

A Comprehensive Guide to Hurricane Preparedness in Fort Lauderdale



Hurricane Preparedness Guide

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1. Understanding Hurricanes



What is a Hurricane?

A hurricane, also known as a tropical cyclone, is a powerful storm system characterized by a low-pressure center, spiraling winds, and intense rainfall. These storms form over warm ocean waters when clusters of thunderstorms pull in moist air that rises and rotates due to the Coriolis effect. As this air cools and condenses, it releases heat - the fuel that intensifies the storm.

The Lifecycle of a Hurricane:

1. Tropical Disturbance - A cluster of thunderstorms develops over warm seas.
2. Tropical Depression - Winds begin to organize and rotate.
3. Tropical Storm - Sustained winds reach 39-73 mph.
4. Hurricane - Winds exceed 74 mph, and the storm gains a defined eye.

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale:

Category 1 (74-95 mph): Minimal damage to structures, slight coastal flooding.

Examples: Hurricane Dolly (2008), Hurricane Sandy (2012)

Category 2 (96-110 mph): Roof and window damage, uprooted trees, power loss.

Examples: Hurricane Frances (2004), Hurricane Ike (2008)

Category 3 (111-129 mph): Devastating damage, structural issues, storm surge.

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Examples: Hurricane Katrina (2005), Hurricane Maria (2017)

Category 4 (130-156 mph): Catastrophic property damage, long-term outages.

Examples: Hurricane Harvey (2017), Hurricane Irma (2017)

Category 5 (157+ mph): Complete structural failure, massive evacuations.

Examples: Hurricane Andrew (1992), Hurricane Michael (2018)

Watches vs. Warnings: Know the Difference

Hurricane Watch: Issued 48 hours in advance; conditions are possible. Begin preparing and stay alert.

Hurricane Warning: Issued 36 hours in advance; conditions are expected. Complete all preparations and follow evacuation orders if necessary.

Local Tip: Know your evacuation zone. Broward County has designated hurricane evacuation zones, and staying informed about your location can be the difference between safety and risk.

2. Preparing Your Home



Preparing Your Home

Pre-Season Preparation

Hurricane readiness starts before the first storm appears on the radar. Begin with a full home inspection, paying close attention to the roof, windows, doors, foundation, and drainage systems. Repair any signs of wear and clear out debris to ensure proper water flow.

Reinforcing Windows and Doors

These are your home's most vulnerable access points during high winds. Install impact-resistant options or secure existing ones with storm shutters or plywood. Garage doors should also be reinforced with braces or retrofit kits.

Roof Integrity

Inspect for loose shingles and potential leaks. Install hurricane straps or clips to anchor the roof structure to the walls, minimizing the chance of wind uplift.

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Storm Shutters

Invest in quality shutters-roll-down, accordion, or panel varieties-tailored to your home's size and budget. Test and maintain them regularly.

Safety Tip:

SourceOne's 3R Program (Ready. React. Restore.) gives homeowners a proactive disaster recovery plan, including baseline documentation and priority service when disaster strikes.

Securing Outdoor Areas

Bring in loose objects like furniture, grills, and garbage bins. Anchor larger structures like sheds and playsets to prevent them from becoming airborne.

Safe Room Setup

Choose a windowless room on the lowest floor-preferably a bathroom or interior closet. Store emergency supplies, sleeping gear, and a hand-crank radio here. Ensure all household members can access it quickly.

Evacuation Planning

Map out multiple evacuation routes. Identify nearby shelters and make arrangements for pets, elderly family members, and those with special needs. Practice your plan annually.

Essential Supplies

- 1 gallon of water per person per day (for 3 days)
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- 7-day supply of medications
- First aid kit with bandages, antiseptic, and pain relievers
- Flashlights, batteries, and a battery-powered radio
- Personal hygiene products
- Waterproof container with copies of IDs, insurance, and medical records

Tools & Backup Power

- Tool kit and multi-purpose tool
- Fire extinguisher rated for multiple types
- Duct tape, plastic sheeting, and a whistle
- Generator (stored outside) with extra fuel
- Battery packs and solar chargers

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With proper preparation, you reduce risk, protect your property, and safeguard your family. Now is always the right time to prepare.

