



## IT'S HURRICANE SEASON: DEVELOP A DISASTER PLAN NOW

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. Where will your family be when a disaster strikes? They could be anywhere – at work, at school or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your children are safe?

### **Before the Storm – Plan, Prepare, Practice**

- ✓ *Devise a Plan* – all the steps you and your family will need to take to prepare for a severe weather emergency that may require evacuation.
- ✓ *Decide to Evacuate or Stay Secure at Home* – if you live along the coast, in a mobile home park or in a high-rise apartment building, you will most likely evacuate in the event of a hurricane. Identify ahead of time where you will go, choosing several places, such as a friend's home in another city, a motel or a shelter. Keep the telephone numbers of these places handy as well as a road map. You might need to take alternate or unfamiliar routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- ✓ *Find a Secure Interior Location in Your Home* – if you decide not to evacuate, identify an interior, first-floor room with no windows, like a bathroom or closet. This will protect your family from severe winds.
- ✓ *Get Information about Shelters* – find out where shelters are in your area and learn their locations. A list of Red Cross hurricane and disaster shelters in Duval County can be found on the Northeast Florida Chapter Web site at [www.nefloridaredcross.org](http://www.nefloridaredcross.org).
- ✓ *Prepare for Pets* – pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters and most hotels and motels, so decide where to go with your pet or find a safe location in your home to leave your pet with an adequate supply of food and water. For a listing of pet-friendly hotels, visit [www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com).
- ✓ *Learn Evacuation Routes and Practice Them* – be sure to make allowances for traffic and decide how long it will take to get to your final destination.
- ✓ *Plan for Senior Citizens and People with Special Needs* – help relatives and neighbors who are older or have special needs plan what they will do in the event of a disaster. Their situations are unique and may require special transportation and sheltering. You can also help them register with JEA so their utilities are flagged for priority restoration after the storm.
- ✓ *Check Disaster Plans for Work and School* – ask your workplace and your children's school if they have a disaster plan and if you can read it. Find out if you are an essential employee at work and what your responsibilities will be.
- ✓ *40% of Small Businesses Close* – many small businesses are forced to close and never reopen after a major disaster because they had no plan or backup systems.
- ✓ *Check Insurance Coverage for Flood and Wind* – homeowners insurance typically does not include this type of coverage, but flood insurance is available to protect homes, apartments, condominiums and nonresidential structures. It is advisable to get flood insurance even if your home is in a low or moderate flood risk zone.

- ✓ *Inventory Household Items with Photographs* – this helps when filing insurance claims. Videotape is another option, but insurance companies prefer photographs.
- ✓ *Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit* – store the kit in a large, watertight container.

- Water – at least one gallon per person per day for three to five days

#### **FOOD**

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices and soups
- Salt, pepper and sugar
- Peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and nuts
- Vitamins
- Special foods for infants and the elderly
- Cookies and other snack foods

#### **FIRST AID KIT**

- Pre-packaged first aid kit, such as those available through the American Red Cross
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal
- Laxative

#### **CLOTHING AND BEDDING**

- Sturdy work shoes or boots
- At least one complete change of clothes per person
- Rain coat
- Hat and gloves
- Sunglasses
- Blankets and sleeping bags

#### **TOOLS AND SUPPLIES**

- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlights and extra batteries (one per person)
- Manual can opener
- Assorted screwdrivers
- Pliers
- Hammer
- Assorted screws and nails
- Plastic sheeting
- Shut-off tool for gas lines and water
- Shovel
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Whistle
- Map of your area
- Soap
- Toilet paper and personal hygiene items
- Disinfectant
- Bleach
- Plastic garbage bags
- Cell phone, cell phone batteries and extra chargers

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Baby items, such as formula, bottles, diapers, medications and toys
- Prescription medicines for all family members, at least a 2-week supply

