



# Weather Safety: Hurricanes

## Safety and Preparedness Fact Sheet

### Before the Hurricane Season

- ▶ Determine safe evacuation routes inland.
- ▶ Learn location of official shelters.
- ▶ Make emergency plans for pets.
- ▶ Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators and battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards and cell phones.
- ▶ Buy food that will keep and store drinking water.
- ▶ Buy plywood or other material to protect your home.
- ▶ Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- ▶ Trim trees and shrubbery.
- ▶ Decide where to move your boat in an emergency.
- ▶ Review your insurance policy.

### During the Storm

#### When in a Watch area...

- ▶ Listen frequently to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for bulletins of a storm's progress.
- ▶ Fuel and service your vehicles.
- ▶ Inspect and secure mobile home tie-downs.
- ▶ Board up windows in case the storm moves quickly and you have to evacuate.
- ▶ Stock up on batteries, food that will keep, first aid supplies, drinking water and medications.
- ▶ Store lawn furniture and other loose, light-weight objects, such as garbage cans and garden tools.
- ▶ Have cash on hand in case power goes out and ATMs don't work.

#### Plan to evacuate if you...

- ▶ Live in a mobile or manufactured home. They are unsafe in high winds no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- ▶ Live on the coastline, an offshore island or near a river or flood plain. In addition to wind, flooding from storm surge waves is a major killer.
- ▶ Live in a high-rise. Hurricane winds can knock out electricity to elevators, break windows and more.

#### When in a Warning area...

- ▶ Closely monitor radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for official bulletins.
- ▶ Close storm shutters.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Hurricane Watch:** Hurricane conditions are *possible* in the specified area of the watch, usually within 36 hours.

**Hurricane Warning:** Hurricane conditions are *expected* in the specified area of the warning, usually within 24 hours.

**Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings:** Take these alerts seriously. Although Tropical Storms have lower wind speeds than hurricanes, they often bring life-threatening flooding and dangerous winds. Take precautions!

- ▶ Follow instructions issued by local officials. **Leave immediately if ordered!**
- ▶ If evacuating, leave as soon as possible. Stay with friends or relatives, at a low-rise inland motel or at a designated public shelter outside the flood zone.
- ▶ DO NOT stay in a mobile or manufactured home.
- ▶ Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
- ▶ Take pets with you if possible, but remember, most public shelters do not allow pets other than those used by the handicapped. Identify pet-friendly motels along your evacuation route.

#### If Staying in a Home...

- ▶ Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and keep closed.
- ▶ Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- ▶ Turn off propane tanks.
- ▶ Unplug small appliances.
- ▶ Fill bathtub and large containers with water in case tap water is unavailable. Use water in bathtubs for cleaning and flushing only. Do NOT drink it.

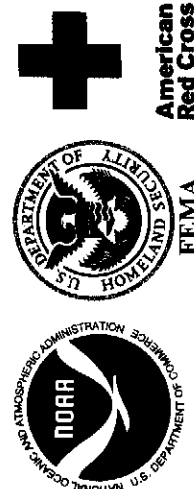
#### If Winds Become Strong...

- ▶ Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway.
- ▶ Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.

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## Tips for Staying Safe **Before**, **During** and **After** a Hurricane!



- ▶ If you are in a two story house, go to an interior 1st floor room.
- ▶ If you are in a multi-story building and away from water, go to the 1st or 2nd floor and stay in the halls or other interior rooms away from windows.
- ▶ Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object.

### Be Alert For...

- ▶ Tornadoes. They are often spawned by hurricanes.
- ▶ The calm "eye" of the storm. It may seem like the storm is over but after the eye passes, the winds will change direction and quickly return to hurricane force.
- ▶ Storm surge flooding. These high waves can be more deadly than hurricane winds. Leave the coast and stay away from low lying areas, creeks, streams and other inland waterways.

### After the Storm

- ▶ Keep listening to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio.
- ▶ Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- ▶ Watch for closed roads. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, **Turn Around Don't Drown!**<sup>TM</sup>
- ▶ Avoid weakened bridges and washed out roads.
- ▶ Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from power lines.
- ▶ Once home, check gas, water and electrical lines and appliances for damage.
- ▶ Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Never use candles and other open flames indoors.
- ▶ Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until officials say it is safe.
- ▶ If using a generator, avoid electrocution by following manufacturers instructions and standard electric code.

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### What to Bring to the Shelter

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • First aid kit                               | • Flashlights                                     |
| • Medicine, prescriptions                     | • Extra batteries                                 |
| • Baby food and diapers                       | • A blanket or sleeping bag for each person       |
| • Games, books, music players with headphones | • Identification                                  |
| • Toiletries                                  | • Copies of key papers such as insurance policies |
| • Battery-powered radio and cell phone        | • Cash, credit card                               |

**REMINDER: If you are told to leave, do so immediately!**

NWS hurricane links, forecasts, assessments:

<http://www.weather.gov/os/hurricane>

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards:

<http://www.weather.gov/nwr>

National Hurricane Center:

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

Central Pacific Hurricane Center:

<http://weather.gov/cphc>

NOAA Hurricane Website

<http://hurricanes.noaa.gov/>

American Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org>

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

<http://www.fema.gov>

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