



Houston Department of  
Health and Human Services

## HURRICANE INFORMATION SHEET

### Be Prepared – Protect Loved Ones

#### Prepare for a Hurricane

You can begin this process by talking with family members to make sure each person is well-informed on and community plans. Discuss with them on what to do if family members are not home when a warning is issued.

If you are under a hurricane watch or warning, here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the storm:

- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes and locations of emergency shelters. [Check out www.hcoem.org](http://www.hcoem.org).
- Identify potential home dangers and fix them before the hurricane strikes.
- Turn off electrical power when there is standing water in your home, fallen power lines, or before you evacuate. Turn off gas and water supplies before you evacuate. Secure any loose items in or near your home.
- Buy a fire extinguisher. Make sure your family knows where to find it and how to use it.
- Locate and store your important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, licenses, stocks, etc. in a safe place. Put them in a plastic bag that zips closed to keep them from getting wet.
- Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
- Inform local authorities about any special needs, i.e., elderly or bedridden people, or anyone with a disability.

#### Make a Disaster Supply Kit

A disaster can happen at any time. You will need a disaster supply kit if you and your family are confined to your home or need to evacuate. A disaster supply kit should include items in **five** basic areas: (1) water and food, (2) medications, personal hygiene and first aid supplies, (3) clothing and bedding, (4) emergency supplies and tools, and (5) important documents.

Make sure that your items are in easy-to-carry containers or duffle bags and stored in a handy place. Check and update your kit at least once a year. This *suggested checklist* will help you gather the basic supply items needed for you and your family, including pets for **3 -5** days.

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## **1. Three – five day supply of water and food:**

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- 9 -15 gallons of water per person or pet use.
- Non-perishable food, such as canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Powdered milk and canned juices
- High-energy snacks and comfort/stress foods
- Baby food and/ or prepared formula
- Food for individuals with special diet needs
- Food for Pets
- Pet food and water bowls
- Pedialyte (to restore hydration if needed)
- Non-breakable cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Manual can opener

## **2. Medications, personal hygiene and first aid supplies:**

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- A week's supply of each person's prescription medication
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication, antacid and laxative
- Extra prescription contact lenses, glasses, or sunglasses
- Hygiene items - shampoo, toothpastes, toothbrushes, denture items, soap, deodorant, sanitary napkins, unscented household bleach, comb and brush, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, liquid detergent and disposable "baby wipes" for the whole family to use in case bathing facilities are not available.
- Baby diapers, bottles, pacifiers and other supplies
- Pet medication (a week's supply) and medical record stored in a waterproof container

### **Recommended First Aid Supplies**

- Band-Aids in assorted sizes

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- ❑ Sterile gauze pads in assorted sizes
- ❑ Clean gloves (at least 2 pairs)
- ❑ Antiseptic and antibiotic ointment
- ❑ Petroleum jelly
- ❑ Assorted sizes of safety pins
- ❑ Scissors, tweezers, and thermometer
- ❑ Sunscreen
- ❑ Insect repellent

### **3. Clothing and bedding supplies:**

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- ❑ 3 – 5 day change of clothing and footwear per person
- ❑ Blankets or sleeping bags and pillows
- ❑ Rain gear
- ❑ Entertainment – include games and books, favorite dolls and stuffed animals for small children

### **4. Emergency Supplies and Tools:**

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- ❑ Cash or traveler's checks, coins
- ❑ Map of the area for locating shelters, other places you could go and their telephone numbers
- ❑ Car items: flares, booster cables, tools, and etc.
- ❑ An extra set of keys for cars and any other properties owned
- ❑ Battery-powered radio flashlight and extra batteries
- ❑ Fire extinguisher

- ❑ Pliers and shut-off wrench to turn off household water and/or gas
- ❑ Plastic sheeting, storage containers and bucket with tight lid
- ❑ Plastic trash bags and ties for sanitation
- ❑ Tape (duct, masking)
- ❑ Candles and Matches in a waterproof container
- ❑ Paper, pencil
- ❑ Aluminum foil

**5. Important documents should be kept are kept in a secured waterproof, portable container:**

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- ❑ Insurance policies
- ❑ Contracts and deeds
- ❑ Copies of birth certificates, drivers' license, and work ID card
- ❑ Stocks and bonds
- ❑ Social Security cards and passports
- ❑ Immunization records and prescriptions
- ❑ Bank account numbers
- ❑ Credit card account numbers and company names and telephone numbers
- ❑ Inventory of valuable household goods ( include photos)
- ❑ Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates) and wills
- ❑ Current photographs of family members

## **Develop an emergency communication plan**

In case family members are separated from one another during a hurricane (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.

Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "*family contact*." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

## **Prepare to Evacuate**

The National Weather Service will issue a hurricane watch when there is a threat to coastal areas of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours. When a hurricane watch is issued, you should:

- Fill your vehicle's gas tank.
- If no vehicle is available, make arrangements with friends or family for transportation.
- Fill your clean water containers.
- Review your emergency plans and supplies, checking to see if any items are missing.
- Listen to the radio or television for weather updates.
- Listen for disaster sirens and warning signals.
- Prepare your emergency disaster kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.
- Secure any items outside which may damage property in a storm, such as bicycles, grills, propane tanks, etc.
- Cover windows and doors with plywood or boards or place large strips of masking tape or adhesive tape on the windows to reduce the risk of breakage and flying glass.
- Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters may not accept animals.
- Place vehicles under cover, if at all possible.
- Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.

## **If You ARE Ordered to Evacuate**

Because of the destructive power of a hurricane, you should never ignore an evacuation order. Emergency authorities may direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the storm. If a hurricane warning is issued for your area or you are directed by local authorities to evacuate the area:

- Take only important items with you.
- If possible, take your pets.
- If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity and water.

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- Disconnect appliances to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.
- Make sure your vehicle's emergency disaster supply kit is ready.
- Follow the designated evacuation routes – others may be blocked – and expect heavy traffic.
- Listen to the radio for emergency updates.
- Notify your family or any other contact not close to hurricane that you are evacuating. Remember to leave a number where you can be reached.

### **If You Are NOT Ordered to Evacuate**

The great majority of injuries during a hurricane are cuts caused by flying glass or trash. Other injuries include wounds from exposed nails, metal, or glass and bone fractures. The following are recommendations to get through the storm in the safest possible manner:

- Monitor the radio or television for weather conditions, if possible.
- Stay indoors until the authorities declare the storm is over.
- Do not go outside, even if the weather appears to have calmed – the calm “eye” of the storm can pass quickly, leaving you outside when strong winds resume.
- Stay away from all windows and exterior doors. Seek shelter in a bathroom or basement. Bathtubs can provide some shelter if you cover yourself with plywood or other materials.
- Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or to a neighbor's home if your home is damaged, or if you are instructed to do so by emergency personnel.
- If you should lose electrical power, eat food that will go bad first.

### **After A Hurricane**

If you evacuated your home or stayed in your home during a hurricane, you should never go outside till local authorities have confirmed that the hurricane has passed. Listen to your local radio stations for information. When driving back home avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges. People should take the following measures when returning and inspecting their home:

- Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the Power Company, police or fire department.
- Enter your home with caution
- Beware of snakes, insects and animals driven to higher ground by flood waters.
- Open windows and door to ventilate and dry your home.
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage.
- Take pictures of the damage, to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.

Source of Information:

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.fema.org](http://www.fema.org)

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