

# The Eight Steps of Hurricane Preparation

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## Step 1: Respect Nature

Hurricanes are dangerous. Hurricanes and Typhoons kill thousands of people every year worldwide and cause billions of dollars in property damage. Don't underestimate these powerful storms. Having a healthy respect for hurricanes is the first step in preparation.

## Step 2: Decide Whether to Go or Stay

You must first decide if you will evacuate your home or stay and weather the storm. Such a decision should be a family decision and must include the consideration of such factors as:

- a. Are you in a surge or flood zone?
- b. Is your home structurally capable of withstanding hurricane force winds?
- c. Do the openings in your home such as the windows, sliding glass doors, and jalousie doors have shutters to keep the powerful winds and rain out?
- d. Does any of your family members have special medical needs that will require assistance you cannot provide?
- e. Is your home capable of providing a "livable" environment after the storm when all utilities are lost?

## Step 3: Make a Personal Plan

Whether you decide to evacuate or ride out a hurricane in your home, you must get your family together and formulate some kind of plan. There just simply won't be time to think of everything when a storm gets close. You will be surprised at the number of issues that need to be discussed once you sit down and start listing them.

### If you are going to evacuate:

- Where will you go?
- Will you be using a local shelter?
- Where is the shelter located?
- What route will you drive to get there?
- How long will it take you to pick up everyone?
- What will you need to bring with you?
- How will you care for your pets?
- What property security needs to be done?
- Will you need to notify other family members where you will be?

### If you are going to stay:

- Do you have shutters for all windows and openings?
- How long will it take you to put up shutters or boards?
- Is rising water an issue in your home?
- How will you cope with any family member with special medical needs?
- What special supplies and food will you need to have on hand?
- Do you want to have any special equipment available for after the storm?

- Do you have a safe place for important documents?
- Should you notify any out-of-area relatives that you are staying?
- Are you prepared to live without utilities and normal services for as long as two weeks after a storm?

#### Step 4) Prepare Your Property in Advance

The time to begin acquiring shutters and protection for your home is now. All openings of your home need to have protection to keep the fierce winds and rain out of the building. Experience has clearly shown us that a home that does not have protected openings is at grave risk for serious damage.

Trees need to be trimmed to minimize the damage that they may cause to your home or someone else's. Locate a protected spot to park your vehicles if you do not have a garage or carport. A good location might be on the leeward side of the house away from the main wind forces. Vehicles left out in the open are often overturned. Identify loose items that are located outside, such as lawn furniture, grills, toys, lawn equipment, etc. that will need to be brought inside before a storm. These items often become deadly missiles when picked up by hurricane force winds.

Examine your home to see if hurricane straps and connectors were installed to roof trusses, rafters, and framing members. Homes that do not have such protective reinforcement are at risk to lose roofs and walls to strong hurricane winds.

#### Step 5) Store Up 14 Days of Supplies & Equipment

The experiences of Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew have taught us that we need to be prepared to live without our utilities and basic services for up to two weeks or more. Most of us are poorly prepared to do so. It is not immediately obvious what we would need for such an adventure. A useful exercise may be to try to live for one day without your utilities and begin making a list of essential items that become evident. The following list should provide a start on this step:

Food (Canned, dry, non-perishables)	Chain saw
Generator	Non-electric can opener
Baby formula	Duct and masking tape
Lighting	Ice
Water (Bottled or home-filled before the storm: 7 gallons per person)	Rolls of plastic
Camping Stove	Dry goods (tp & paper towels)
Lanterns	Wheelbarrow
Canned sodas	Toiletries
Fuel	Light sticks (cylome)
Disposable plates, cups, utensils	Flashlights
Fire Extinguisher	Battery operated clock
Diapers	Batteries
Cans, gas & oil	Butane lighters
Plastic garbage bags	Radio
Gloves & goggles	Axes, hatchets, pruners
Medicines Small tools	Clothes detergent
First Aid Supplies	Rope
Brooms & Mops	Dish detergent
	Pails & buckets
	Tubs Cleaning supplies
	Clothesline and pins

"It's instructive to remember that Noah began building the Ark before it started raining"

### **Some Final Thoughts for Employees and Employers**

- What is your organization's hurricane plan and how do you fit in?
- Will you be asked to stay at work during the hurricane?
- If you are required to stay, when will you be allowed to return home?
- If you are at home, when should you report in?
- What personal equipment or supplies do you need to bring in with you?
- Is your workplace secure from storm damage?
- What skills or talents outside of your normal job role can you bring into assistance after a hurricane?
- Will your family be able to cope with the storm aftermath in your absence?
- Do you have any recommendations for hurricane preparedness for your department?
- If your work operation is closed down for several weeks how will you handle the loss of pay? Will people at your work place be laid off if the business cannot get back in operation for an extended time?