

Hurricane Safety

We know their names – Andrew, Fran and Hugo – because of destructive amount of damaged that these hurricanes caused to homes, businesses and properties along coastal regions in recent years. Hurricane Andrew, for example, hit southeast Florida and southeast Louisiana in 1992, causing more \$30 billion in damage.

Although not avoidable, the damage inflicted by these severe tropical storms can be managed with careful planning and preparation. As each hurricane season approaches – June 1 to Nov. 30 – know what to do before the storm strikes.

Before the Hurricane

- Know the difference between a hurricane watch and a hurricane warning.
 - **Hurricane Watch:** This indicates that hurricane conditions are present and there is a threat within 24-36 hours.
 - **Hurricane Warning:** There is a hurricane expected within 24 hours (74 mph winds, high tides and waves).
 - **Eye of the Hurricane:** Despite popular belief, the eye of the storm is actually the calm center of the storm. The deadliest part of the storm comes just before and just after the eye passes.
- Prepare a hurricane evacuation kit that can be reached within a moment's notice of evacuation. Include the following . . .
 - battery-operated transistor radio
 - extra batteries
 - flashlight/candles
 - matches
 - blankets
 - cash/credit cards
 - identification
 - spare house/car keys
 - canned goods
 - medications and list of doctors
 - eyeglasses
 - coloring books and crayons
 - toiletries
 - first aid kit
 - utility shut off instructions
 - manual can opener
 - bottled water
 - canned food
 - change of clothing, rain gear
 - sturdy shoes
 - blankets, pillow and sleeping bag
 - cards, games and books
 - baby supplies
 - maps
- Complete an itemized inventory of your furnishings and personal belongings and store in a safe place such as fireproof box or in a safe deposit box at your bank.
- Listen to your local radio or television station for weather updates. If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Remove diseased or damaged tree limbs before the threat of storm.
- Shutter, board or tape windows to prevent breakage and injuries.
- Move valuables and furniture to upper floors to prevent storm damage and warping.
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and don't open unless absolutely necessary.
- Prior to evacuation, fill your car's gas tank and extra can for roadside emergencies.
- Tie your boat securely to a dock to prevent wind damage.
- Permanent shutters are best to protect windows. You can also use half-inch plywood panels with pre-drilled holes every 18 inches for screws.
- If you have time, bring your lap top computer with you. This will provide an invaluable bank of phone numbers and data bases. If you have access to a phone line, you can connect to the Internet and track the hurricane.
- Before leaving your home, bring in garbage cans, lawn furniture, bikes, toys, hanging plants and lawn decorations. If possible, disassemble the swings on your child's swing set to prevent unnecessary damage.
- Have a supply of plywood and nails on hand to board up your home. You risk paying high prices and standing in long lines if you wait until the last minute to purchase these storm essentials.

During . . .

- Upon evacuation, consider a shelter as a last resort. You may be more comfortable with friends, relatives or at a hotel.
- Keep phone numbers and road maps handy.
- Stay away from flood waters.
- Keep a stock of new wooden matches in a sealed glass jar to prevent water damage.
- During the evacuation, use candles and kerosene lamps as a last resort--they will only make a hazardous situation worse.
- If your area is not advised to evacuate, prepare to stay inside, away from windows.
- If the storm worsens, take shelter in a closet or bathroom without windows. Protect yourself with a mattress.

After . . .

- Don't sightsee or head outdoors until authorities issue an "all clear."

- Call your ERIE Agent or nearest field office as soon as possible following the hurricane. After business hours, contact After Hours Service at (800) 367-3743.
- Take photos or video footage of damaged household items and property. Make a list of all damaged/destroyed items.
- Assess the damage to your property and make temporary repairs to prevent further destruction.
- Cover broken windows and damaged roof coverings immediately.
- Remove standing water from your home.
- Clean exterior drain pipes to prevent drainage problems and roof leaks.
- Hold off on permanent repairs until your ERIE insurance adjuster approves your reimbursement.
- Keep all receipts related to repairs and temporary housing.
- Check food and water for spoilage. If power is out, open refrigerator and freezer doors as little as possible.
- Use the phone for emergencies only.

[Back to Top](#)