

Storm Watch

How to prepare your family and property for severe weather

Outside

1. Bring indoors objects that may be blown or swept away.
2. In a flood-prone area, elevate or move structures to higher ground.
3. Lower water level in pool to 6 inches. Add extra chlorine. Turn off electricity to equipment.
4. Keep sliding glass doors wedged shut.
5. If you evacuate, take pets with you or leave them with a friend. Give large animals in barns plenty of food and water.
6. Trim dead or weak branches. Do not leave them for curbside pickup during a storm watch.
7. Keep roof drains clear.
8. Take down outdoor antennas.
9. Protect windows with custom-fit shutters or 3/4-inch plywood. Consult your building inspector.
10. If you use a portable generator, know what loads it can handle, including start-up wattage. If you connect to a household circuit, you must have a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch installed between the generator and outside power, or the "backfeed" could seriously harm utility line workers.

Inside

11. Store valuables and extra keys in a waterproof container at the highest point in your home.
12. Video record a home inventory and store it somewhere safe.
13. Post emergency telephone numbers. Charge your mobile phone.
14. Make two copies of vital documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box. Keep one copy in a safe place at home, give the second to someone out-of-town. Birth and marriage certificates, tax records, credit card info, financial records, wills and trusts.
15. Protect what could cause harm: bookshelf, hanging pictures, gas appliances, chemicals.
16. If someone relies on life support equipment, notify your electric cooperative.
17. Check your supply of medicines.
18. Fill bathtubs and jugs with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.
19. Show adult family members how your fire extinguishers work.
20. Keep a battery-operated radio or television and extra batteries.
21. Plan home escape routes. Find two ways out of each room.
22. Make a plan to reunite if separated. Designate an out-of-state contact and make sure your family knows how to reach the person.

23. Pick a "safe" room in the house, usually a first-floor interior hallway, room or closet without windows.
24. Turn off electricity, water and gas only if you suspect a leak or damaged lines, or if you are instructed to do so by authorities.
25. Fuel your vehicle. Get cash. ATMs may not work later.
26. Keep a smaller Disaster Supplies Kit (see box) in each car.

27. Moor boat securely, store it upside down, against a wall or move it to a safer place. Anchor a boat trailer.
28. If you must evacuate, leave as quickly as possible. Unplug your appliances, but leave your refrigerator on and set to the coldest possible setting. Turn off the main water valve. Move furniture to a higher place, if possible. Take sleeping bags, blankets, warm protective clothing, emergency supplies, eating utensils and identification showing proof of residency. Tell somebody where you are going.

A Disaster Supply Kit

(recommended by the American Red Cross)

Have enough disaster supplies for 2 weeks ready. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Replace stored food and water every six months. Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year. (Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.) Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

- Emergency food & drinking water
- At least one change of clothes for every person
- Baby food, diapers & formula (if necessary)
- Batteries
- Bleach (without lemon or additives)
- Books, magazines, cards & games
- Butane lighters
- Cash & credit cards
- Camera
- Car keys
- Clock (non-electric)
- Cooler (with ice)
- Duct & masking tape
- Fire extinguisher
- First Aid kit
- Flashlight
- Grill or camp stove
- Lantern with extra fuel (after storm has passed)
- Manual can opener
- Medicines, glasses or contact lens supplies
- Mosquito repellent
- Personal identification
- Pet food
- Phone numbers of places you could go.
- Plastic trash bags
- Radio (battery-operated) or TV
- Sleeping bags, pillows & blankets
- Soap & shampoo
- Sturdy shoes
- Toilet paper & towelettes
- Tool kit including hammer, crowbar, nails, saw, gloves, etc.
- Water purification tablets (available at drug stores)

Resource information

Federal Emergency
Management Agency (FEMA)
800-621-FEMA (3362)
www.fema.gov

American Red Cross
703-584-8400
www.redcross.org