

It's never too early to prepare for a natural disaster

When the time comes, keeping yourself and family safe is the most important. Beyond basic disaster survival and recovery, this information is intended to help you prepare one of your most important assets, your home, in order to mitigate damages caused by inclement weather.





What to do **before** a hurricane

- Remove low hanging limbs from trees. Strong winds can break dead or damaged tree limbs.
- Make a list of outdoor items that will need to be secured or put inside.
- Remove loose debris and clutter from your yard.
- Ensure you have fire extinguishers, smoke and CO2 alarms in working order throughout your home.
- Strengthen exterior and garage doors.
- Put up hurricane shutters.
- Make sure the roof on your home is in good condition with no leaks
- If you have the means to do so, consider elevating and reinforcing your home.
- Talk to your insurance provider about adding a flood coverage policy to cover your home.



What to do during a hurricane

It is important to follow all evacuation mandates and guidelines. The below information is if you choose the storm at home

- **Use sandbags during a flood to divert water from doors.**
- **Unplug electrical equipment you don't need and if you need to evacuate make sure to unplug all appliances including freezers and refrigerators.**
- **Fill the bathtub with water that can be used to flush the toilet if power is lost.**
- **Ensure you have plenty of food, water, batteries, medical supplies, and pet food if needed.**
- **Shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving.**
- **Be sure to take your emergency to go bag and important legal documents.**



What to do after a hurricane

- **Let your friends and family know you are safe through the Red Cross smartphone application and follow your family emergency plan.**
- **Return to your home only when authorities say it is safe to do so.**
- **Check for any structural damage before you enter your home. Avoid pushing or leaning against damaged building parts. Structural damage to your home may make it too dangerous to enter.**
- **Look for loose or fallen power lines and report those to the utility company immediately.**
- **Be sure to sniff for gas or listen for a hissing noise. If you smell gas or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and call the fire department. Never use an open flame as an alternative to a flashlight.**



What to do after a hurricane

- Damaged objects, such as furniture, may be unstable. Be very cautious when near them.
- Wear protective clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and closed-toe shoes. Use a two-strap dust particulate mask with nose clip and coveralls for protection. Wear leather gloves to protect hands from sharp objects while removing debris.
- When you return to your home you will need to document the state of the home prior to performing any repairs. Photos of the exterior and interior can save you thousands of dollars when you file an insurance claim. Take photos of the exterior of your home, front and back, all four sides and close ups of specific damage. Take photos of each room, all four walls, the ceiling, the floor and the water mark line.
- If a door is jammed, don't force it open, find an alternative way inside.



What to do after a hurricane

- **Consult local authorities for debris pick-up guidelines. Debris is typically sorted into categories and placed within 10 feet of the street curb.**
- **To muck and gut make sure you wear eye protection, long pants and long sleeves, sturdy and puncture free work shoes, heavy work gloves and a two-strap dust particulate mask with nose clip.**
- **Before you start to muck and gut make sure to shut down power, gas and water.**
- **Sweep out and bag debris and remove remaining standing water with a shop vac.**
- **Scrub surfaces using mold kill (bleach is not adequate).**



What to do after a hurricane

- **Clean floors, countertops, appliances and other hard surfaces with hot water and soap or detergent, then disinfect them with a commercial disinfectant, following product directions.**
- **Dry upholstered furniture, rugs, bedding, curtains and clothing in the open air if weather permits before cleaning them. If they are growing mold, you may have to discard those.**
- **Slowly pump out flooded basements, one-third of the water per day, to avoid pressure from water-saturated soil on the outside collapsing basement walls.**
- **Be mindful of fraudulent contractors who follow disasters, promise rapid repairs and walk away without completing the necessary work. Check references for any contractor you hire and make sure they are licensed and insured in your state.**
- **Do not start any major repairs without first talking to your insurance company (if insured) or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).**