



## 1. PREPARE

### **Fortify Your Home:**

You can't completely prevent any damage from storms and hurricanes, but you can be proactive and take steps to help lessen the problems if the worst occurs. Scroll down to see how to prepare your property

### **Sign Up for Storm Alerts:**

Many counties have an emergency alert system which you can sign up for to get text and email alerts. You will be notified immediately if there is bad weather heading your way. To sign up for this you can search on your cell phone for an app, or google the county you live in and the word "alert".

### **Build an Emergency Kit:**

Fill your emergency kit with supplies you may need if you're staying at home during a hurricane, or if you lose power for several days after a major storm. It is a good idea to have a kit for each member of your family, including your pet. Store the kits in an easily accessible place. See below for a list of items to include. Go to <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

## 2. SAFE ROOM

For most storms you will likely stay at home, so you need to choose a safe area where you and your family can go when the weather gets rough. Choose an interior room like a walk-in closet or a bathroom near the center of your home. It should be on the first floor of your home and away from exterior doors and windows.

## 3. EVACUATION PLAN

If a storm is heading your way and you feel it is too dangerous to stay at home, or if mandatory evacuation orders have been issued, you will need a plan to evacuate safely. Make sure you familiarize yourself and all the members of your family with the plan.

Look up the evacuation route for your neighborhood, and print it out. You may not be able to use your cell phone, so you should not rely on GPS. Have a safe place to go if you need to leave

town. Ideally it will be a relative or friend's house out of harm's way, because hotels tend to book up fast. Make sure everyone in your family knows where it is and how to get there. You should familiarize yourself with the shelter locations closest to you; print the list so you can have it at hand. Should you have medical needs or a pet, know which shelters you can go to.

If you know a storm is heading towards your area, make sure you have a full tank of gas. If you have a separate emergency kit for on the go, double check that it is stocked and in the car.

## 4. COMMUNICATION PLAN

During and after a major storm or hurricane, family members could become separated, especially if you must evacuate or shelter outside of your home. If there is major damage in your area, you will want a communication plan to get in touch with everyone to be sure they are safe. Tracking down family members can get stressful, so discuss a plan ahead of time.

Choose a family member or friend in the area and one outside of the area that will be the "go-to" people to contact after the storm ends. If the phones are not working, try to send an email or a message through social media. Make a contact list including phone numbers and email addresses.

## 5. PET SAFETY PLAN

Create an emergency kit for your pet(s), including food, water, litter and box if you have a cat, medications, photos of your pets, contact information for your vet, and the nearest animal hospital. If you give your pet Benadryl to calm them during storms, keep a bottle in the emergency kit.

Have a (soft) crate that you can easily travel with in case you need to evacuate.

Make sure your pet is always wearing a collar with their name, your name, and your phone numbers (if possible, include a back-up number in case something happens to your cell phone).

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST register your pet ahead of time in a specific shelter. Visit [need link](#) for more information.

## 6. PRACTICE THE PLAN

All your planning will only work if you remember what needs to be done, and it can be done quickly. Once you've created the plan, schedule a family meeting to discuss everything. Make copies of the plan for adults and older children. Keep a copy of the plan in an easily accessible place, like the refrigerator.