3. Creating a Family Emergency Plan



Creating a Family Emergency Plan

Communication is essential during an emergency. Create a strategy that ensures everyone in your household can receive updates, stay informed, and reconnect if separated.

Communication Plan:

- Compile a list of emergency contacts: family, friends, neighbors, and local authorities.
- Share this list digitally and in print with every household member.
- Text messaging is often more reliable than phone calls during high-traffic emergencies.

Meeting Points:

- Choose two: one near your home (like a neighbor's house) and another outside your neighborhood (like a library or family member's home).
- Practice reaching these locations to ensure everyone understands the routes.

Emergency Contacts List:

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- Police, fire department, emergency management office
- Family doctors, pharmacies, and local hospitals
- Utility companies (electric, gas, water, and internet)
- Out-of-town contacts who can help coordinate from a safe location

Special Considerations:

Pets:

- Pack a pet emergency kit: food, water, leash, medications, and ID tags
- Research pet-friendly shelters before hurricane season begins

Elderly Family Members:

- Prepare an ample supply of medication and backup equipment
- Document medical needs and mobility requirements in writing

Individuals with Special Needs:

- Include medical devices, prescriptions, and a written care plan in your emergency kit
- Identify a support network and alert local services about special assistance requirements

Preparation brings peace of mind. A well-structured emergency plan ensures that no matter how chaotic the storm, your family has a clear path to safety and support.

4. Financial Preparedness



Financial Preparedness

When it comes to hurricane readiness, financial stability can drastically influence your ability to recover quickly and confidently.

Reviewing Insurance Policies:

- Ensure your homeowners policy covers structural damage and personal belongings.
- Standard policies often exclude flood damage-purchase separate flood insurance through NFIP or private carriers.
- Confirm windstorm coverage, which may require an additional policy in hurricane-prone areas.
- Review policy limits and deductibles to ensure you can afford repairs or rebuilding costs. Be mindful of special hurricane deductibles.

Documenting Valuable Possessions:

- Create a detailed home inventory including descriptions, values, and serial numbers.
- Take room-by-room photos or videos (especially closets, attics, and basements).

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- Save receipts, appraisals, and proof of purchase documents in waterproof or cloud storage.

Emergency Funds & Financial Documents:

- Maintain a week's worth of emergency cash on hand-banks and ATMs may be offline.
- Build a savings cushion for 3-6 months of expenses to cover post-storm income loss.
- Secure key records in a waterproof container:
 - IDs: Driver's license, Social Security cards, passports
 - Banking: Account numbers, recent statements, contact info
 - Insurance: All active policies with claim contact details
 - Property: Titles, deeds, and mortgage records
 - Medical: Insurance cards and medical histories for each family member

Planning ahead financially ensures you're not only protected, but positioned to bounce back quickly after a storm. Peace of mind starts with preparation.

5. During the Hurricane



During the Hurricane

When a hurricane strikes, staying calm, informed, and protected is vital to ensure the safety of you and your loved ones.

Monitoring Weather Updates:

- Tune into local news stations via TV or radio for real-time storm tracking and safety updates.
- Use trusted weather apps like NOAA Weather Radar and The Weather Channel to receive alerts.
- Sign up for local emergency alert systems to stay updated on evacuation notices and shelter locations.

Understanding Emergency Alerts:

- Hurricane Watch: Issued 48 hours before potential storm conditions. Begin prepping your home.
- Hurricane Warning: Issued within 36 hours of expected conditions. Finish preparations immediately.
- Evacuation Order: If instructed by local authorities, leave immediately. Delay can be dangerous.

