



TYLOR HANSEN

Preparing for a Hurricane

Try living for a day without utilities to get an idea of what to expect after a disaster

The 2021 hurricane season will soon be upon us. Your community should be equipped to respond to anything in an effective and efficient manner. This means reviewing current emergency preparedness procedures for before, during and after a hurricane, what supplies to include in emergency kits and who to contact in the immediate aftermath.

Standard features of a hurricane plan include emergency contact information; responsibilities of the board, management and residents; and a list of services that might be unavailable during and after a hurricane.

You must first decide if you will evacuate your home or stay and ride out the storm. Such a decision should be a family decision and must include considering such factors as:

Are you in a storm surge or flood zone? Have you backed up your computers? Is your home structurally capable of withstanding hurricane-force winds? Do you have the proper insurance, such as flood insurance? Do any of your family members have special medical needs that will require help you cannot provide? Is your home capable of providing a “livable” environment after the storm when all utilities are lost? Have you taken video of your home, belongings and designated a safe room? Sandbag supply check—how many, and do we have enough?

The experiences from previous hurricanes have taught us that we need to be prepared to live without our utilities and basic services for up to two weeks or more. Most of us are ill-prepared to do so. It is not immediately obvious what we would need for such an adventure. A useful exercise may be to try to live for one day without your utilities and begin making a list of essential items that become evident. Parents should try an occasional “one-day camp-in” with

their children. This will make it less traumatic for children (and their parents) when they are forced to live without all the things we take for granted.

More specifically, you need to have a plan and create a detailed checklist and pack an emergency preparedness kit (EPK).

Your EPK should contain:

- Food (canned, dry, non-perishable)
- Cooler
- Gloves and goggles
- Non-electric can opener
- Small tools
- Baby needs (formula, diapers)
- Ice
- Cleaning supplies
- Dry goods (TP and paper towels)
- Brooms and mops
- Water (bottled or home-filled before the storm; one gallon/person/day)
- Pails and buckets
- Toiletries
- Ladders
- Flashlights with spare batteries
- Plywood and nails
- Canned drinks
- Portable radios or TV
- Butane lighter and matches
- Disposable plates, cups, utensils
- Clean clothes and sturdy shoes
- Rope
- Garbage bags
- First aid supplies
- All prescriptions, medicines and other essential health items
- Lantern with spare fuel
- Fire extinguisher
- Bedding

It is also important to fuel all vehicles before the storm hits. In addition, remember to get to an ATM or bank and secure some cash since banks will probably be closed for some time after a severe storm.

Finally, keep a photo I.D. that also shows your home address. This may become important when asking a police

officer or National Guardsman for permission to re-enter your neighborhood.

Additional items for your pet should include:

- At least three days of food and water. Include bowls and a manual can opener.
- Pet medicines, medical records, collar with ID tag and a leash.
- Crate or pet carrier, pet litter, litter box, toys, bedding, and treats.

Storms and weather fronts, especially tornados and hurricanes, can move very quickly. Hurricanes typically move at a forward speed of 8 to 25 mph. While this may seem quite slow, such movement can advance an approaching storm up to 200 miles during a normal workday. As a hurricane or other storm moves closer to your area, begin monitoring the weather reports every hour. Do not get caught by surprise by not taking advantage of the excellent media coverage of weather-related events.

A growing concern of hurricane forecasters and emergency management officials is the problem of many people refusing to act until a definite hurricane or severe storm warning is issued. Do not cut it too close. Good judgment and early action are everyone’s responsibilities. When the time comes for action, do so without hesitation. There is never enough time to get ready for nature’s fiercest weather. Give yourself and your family a head start. It’s worth it! ❖

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