

PREPAREDNESS TIPS – AFTER THE STORM

IN ADDITION TO ALL THE TIPS IN THE PREVIOUS LISTS,
YOU SHOULD OBSERVE THESE ADDITIONAL DISASTER
AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIPS

RETURNING AFTER EVACUATION:

- Do not return home until authorities announce that it is safe to do so
- Talk to neighbors who have remained about getting information about the condition of your home and neighborhood
- Avoid driving until roads are open – if you must drive home, be aware that traffic signals may not be working and use extra caution
- Be alert for power lines and other utility lines that are down – stay away from them – Do NOT touch
- Do not drive through flood waters
- Avoid sight-seeing; you could be mistaken for a looter
- Return during the daytime whenever possible
- Notify family members outside of area when you have arrived
- Check outside of home, roof, walls, chimney, etc. and see if it all appears safe
- Open closets and cupboards carefully and watch for falling objects
- Decide if it is possible to salvage/repair your home
- Check operation of septic system if you have one
- Assume all stairs, floors, and roofs are unsafe until inspected
- Avoid turning on power if there is flood water present
- Make sure electrical outlets and appliances are free of water before using them
- Always ask for identification before allowing anyone to enter your residence
- Use professional licensed inspectors for electrical, structural portions of buildings, gas lines, fallen trees, and plumbing
- Beware of scam artists representing themselves as professional repairmen

AT HOME:

- Make sure your stove and cooktop are turned off – when electricity returns, if stovetops and ovens heat up without your knowledge, a fire can start
- Turn off sensitive electrical appliances, TVs, computers, etc. that may be affected by power surges
- When resetting circuit breakers, wear dry, rubber-soled shoes and stand on something dry such as a dry wood board
- Use only one (1) hand when touching circuit breaker
- If breakers do not reset, consult a licensed electrician
- If, after resetting breakers, any appliances spark or emit smoke, turn off electrical system and call a licensed electrician
- Do not overload portable generators – read instructions carefully
- Use an inexpensive power inverter that you can plug into your car cigarette lighter to create enough house electricity to power light duty appliances such as a fan or battery charger

- Be careful of snakes, poisonous insects, and other wildlife that may be dislocated by the storm
- Always ask for identification before allowing anyone to enter your residence
- Use professional licensed inspectors for electrical, structural portions of buildings, gas lines, fallen trees, and plumbing
- Beware of scam artists representing themselves as professional repairmen
- Prevent mold by sanitizing personal property, clothes, furniture, shelves that hold food and clothes, areas where children play
- Steam clean carpeting and upholstered furniture if necessary
- Use bleach with water (one cup to five gallons of water) and other disinfectants to neutralize bacteria
- Steam clean carpeting and upholstered furniture if necessary
- Use bleach with water (one cup to five gallons of water) and other disinfectants to neutralize bacteria
- Use camera or video camera to record pictures of all damage
- Hang mosquito netting around bed – if you have no air and open window at night, you will need it
- Keep doors and windows closed after storm to keep out damp humid air

FOOD SAFETY:

- Check for food spoilage
- Throw out any food that has been in the refrigerator without refrigeration – food without refrigeration can spoil in a few hours
- Toss out any food that may have come in contact with flood waters
- Partially frozen food may be refrozen if ice crystals are still present
- Discard any food that has been at temperatures over 40 degrees for more than two (2) hours
- Check all food before use including canned goods and dry food in your pantry before use – hot humid air can cause mold to appear quickly
- Do not drink tap water until told to do so
- Drink bottled water
- Use jug cooler with spout to avoid opening cooler frequently
- Wash hands frequently especially before eating
- Cook with neighbors to conserve gas or charcoal
- Coffee and frozen pizza can be made on a BBQ grill as well as many other foods
- If you lose power and, when you return home after evacuation, your refrigerator has a lingering bad odor, clean it thoroughly and then try placing several saucers of cat litter on each shelf and don't open door for several days. Also, you could try putting couple of old knee-high socks filled with fresh ground coffee on shelves and leaving door closed for several days. Then wipe inside out completely, dry before using

PREVENTING INJURY:

- Do not walk outside in water or drive through moving water or flooded roads
- Avoid power lines and open manholes
- Wear protective clothing – hard-sole shoes, long sleeves and pants
- Use leather or other heavy-duty work gloves to avoid cuts from sharp objects
- Avoid back injuries from lifting and handling of debris or furniture
- Use team lifting of at least two (2) people for anything over 50 pounds
- Never assume water-damaged objects are safe to move
- Avoid use of candles, torches and gas lanterns indoors – fire and explosions are real possibilities
- Prepare in case of fires – you may encounter delayed emergency response, interrupted communications, inoperable water supplies, damaged fire protection systems
- Have two (2) fire extinguishers available at cleanup jobs
- Don't walk outside barefoot
- Wear a hat to protect you from sunburn while doing repairs and clearing debris after storm
- Pace yourself when clearing debris and doing repairs since you may not be used to physical labor and heat outdoors
- Place reflective tape on large items and debris that may be hard to see in the dark
- Wear rubber boots during cleanup if possible
- Use extreme care around hazardous chemicals that may now pose a threat such as car batteries that have been under water or chemicals in a garage that may have been in flood waters
- Be sure to follow all instructions if you use a generator

ANIMALS:

- Keep pets on leashes when outdoors until they become readjusted to home.
- Glow-in-the-dark lightstick can be placed on pet's collar when outside after dark to do its business
- Contact animal control agency if pet cannot be found – have identification and picture available
- Beware of wild animals and poisonous snakes that may be dislocated because of the storm – rats, raccoons, snakes, etc.
- Use care around stray and domesticated animals
- Be aware of increase in insects and take appropriate actions

MENTAL HEALTH:

- Stress is natural after hurricane
- Take care of yourself and your family members
- Take time to comfort and reassure children
- Take a break
- Anticipate the future and think positively

INSURANCE AND OTHER AID:

- Contact insurance company or agent to file claim
- Use camera or video camera to document any damage before cleanup and repairs begin
- Make any temporary repairs to prevent further damage to property
- Begin cleanup and debris removal process
- Don't wait for insurance adjusters to show up to make temporary repairs or begin cleanup and debris removal process
- Have home ownership and mortgage documents available
- Be aware that you have two deductibles, one of which is for hurricane – up to 5% of home's insured value
- Subsequent hurricanes during the same hurricane season may have additional deductibles
- Keep all damaged items to provide proof of loss and have list of damaged and lost items available to give to company representative
- Give insurance company multiple contact phone numbers for you in case your phone is not in service
- Get loss statement from the insurance adjuster
- Keep all invoices, estimates, and receipts
- Be aware of what other sources of aid are available to you – FEMA, charitable organizations, etc.
- If you have a claim, file it promptly

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Many companies will allow hurricane victims limited temporary relief from mortgage payments or other bills during recovery period – check with your
- creditors to get more information
- Based on your experiences, plan for next hurricane – replenish supplies, prepare your home, and update your family emergency preparedness plan