Staying Safe Indoors:

Designate a Safe Room:

- Choose a windowless interior room on the lowest floor (bathroom or closet preferred).

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- Stock it with your emergency kit: food, water, flashlight, radio, blankets, and first aid supplies.

Avoid Windows and Doors:

- Stay away from windows, glass doors, and exterior walls to avoid injury from flying debris.
- If glass breaks, move to a more secure space in your home immediately.

Secure Interior Doors:

- Close all interior doors to compartmentalize wind force.
- Reinforce weak points with heavy furniture if necessary.

Power Outages:

Using Generators Safely:

- Place generators outdoors, at least 20 feet from any doors or windows.
- Keep fuel on hand in approved containers. Operate carefully to avoid electrical hazards.
- Maintain your generator regularly to ensure it functions when needed.

Staying Cool and Hydrated:

- Drink plenty of water and avoid dehydrating drinks like alcohol and caffeine.
- Use battery-powered fans or wet cloths to stay cool. Dress in breathable clothing.
- If safe, allow for airflow by opening windows slightly.

Conserving Battery Power:

- Limit use of electronics to conserve energy.
- Keep power banks and solar chargers ready.
- Enable power-saving modes on all devices.

By staying informed and taking these precautions, you can remain safe and resilient-even if the storm lasts longer than expected or the power goes out.

6. After the Hurricane



After the Hurricane

Once the storm passes, your priority shifts to safety, documentation, and beginning the path to recovery.

Assessing Property Damage:

Conducting a Safe Inspection:

- Wear protective clothing: gloves, sturdy boots, long sleeves.
- Watch for sharp debris, downed power lines, and unstable structures.
- Check roof, walls, and foundation for cracks or broken elements.
- Look inside for water intrusion, ceiling stains, mold, and warped flooring.
- Inspect utilities-if anything seems off, shut it down and contact the utility company.

Documenting for Insurance:

- Take detailed photos and videos of all damage, including wide shots and close-ups.
- Write down dates, descriptions, and any contributing circumstances.
- Keep receipts from temporary repairs and gather quotes from licensed professionals.

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Contacting Your Insurance:

- Have your policy information handy when calling.
- Submit a full damage report and your photo evidence.
- Join the adjuster during the inspection to ensure nothing is missed.

Staying Safe After the Storm:

- Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters-they may contain hazards or be electrically charged.
- Report downed power lines and avoid damaged buildings.

Using Equipment Safely:

- Operate generators outdoors and far from windows or enclosed spaces.
- Use power tools cautiously; wear gloves, goggles, and boots.
- Don't use electrical equipment in damp or flooded areas.

Cleanup and Repair:

Removing Debris:

- Sort debris into piles: vegetation, construction, and hazardous waste.
- Follow local guidelines for pick-up or drop-off.
- Don't go it alone-ask for help with large or dangerous cleanup jobs.

Addressing Mold & Water Damage:

- Dry affected areas with fans and dehumidifiers as soon as possible.
- Use protective gear and cleaning solutions to stop mold growth.
- For severe cases, hire licensed professionals like SourceOne to ensure thorough remediation.

Hiring Contractors:

- Check licenses, insurance, and BBB complaints.
- Get multiple written estimates detailing scope, materials, and costs.
- Use contracts and avoid large cash payments upfront.

Recovering from a hurricane takes time, but by staying organized and cautious, you can begin rebuilding safely-with trusted support behind you.

7. Community Resources and Support



Community Resources and Support

After a hurricane, local organizations and public services play a key role in restoring stability. Knowing where to turn for help can make a tremendous difference.

Emergency Contacts & Services:

- Emergency Management Agencies provide updates on shelter locations and available resources.
- Police and Fire Departments respond to urgent threats and rescue situations.
- Utility Companies can assist with power outages, gas leaks, or water issues.
- Medical Facilities remain open for emergencies; locate your nearest hospital or urgent care center.

