



# HURRICANE

A hurricane is a tropical cyclone, a low-pressure system that originates in the tropics. The cyclone usually includes intense thunderstorms and strong winds that can exceed 155 mph. Hurricanes and tropical storms can further result in tornadoes and heavy flooding. Hurricanes can cause extensive damage through both strong winds and high flood waters from rain and storm surges.



## ***How to Prepare for a Hurricane***

- Stay informed and know hurricane terminology:
  - **Tropical Depression**—A system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and sustained winds not exceeding 38 mph.
  - **Tropical Storm**—A system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and sustained winds 39–73 mph.
  - **Hurricane**—A system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and sustained winds 74 mph or higher.
  - **Storm Surge**—A dome of water pushed ashore by winds during tropical storms and hurricanes. Storm surges can reach 25 feet high and be 50–1000 miles wide.
  - **Storm Tide**—A combination of storm surge with normal tide, increasing the amount of water (e.g., a 15-foot storm surge with a 2-foot normal tide creates a 17-foot storm tide).
  - **Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch**—Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are possible within 48 hours in specified areas. Stay tuned to radio or TV for further information.
  - **Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning**—Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere in the specified area within 36 hours.
  - **Short-Term Watches and Warnings**—Provide detailed information about specific threats during hurricanes, such as flash flooding or tornadoes.
- Understand the categorization of hurricanes:
  - **Category 1**—Winds 74–95 mph, storm surge 4–5 feet, minimal damage to plants and signs.
  - **Category 2**—Winds 96–110 mph, storm surge 6–8 feet, some flooding, minimal damage to mobile homes, roofs, and small crafts.
  - **Category 3**—Winds 111–129 mph, storm surge 9–12 feet, extensive damage to small buildings and low-lying roofs.
  - **Category 4**—Winds 130–156 mph, storm surge 13–18 feet, extreme damage with destroyed roofs and mobile homes, downed trees, blocked roads, and flooded homes.
  - **Category 5**—Winds exceeding 157 mph, storm surge more than 18 feet, catastrophic damage destroying most buildings and vegetation, cutting off major roads and flooding homes.
- Install permanent storm shutters or have supplies available to board up your windows.
- Install straps or clips to secure your roof to the frame structure.
- Make sure trees and bushes are well trimmed and maintained.
- Keep enough fuel in your car's tank to evacuate. Expect a high volume of slow traffic.
- Develop a family evacuation procedure and build an emergency supply kit.
- Develop a family communication procedure in case you are separated. Keep in mind phone lines and cell phone towers may be down.

## ***What to Do If There Is a Hurricane***

- Listen to the radio or TV for more information and further instructions.
- Secure your home by closing the storm shutters and bringing outdoor furniture inside.
- Ensure a supply of water for household purposes.
- Turn your refrigerator to the coldest setting and keep the door closed.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so.
- If you are told to evacuate:
  - NEVER ignore an evacuation order.
  - Follow the guidelines given regarding times and routes.
  - Take only essential items and your emergency kit.
  - Turn off gas, electricity, and water if you have not already done so.
  - Disconnect all appliances.
  - Do not walk in moving water.
  - Do not drive in high water (as little as six inches can cause a stall or loss of control).
  - Follow the designated evacuation procedure and expect a high volume of traffic.
- If you are NOT told to evacuate:
  - Stay tuned to emergency stations on radio or TV, and listen for further instructions.
  - Stay away from windows and doors by seeking shelter in a bathroom or basement.
  - Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or a neighbor's home if your home is damaged.
  - Do not go outside until instructed to do so even if the storm is over and it seems calm. When the eye of the hurricane passes, it is calm for a while but does not remain that way.

## ***What to Do after a Hurricane***

- Listen to news reports to make sure water supplies are not contaminated.
- Avoid flood waters, standing or moving, as they may be contaminated or deeper than expected.
- Beware of downed power lines.
- Avoid any roads where flood waters have receded, as they may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Be extremely cautious when entering buildings and homes, as there may be unseen damage.
- Clean and disinfect everything that was touched by flood water, as it can contain sewage and other contaminants.

## ***Where to Find Additional Information***

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—[www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Ready.gov—[www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes)

## ***Semper Paratus***

**Be “Always Ready.” Be informed about what might happen, make an emergency plan with your family, and build an emergency supply kit good for at least three days.**