



**State Emergency
Response Team**



Florida Long Term Recovery Office
Orlando, Florida

FEMA

News Release

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PREPARE A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN NOW

ORLANDO, Fla. – As Florida residents have learned through experience, a well thought-out family disaster plan can go a long way toward reducing the damage from hurricanes and any other type of disaster that could strike. With hurricane season upon us, preparing your family's plan is the first step.

Household emergency plans should be kept simple and easy to remember.

- An information link to the outside is crucial. Keep a battery-operated radio and extra batteries on hand and make sure family members know where the radio is kept.
- Post emergency numbers (fire, police, ambulance) by the phone. Teach children how to call 911 for help.
- Teach responsible family members how to turn off the utilities in your home.
- Identify family meeting places outside your neighborhood in case you are separated and be sure everyone is clear about these locations.
- Develop an emergency communication plan. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the family's contact. Make sure everyone knows the telephone number of this contact.
- Plan and be familiar with escape routes in case you need to evacuate your neighborhood.
- Be sure to include pets in your family disaster plan. Pets usually are not allowed at public shelters.
- Consider investing in an inexpensive National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio and set it on the Specific Area Message Encoding frequency for your area.

For more information visit www.ready.gov online or call 800-BE-READY (800-237-3239); or go to www.floridadisaster.org.

Actions to Take Before a Hurricane

It is becoming more difficult to evacuate people from densely populated areas. Roads are easily overcrowded, particularly during summer tourist season. The problem is compounded by the complacency of people who do not understand the awesome power of severe storms. Complacency and delayed action could result in needless loss of life and damage to property and could endanger the lives of first responders.

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Before a Hurricane Strikes

- Plan a safe evacuation route and identify safe shelter space within your area. Those in storm surge zones, in flood zones, or in less than standard housing should be especially vigilant in preparing disaster plans. Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter and ask for the community preparedness plan.
- Have disaster supplies on hand, including:
 - Flashlight, portable battery-operated radio and extra batteries
 - First-aid kit
 - Emergency food and water (including a non-electric can opener)
 - Essential medicines
 - Cash and credit cards
 - Sturdy shoes and a change of clothing
 - Copies of important papers (bank statements, insurance records, deeds, etc.)
- Review the family disaster plan regularly.
- Protect your home (roof, windows, doors, etc.) and trim dead branches from trees.

Check into flood insurance. Homeowners' policies do not cover damage from flooding that often accompanies hurricanes. Call your local insurance agent or the National Flood Insurance Program at 800-427-4661.

When a Hurricane Watch or Warning Is Issued

- Listen to hurricane progress reports. Follow instructions if ordered to evacuate.
- Check your emergency supplies. Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, bottles and cooking utensils.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools; anchor objects that cannot be brought inside but that could be wind-tossed.
- Secure your home by installing hurricane shutters or pre-cut plywood.
- Turn the refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings if not instructed by officials to turn off utilities.
- Fuel your car. Review evacuation routes and gather your disaster supply kit.
- Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container.

If Evacuation Is Necessary

- If officials order evacuation, leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
- Secure your home. Unplug appliances and turn off electricity and the main water valve. If time permits, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding or move it to a higher floor.
- Take your pre-assembled emergency supplies and warm, protective clothing.

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For information on SERT go to www.floridadisaster.org; For FEMA, go to www.fema.gov.