Community Hotlines & Information Centers:

- Access up-to-date relief details including food and water distribution points.
- Local government and non-profits set up information hubs after major storms.

Finding Local Shelters:

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- The American Red Cross lists active shelters through their website or mobile app.
- Local emergency management offices also provide shelter listings, including those that accommodate pets.

Accessing Relief Centers:

- Centers distribute food, bottled water, hygiene products, and clothing.
- Many provide basic medical care or assistance for injuries.
- Counseling services are available to support emotional and psychological well-being.

Government and Non-Profit Assistance:

- FEMA offers disaster assistance to homeowners, renters, and businesses. Apply online or by phone.
- SBA provides low-interest disaster loans for recovery and rebuilding.
- Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) may be available to those who've lost work due to the storm.

Key Non-Profit Organizations:

- American Red Cross: Emergency shelters, food, and medical assistance.
- Salvation Army: Shelter, hot meals, and basic financial aid.
- United Way: Connects individuals with support networks and local services.
- Local Churches & Community Groups: Provide meals, volunteer services, and support for rebuilding.

Volunteering and Neighborly Support:

- Join organized relief teams or neighborhood cleanup crews.
- National groups like Habitat for Humanity deploy assistance in hard-hit areas.
- Check on elderly neighbors, the disabled, and those living alone. Offer transport, food, or help with debris removal.
- Share your extra supplies with those in need and create or join local resource-sharing networks.

A strong community response accelerates recovery for everyone-whether it's lending a hand, offering information, or showing up when others need it most.

Broward County Emergency Contact Information

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL 911

Emergency Contacts

BROWARD COUNTY:

Sheriff (Non Emergency):	(954) 831-8901
Fire/EMS (Non Emergency):	(954) 764-4357
Hurricane Hotline:	(954) 831-4000
Emergency Management:	(954) 831-9000
Special Needs Shelter Registration:	(954) 831-3902
Pet Friendly Hurricane Shelter:	(954) 989-3977

United Way



Main Number

211

Salvation Army



Main Number

(800) 728-7825

8. Recap & Final Thoughts



Recap of Key Points

Hurricane Preparedness Summary:

- Understand Hurricanes: Know how they form, how they're categorized, and what their impacts mean for your area.
- Prepare Your Home: Inspect and reinforce your property, secure windows and roofs, stock supplies, and prepare for power loss.
- Emergency Planning: Create a family plan with communication methods, evacuation routes, and special needs accommodations.
- Financial Prep: Secure insurance coverage, document valuables, and maintain an emergency fund.
- During the Storm: Stay updated, follow alerts, and shelter in place safely.
- After the Storm: Document damage, contact your insurer, avoid hazards, and begin safe cleanup and

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repairs.

- Community Resources: Utilize shelters, local services, government assistance, and volunteer networks.

Ongoing Preparedness:

- Keep emergency kits and plans current. Review annually.
- Engage with your local community and attend preparedness events.
- Stay informed through trusted weather and emergency alert channels.

Taking Proactive Steps:

- Build confidence through preparation. Reduce the chaos of last-minute planning.
- Bring peace of mind knowing your loved ones are protected.
- Community readiness begins with individual responsibility.

Staying Vigilant:

- Practice emergency drills with your household.
- Maintain open lines of communication with neighbors.
- Monitor forecasts and respond to warnings seriously.

Final Thoughts:

In South Florida, hurricane preparedness is a way of life. By staying alert, informed, and ready year-round, you can reduce the risks these storms pose. Plan ahead and know that SourceOne Property Restoration Group is here when you need us most.

Be Storm-Ready with the 3R Program:

Don't wait until disaster strikes-sign up for our 3R Program today:

- Custom Property Floorplans & 360° Photos
- Priority Emergency Response
- Baseline Air Quality Testing
- Preferred Pricing on Restoration Services

Join the SourceOne 3R Program today and be prepared to Ready. React. Restore.

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