



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE:

(FROM: <https://www.stateofflorida.com/articles/hurricane-preparedness-guide/>)

Each year Hurricane Season begins on June 1st and lasts 5 months, with storms typically peaking in August and September. As with every hurricane season regardless of forecast, knowing the essentials of how to prepare could truly be a lifesaver.

HURRICANE KNOWLEDGE:

First, know your hurricane facts and understand common terms used during hurricane forecasts. Storm conditions can vary on the intensity, size and even the angle which the tropical cyclone approaches your area, so it is vital you understand what the forecaster and news reporters are telling you.

TROPICAL DEPRESSIONS are cyclones with winds of 38 mph. **TROPICAL STORMS** vary in wind speeds from 39 mph to 73 mph while **HURRICANES** have winds 74 mph or greater. Typically, the upper right quadrant of the storm (the center wrapping around the eye) is the most intense portion of the storm. The greatest threats are damaging winds, storm surge and flooding. This is in part why Hurricane Katrina was so catastrophic when bringing up to 28 foot storm surges onto the Louisiana and Mississippi coastlines.

Here are some important terms you may hear:

- **Tropical Storm Watch:** Tropical Storm conditions are **possible** in the area.
- **Hurricane Watch:** Hurricane conditions are **possible** in the area. Watches are issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of Tropical Storm force winds.
- **Tropical Storm Warning:** Tropical Storm conditions are **expected** in the area.
- **Hurricane Warning:** Hurricane conditions are **expected** in the area. Warnings are issued 36 hours in advance of Tropical Storm force winds.
- **Eye:** Clear, sometimes well defined center of the storm with calmer conditions.
- **Eye Wall:** Surrounding the eye, contains some of the most severe weather of the storm with the highest wind speeds and largest precipitation.

- **Rain Bands:** Bands coming off the cyclone that produce severe weather conditions such as heavy rain, wind and tornadoes.
- **Storm Surge:** An often underestimated and deadly result of ocean water swelling as a result of a landfalling storm, and quickly flooding coastal areas and sometimes areas further inland.

DURING A WATCH, prepare your home and evacuation plan in case a warning is issued.

DURING A WARNING, carefully follow the directions of officials, and immediately leave the area if they advise it. In the event of an ***EXTREME WIND WARNING/ADVISORY***, which means that extreme sustained winds of 115 mph or greater are expected to begin within an hour, immediately take shelter in the interior portion of a well built structure.

HURRICANE FORECASTS

Predicting a tropical cyclone's path can be challenging; there are many global and local factors that come into play. The storm's size and path can directly influence what sort of wind patterns guide, enhance, or hinder its growth, and vice versa! Forecasters have computers that take huge amounts of data and try to predict where the storm will go and usually can calculate 2-3 days out fairly accurately. This is where you hear the terms computer models and spaghetti models being used. Generally, the forecast track or path is given with the average consensus of these models. The National Hurricane Center has the most up-to-date information on tropical cyclone developments, forecasts and weather alerts, and discussions analyzing the data and more. Visit: www.nhc.noa.gov/

HURRICANE NAMES:

Hurricane names are picked randomly, then rotated and recycled every 6 years. If a Hurricane was catastrophic or severely deadly and costly (i.e. Charlie, Katrina, Irene) it is officially retired since use is not appropriate and can be confusing when naming current storms. To view the current list of tropical cyclone names visit: www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutnames.shtml

HURRICANE KITS:

It is important to create a kit of supplies that you could take with you if you are forced to evacuate. This kit will also be useful if you are able to stay in your home, but are still affected by the storm, such as through the loss of power. One common trend seen when hurricanes are approaching is a wide-spread panic. When this happens, people rush in large numbers to get all the supplies they think they need. However, if you prepare your kit ahead of time, you can alleviate a lot of the potential stress of a very chaotic situation. You should create your kit in a bag that you can easily take with you. Some recommended items to include are:

- Non-perishable food (enough to last 3 days)
- Water (enough to last 3 days)
- First-aid kit (include any prescription medications)
- Personal Hygiene items and sanitation items
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery operated radio and extra batteries
- Battery operated fans and extra batteries
- Waterproof container with cash and important documents
- Manual can opener
- Matches or lighter
- Books, magazines, games
- Special items: pet supplies or baby supplies
- Cooler and ice packs
- A plan for evacuation and a plan if family members are separated

SECURING YOUR HOME:

Know how to secure your home in the event of damaging winds, storm surge and flooding.

- Bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations and anything that is not tied down.
- Stay away from windows and doors and close all interior doors

POWER OUTAGES:

In the event a storm should leave you without power, there are a few things to consider and help you be ready and stay safe outside of your normal hurricane preparedness.

- **GAS:** Make sure your tank is full far in advance of an approaching storm. Most people wait until the last minute, rush to get extra gas for cars and generators, and subsequently gas stations can run out early.
- **ATMs:** Have extra cash on hand in the event no ATMs in your area are accessible or working.
- **CELL PHONES:** Charge your cell phone and limit use after power is out.
- **A/C:** This can be the most uncomfortable side effect of losing power during a storm. Try to prevent as much light from entering and warming the house by covering up your windows on the inside. If you have back-up or battery powered fans, don't run them unless you are in the room. Fans create a difference in perceived temperature but do not cool the room, instead they create a cooling effect by discharging heat off your skin. It is said they can actually add heat to your room when running.
- **WATER:** Fill bathtub and large containers with water for washing and flushing only.
- **FOOD:** Turn your fridge temperature down and or freeze any food or drinking water that can be frozen if you expect a power outage. Have a cooler and cooler packs ready to cool your drinks and snacks after power has been out for more than 4 hours. Please visit <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts> for a food safety guide and information on when to discard perishable food.
- **HEALTH/SAFETY:** The CDC has a great guide on how to stay safe in the event of a power outage: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/index.html>

Remember, any severe storm can be deadly and destructive. If you've survived a landfalling cyclone, you know the inconvenience and distress it can cause. One of the best tips to be prepared is knowing the cycle of a cyclone – **Approach, Arrival & Aftermath**. Prepare ahead of time and listen to the directions of officials for the approach. Secure your home, or find a safe shelter for its arrival, and know how to proceed safely during the aftermath.

Useful Links:

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

<https://www.floridadisaster.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/index.html>

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts>

<https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutnames.shtml>

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