

The Essential Guide to Hurricane Preparedness

Courtesy of StateOfFlorida.com

Hurricane Kits

It is important to create a kit of supplies that you could take with you if you are forced to evacuate. This kit will also be useful if you are able to stay in your home, but are still affected by the storm, such as through the loss of power. One common trend seen when hurricanes are approaching is a wide-spread panic. When this happens, people rush in large numbers to get all the supplies they think they need. However, if you prepare your kit ahead of time, you can alleviate a lot of the potential stress of a very chaotic situation. You should create your kit in a bag that you can easily take with you. Some recommended items to include are:

- Non-perishable food (enough to last at least 3 days)
- Water (enough to last at least 3 days)
- First-aid kit (include any prescription medication you may need)
- Personal hygiene items and sanitation items
- Flashlights (have extra batteries on hand)
- Battery operated radio (again, have extra batteries)
- Waterproof container with cash and important documents
- Manual can opener
- Lighter or matches
- Books, magazines, games for recreation
- Special needs items: pet supplies and baby supplies if applicable
- Cooler and ice packs
- A plan for evacuation and for if family members are separated

Securing Your Home

Know how to secure your home in the event of damaging winds, storm surge and flooding.

- Cover all your windows, either with hurricane shutters or wood.
- Although tape can prevent glass from shattering everywhere, be warned that tape does not prevent the window from breaking.
- If possible, secure straps or clips to securely fasten your roof to the structure of your home.
- Make sure all trees and shrubs are trimmed and clear rain gutters.
- Reinforce your garage doors.
- Bring in all outdoor furniture, garbage cans, decorations, and anything else that is not tied down.

- If winds become strong, stay away from windows and doors and close, secure and brace internal doors.

Power Outages

In the event a storm should leave you without power, there are a few things to consider and help you be ready and stay safe outside of your normal hurricane preparedness.

- **Gas:** Make sure your tank is full far in advance of an approaching storm. Most people wait until the last minute, rush to get extra gas for cars and generators, and subsequently gas stations can run out early.
- **ATMS:** Have extra cash on hand in the event no ATMS in your area are accessible or working.
- **Cell Phones:** Charge your cell phone and limit use after power is out.
- **A/C:** This can be the most uncomfortable side effect of losing power during a storm. Try to prevent as much light from entering and warming the house by covering up your windows on the inside. If you have back-up or battery-operated fans, don't run them unless you are in the room. Fans create a difference in perceived temperature but do not cool the room; instead, they create a cooling effect by dispersing the heat off your skin. It is said they can add heat to a room just by running.
- **Water:** Fill bathtub and large containers with water for washing and flushing only.
- **Food:** Turn your fridge temperature down and/or freeze any food or drinking water that can be frozen if you expect a power outage. Here is a guide on freezing food: [Freezing and Food Safety](#). Have a cooler with ice packs prepared to cool your drinks and snacks after power has been out for more than 4 hours. And importantly, check out this food safety guide for when to discard your perishable
Food: http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html
- **Health/Safety:** The CDC has a great guide on how to stay safe in the event of a power outage: [Power Outages](#)