

Public Information for Flood Response

During a Flood Period

*Information obtained from FEMA 03/08

If a flood is likely in your area, you should:

- Listen to your radio and television for information.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash Floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:

- Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home remember these evacuation tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and your vehicle can be quickly swept away.

Driving Flood Facts

The following are important points to remember when driving in flood conditions:

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups.

Public Information for Hurricane Response

Before a Hurricane

*Information obtained from FEMA 05/08

To prepare for a hurricane, you should take the following measures:

- Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Determine how and where to secure your boat.
- Consider building a safe room.

Public Information for Hurricane Response

During a Hurricane

*Information obtained from FEMA 05/08

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should:

- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks. Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Moor your boat if time permits.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

You should evacuate under the following conditions:

- If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions.
- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure—such shelters are particularly hazardous during hurricanes no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- If you live in a high-rise building—hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If you feel you are in danger.

If you are unable to evacuate, go to your safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:

- Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

Public Information for Hurricane Response

After a Hurricane (2 pages)

*Information obtained from FEMA 05/08

Returning Home

General Tips

Returning home can be both physically and mentally challenging. Above all, use caution.

Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flash light to inspect a damaged home.
Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- [Be wary of wildlife and other animals](#)
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.

Before You Enter Your Home

Walk carefully around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

Do not enter if:

- You smell gas.
- Floodwaters remain around the building.
- Your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.

Going Inside Your Home

When you go inside your home, there are certain things you should and should not do. Enter the home carefully and check for damage. Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors. The following items are other things to check inside your home:

- **Natural gas.** If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside, if you can. Call the gas company from a neighbor's residence. If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Do not smoke or use oil, gas lanterns, candles, or torches for lighting inside a damaged home until you are sure there is no leaking gas or other flammable materials present.
- **Sparks, broken or frayed wires.** Check the electrical system unless you are wet, standing in water, or unsure of your safety. If possible, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If the situation is unsafe, leave the building and call for help. Do not turn on the lights until you are sure they're safe to use. You may want to have an electrician inspect your wiring.
- **Roof, foundation, and chimney cracks.** If it looks like the building may collapse, leave immediately.
- **Appliances.** If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Then, unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have appliances checked by a professional before using them again. Also, have the electrical system checked by an electrician before turning the power back on.
- **Water and sewage systems.** If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using any water; the water could be contaminated. Pump out wells and have the water tested by authorities before drinking. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact.
- **Food and other supplies.** Throw out all food and other supplies that you suspect may have become contaminated or come in to contact with floodwater. Your basement. If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about one third of the water per day) to avoid damage. The walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged.
- **Open cabinets.** Be alert for objects that may fall.
- **Clean up household chemical spills.** Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria, or chemicals. Also clean salvageable items.
- **Call your Insurance Agent.** Take pictures of damages. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.

Public Information for Hurricane Response

Evacuation Plans

***Information obtained from FEMA 05/08**

- When community evacuations become necessary, local officials provide information to the public through the media. In some circumstances, other warning methods, such as sirens or telephone calls, also are used. Additionally, there may be circumstances under which you and your family feel threatened or endangered and you need to leave your home, school, or workplace to avoid these situations.
- The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. If the event is a weather condition, such as a hurricane that can be monitored, you might have a day or two to get ready. However, many disasters allow no time for people to gather even the most basic necessities, which is why planning ahead is essential.

Evacuation: More Common than You Realize

- Evacuations are more common than many people realize. Hundreds of times each year, transportation and industrial accidents release harmful substances, forcing thousands of people to leave their homes. Fires and floods cause evacuations even more frequently. Almost every year, people along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts evacuate in the face of approaching hurricanes.
- Ask local authorities about emergency evacuation routes and see if maps may be available with evacuation routes marked.

Evacuation Guidelines

Always:	If time permits:
Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.	Gather your disaster supplies kit.
Make transportation arrangements with friends or your local government if you do not own a car.	Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a cap.
Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.	Secure your home: -Close and lock doors and windows. -Unplug electrical equipment, such as radios and televisions, and small appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.
Gather your family and go if you are instructed to evacuate immediately.	Let others know where you are going.
Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.	
Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.	
Be alert for washed-out roads and bridges. Do not drive into flooded areas.	
Stay away from downed power lines.	