- ❑ Books, games and other items for entertainment
- ❑ Important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, identification (driver's license, credit card, social security cards) and household inventory
- ✓ *Property* – Measure your windows and purchase pre-cut plywood to cover them. Get exterior, half-inch thick CDX grade plywood, which can withstand winds up to 150 miles per hour. If possible, leave at least four inches of overlap on all sides of the window and use 1 ½ inch screws to attach the plywood to your home. For wood homes and mobile homes, screw the plywood directly to the home. For brick or block homes, pre-drill a hole into the mortar joint (the cement between the bricks or blocks) and insert a one-inch lead anchor into the hole. Screw 1 ½-inch screws into the anchors, spaced 18 inches apart. Don't forget sliding glass doors as well. Also pay attention to ways you can reinforce exterior and garage doors and your roof. You may need to install horizontal bracing onto the panels of your garage door and hurricane straps for your roof. Contact the Northeast Florida Chapter and ask for the brochure *Against the Wind: Protecting your Home from Hurricane Damage* for more information.
- ✓ *Write It Down* – put your plan in writing and include important phone numbers, such as an out-of-town contact person in case your family is separated who can ask as a communication link, schools, insurance companies and emergency contacts and phone numbers.
- ✓ *Put Plan and Travel Maps in Kit* – Store your plan with your disaster supplies kit and include travel maps. Make sure to check your kit at least twice a year, once just before hurricane season, and replace items as needed.

### **During the Storm – Watches and Warnings**

- ✓ *After a Watch is Issued* – Check Kit, Flashlights, Portable Radio, Cell Phone Chargers, Extra Batteries, Portable TV
  - ❑ *What is a Watch?* – A hurricane or hurricane conditions may threaten your specific area within 36 hours.
- ✓ *Monitor Local Media*
- ✓ *Collect Valuables and Personal Effects*
- ✓ *Get Gas, Secure Yard Items*
- ✓ *Prepare Windows, Reinforce Doors, Inspect Mobile Home Tie-Downs, Get Cash*
- ✓ *Check Prescription Medication, Call out-of-town contact*
- ✓ *After a Warning is Issued* – Take immediate action
  - ❑ *What is a Warning?* – Expect winds at least 74 miles an hour or dangerously high water and rough seas within 24 hours.
- ✓ *Close and Cover Windows and Glass Stay Clear of Windows*
- ✓ *Turn Refrigerator and Freezer To Coldest Settings*
- ✓ *Store Water in Clean Containers*
- ✓ *Unplug Major Appliances*
- ✓ *Go to the Designated Safe Place Take Disaster Kit Evacuate If Told To By Local Authorities*
- ✓ *Close Interior Doors*
- ✓ *Secure and Brace External and Garage Doors*
- ✓ *Leave Early if Evacuating*
- ✓ *Turn off Water and Electricity*
- ✓ *Take Your Disaster Kit and Provide for Pets*

## **After the Storm – Recovery**

- ✓ *Inspect Home, Take Pictures*
- ✓ *Keep Generator Outside Home* – the exhaust from generators contains lethal carbon monoxide
- ✓ *Connect Appliances to Generator and Do Not Plug into Breaker* – plugging the generator into your circuit breaker might cause electricity to flow out of your home into JEA’s electric grid, which could injure or kill an unsuspecting utility worker trying to restore power.
- ✓ *Use a Licensed Contractor for All Connections*
- ✓ *Use Flashlights Instead of Candles* – candles are a fire hazard, so flashlights are safer when illuminating dark rooms.
- ✓ *Do Not Touch Fallen Power Lines* – also avoid anything or anyone in contact with power lines, including standing water, which could be charged from underground or downed power lines.
- ✓ *Avoid Transformer Boxes*
- ✓ *Flooding may contain Sewage*
- ✓ *Turn on Only Necessary Items First, One at a Time* – this will prevent overloading the system.
- ✓ *Keep Electric Appliances away From Water*
- ✓ *Use Safety Equipment and Caution Hire Professionals*
- ✓ *Conserve Water*
- ✓ *Boil Water* – water needs to be treated only if it is of questionable purity. Boiling is the safest method of treating water. First, strain water through a clean cloth to remove bulk impurities. Then bring the water to a rolling boil for about one minute and allow it to cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.
- ✓ *Return When Roadways are Safe*
- ✓ *Monitor Local Media*