

**"Preventing the loss of life and minimizing the damage to property from hurricanes are responsibilities that are shared by all."**

The most important thing that you can do is to be informed and prepared. Disaster prevention includes both being prepared as well as reducing damages (mitigation).

Disaster Prevention should include:

- [Developing a Family Plan](#)
- [Creating a Disaster Supply Kit](#)
- [Having a Place to Go](#)
- [Securing your Home](#)
- [Having a Pet Plan](#)

One of the most important decisions you will have to make is "Should I Evacuate?" If you are asked to evacuate, you should do so without delay. But unless you live in a coastal or low-lying area, an area that floods frequently, or in manufactured housing, it is unlikely that emergency managers will ask you to evacuate. That means that it is important for you and your family to HAVE A PLAN that makes you as safe as possible in your home.

Disaster prevention includes modifying your home to strengthen it against storms so that you can be as safe as possible. It also includes having the supplies on hand to weather the storm. The suggestions provided here are only guides. You should use common sense in your disaster prevention.

- **[DEVELOP A FAMILY PLAN](#) - Your family's plan should be based on your vulnerability to the Hurricane Hazards. You should keep a written plan and share your plan with other friends or family.**

Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to [storm surge](#), [flooding](#) and [wind](#).

Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community.

Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.

Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.

Make a plan now for what to do with your [pets](#) if you need to evacuate.

Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.

Check your insurance coverage - flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.

Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a [Disaster Supply Kit](#).

Use a [NOAA weather radio](#). Remember to replace its battery every 6 months, as you do with your smoke detectors.

Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.

- **[CREATE A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT](#) - There are certain items you need to have regardless of where you ride out a hurricane. The disaster supply kit is a useful tool when you evacuate as well as making you as safe as possible in your home.**

**Water** - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days

**Food** - at least enough for 3 to 7 days

- non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices
- foods for infants or the elderly
- snack foods
- non-electric can opener
- cooking tools / fuel
- paper plates / plastic utensils

**Blankets / Pillows, etc.**

**Clothing** - seasonal / rain gear/ sturdy shoes

**First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs**

**Special Items** - for babies and the elderly

**Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture wipes**

**Flashlight / Batteries**

**Radio** - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio

**Telephones** - Fully charged cell phone with extra battery and a traditional (not cordless) telephone set

**Cash (with some small bills) and Credit Cards** - Banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods

**Keys**

**Toys, Books and Games**

**Important documents** - in a waterproof container or watertight resealable plastic bag

- insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.

**Tools** - keep a set with you during the storm

**Vehicle fuel tanks filled**

**Pet care items**

- proper identification / immunization records / medications
- ample supply of food and water
- a carrier or cage
- muzzle and leash

## Having A Place Go

**Develop a family hurricane preparedness plan before an actual storm threatens your area.** If your family hurricane preparedness plan includes evacuation to a safer location, then it is important to consider the following points:

**If ordered to evacuate, do not wait or delay your departure.**

If possible, leave before local officials issue an evacuation order for your area. Even a slight delay in starting your evacuation will result in significantly longer travel times as traffic congestion worsens.

**Select an evacuation destination that is nearest to your home, preferably in the same county, or at least minimize the distance over which you must travel in order to reach your intended shelter location.**

In choosing your destination, keep in mind that the hotels and other sheltering options in most inland metropolitan areas are likely to be filled very quickly in a large, multi-county hurricane evacuation event.

**If you decide to evacuate to another county or region, be prepared to wait in traffic.**

The large number of people in this state who must evacuate during a hurricane will probably cause massive delays and major congestion along most designated evacuation routes; the larger the storm, the greater the probability of traffic jams and extended travel times.

If possible, make arrangements to stay with the friend or relative who resides closest to your home and who will not have to evacuate. Discuss with your intended host the details of your family evacuation plan well before the beginning of the hurricane season.

**If a hotel or motel is your final intended destination during an evacuation, make reservations before you leave.**

Most hotel and motels will fill quickly once evacuations begin. The longer you wait to make reservations, even if an official evacuation order has not been issued for your area or county, the less likely you are to find hotel/motel room vacancies, especially along interstate highways and in major metropolitan areas.

**If you are unable to stay with friends or family and no hotels/motels rooms are available, then as a last resort go to a shelter.**

Remember, shelters are not designed for comfort and do not usually accept pets. Bring your [disaster supply kit](#) with you to the shelter. Find [Pet-Friendly](#) hotels and motels.

**Make sure that you fill up your car with gas, before you leave.**

- [SECURE YOUR HOME](#) - There are things that you can do to make your home more secure and able to withstand stronger storms.

## RETROFITTING YOUR HOME

The most important precaution you can take to reduce damage to your home and property is to protect the areas where wind can enter. According to recent wind technology research, it's important to strengthen the exterior of your house so wind and debris do not tear large openings in it. You can do this by protecting and reinforcing these five critical areas:

[ROOF](#) | [STRAPS](#) | [SHUTTERS](#) | [DOORS](#) | [GARAGE DOORS](#)

A great time to start securing - or retrofitting - your house is when you are making other improvements or adding an addition.

Remember: building codes reflect the lessons experts have learned from past catastrophes. Contact the local building code official to find out what requirements are necessary for your home improvement projects.

## FLOOD INSURANCE

The National Flood Insurance Program, is a pre-disaster flood mitigation and insurance protection program designed to reduce the escalating cost of disasters. The National Flood Insurance Program makes federally backed flood insurance available to residents and business owners

Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policy.

[National Flood Insurance Program](#) call

**1-888-CALL-FLOOD ext. 445, TDD# 1-800-427-5593.**

- [ONLINE VULNERABILITY INFO](#) - There are web sites that can give you information about your communities vulnerability to specific hazards. These include hurricanes as well as other weather related hazards.

[FEMA ONLINE HAZARD MAPS](#) - FEMA and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) have formed a National Partnership aimed at providing multi-hazard maps and information for U.S. residents, business owners, schools, community groups, and local governments. Visitors can create custom hazard maps, by entering a zip code and selecting from a variety of hazard types to help determine disaster risks in any community.

[NWS STORM-READY](#) - Ninety percent of all presidentially declared disasters are weather

related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$14 billion in damage. To help Americans guard against the ravages of severe weather, the National Weather Service has designed StormReady, a program aimed at arming America's communities with the communication and safety skills necessary to save lives and property. The [COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL](#) (Ex. North Carolina) is an informational aid designed to assist communities in their efforts to reduce hazard vulnerability through strategies relating to awareness, education and mitigation. This product contains a methodology that helps State and local governments determine and prioritize their locality's vulnerabilities to coastal hazards. Physical factors such as the location of critical facilities and infrastructure relative to high-risk areas, the distribution of vulnerable populations such as the elderly, poor and under-insured, significant environmental resources and the vulnerability of primary economic sectors are all included as issues for consideration.

- **PET Plan**

Contact your veterinarian or local humane society for information on preparing your pets for an emergency.

#### **BEFORE THE DISASTER**

- Make sure that your pets are current on their vaccinations. Pet shelters may require proof of vaccines.
- Have a current photograph
- Keep a collar with identification on your pet and have a leash on hand to control your pet.
- Have a properly-sized pet carrier for each animal - carriers should be large enough for the animal to stand and turn around.
- Plan your evacuation strategy and don't forget your pet! Specialized pet shelters, animal control shelters, veterinary clinics and friends and relatives out of harm's way are ALL potential refuges for your pet during a disaster.

**If you plan to shelter your pet - work it into your evacuation route planning.**