**If sheltering during high winds, go to a FEMA safe room,** ICC 500 storm shelter, or a small, interior, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor.

**If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building.** Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising flood water.

**Listen** for current emergency information and instructions.

**Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machinery ONLY outdoors** and away from windows.

**Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters.** Turn Around. Don't Drown. Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.

**Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.**

## Be Safe AFTER

**Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.**

**Be careful during clean-up.** Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.

**Do not touch electrical equipment** if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.

**Avoid wading in flood water,** which can contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.

**Save phone calls for emergencies.** Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.

**Document any property damage** with photographs. Contact your insurance company for assistance.

## Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to **ready.gov** and search for **hurricane**. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for a **hurricane**.

