

# PREPAREDNESS TIPS – BEFORE THE STORM

## FOR YOUR FAMILY:

- Have family disaster plan and communication plan ready and updated – be sure all family members know what the plans are
- Place pictures, photographs, and other valuables in plastic bags to keep them dry in case water comes in and starts running down the walls, etc.
- Have a plug-in phone to use since cordless phones will not work without electricity
- Have a list of emergency contact numbers for your local insurance agent – call to be sure it is a valid number
- Do all dirty laundry before storm strikes in case you do not have water and electricity during or after the storm
- Pack your freezer and refrigerator with bottled water and juices not only to give you drinks for a couple of days but also to help your refrigerator and freezer stay colder longer
- Keep several larger plastic storage bins available that can be filled with extra water
- Have extra tank available to use for your gas grill or extra coals if you use a coal grill since your grill can be used as a stove if you are without electricity – keep aluminum foil and throw-away aluminum pans in your home to use on grill for cooking
- Plan evacuation route well in advance
- Keep your important papers in a sealed plastic case or bag to keep them protected and ready if you need to evacuate
- Begin making and storing ice
- Have several coolers available for food and drinks
- Use battery-operated lights instead of candles for safety
- Keep some cash, small bills in home since ATMs won't work if there is no electricity – keep cash in plastic case or bag with your important papers
- Plan ahead what type of meals you can serve if you have no power and shop in advance – see disaster supply list
- Have a manual can opener
- Tub can be filled with water – you can disinfect it with Clorox first and be sure to rinse well
- Use household silicone glue and sealer to seal tub's drain before filling – wait for it to dry before filling – also seal the overflow opening under the stopper lever – Sealer can be removed after storm – Also, you can replace the stopper with an old-fashioned rubber stopper from the hardware store but be sure to get one the correct size
- Consider a GPS cell phone as it may work better
- Prepare as though you were going on a camping trip deep into the woods
- Have a battery-operated TV
- Keep several large tarps available in case you need them
- Make sure cameras and video cameras have fresh batteries and film
- Refill prescriptions and keep them in plastic containers

- Have books and other reading material available to pass the time
- Keep first aid supplies on hand – emergency services may not be available
- Park car directly against garage door to help secure it
- Have inverter to turn battery power into household current
- Plan ahead to cook with neighbors so one grill can be used to save gas or charcoal
- Charge cell phone
- Take out your trash long before storm hits so it can be picked up before storm and you won't be stuck with it in your home or garage during hurricane
- Clean home and bathe pets before storm hits
- Keep games, playing cards, coloring books and crayons together so you and kids have something to do – keep favorite music on tapes to play in battery-operated tape player – have supply of crossword puzzle books, find-a-work books, etc.
- Back up computer to disks
- Check with your elderly or disabled neighbors to see if they need help preparing
- Change generator oil if you ran generator during previous hurricane
- Discard items like Popsicles which will defrost quickly with no power and could have strong odor which will permeate home – toss if you could lose power
- In case of evacuation, know in advance what you consider valuable and would want to take with you out of the house
- If you keep food in your emergency supply kit, be sure to throw away old and out-dated food and replace with fresh
- Know who your neighbors are – write down names of each family (and go ask if you don't know), address, phone, cell, etc. – distribute to each family
- Talk with your neighbors and see who has what supplies in case someone needs help
- Buy inexpensive plastic food containers, fill them with water, and freeze to make blocks of ice – be sure not to fill all the way to allow for expansion – square ones are better than round ones since they pack better
- If you have a large generator, consider getting smaller one also just to use for refrigerator/freezer or lights – uses less fuel
- If there is any possibility you will have to evacuate, at least try to pack car with bedding and clothing in advance so you won't have to do so at last minute
- Wash all dishes before storm hits
- Have supply of cleaning supplies for after-storm cleanup
- Make sure your smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector have fresh batteries and have fire extinguisher
- Have disaster supply kits for home, car, and office
- Place reflective tape on large items you may not be able to see in the dark
- Use permanent marker when labeling supplies
- Agree on meeting place in case you get separated during the storm
- Consider getting walkie-talkies with some of your neighbors so that you can share information when phones are out

- Book hotel room several days in advance in case you need to evacuate – if storm changes direction, cancel room
- Test your computer UPS batteries
- Keep smallest and most valuable items in one small carry bag that can be grabbed immediately in case of an emergency evacuation
- Put names and identification information like next of kin inside each bag that is packed for hurricane evacuation
- Contact people with whom you do business outside the local area and let them know you may be incommunicado for several days due to possible hurricane
- Check your tool box for supplies of nails, hammers, etc. for quick repairs during the hurricane
- Make sure to have adequate supplies for babies and young children and/or elderly/disabled
- Make sure to have adequate supplies for pets (see pet section)
- Keep pen and paper handy to record any important information you may hear on your radio or TV such as important phone numbers, shelter information, school information, etc
- Completely wet clean washcloths and individually freeze in ziplock bags – they will provide cool relief
- Choose a safe place in your home to protect you from flying debris and keep interior doors closed
- Board up windows and doors
- Keep list of emergency numbers by phone and be sure you and your children know who to contact
- Be aware of locations of evacuation shelters and how to get there
- Listen to official warning and heed them
- Plan ahead
- Never underestimate any storm