

Hurricane Season Guide

Stage 2: Storm is on the Way

You did your early in the season preparation, as outlined in our previous bulletin. Now a storm is on the way and has the potential to affect your home or business. What do you do now? It's a scary moment, but by taking the following steps you will significantly reduce the potential loss of property and also ensure that you are as well prepared as possible to protect yourself, your family, and pets.

While we could create an extensive list for you, the best I've ever seen is from Denis Phillips, one of America's most experienced hurricane meteorologists. Denis, who works at ABC Action News in Tampa, is a terrific resource for up to date, insightful information. In 2018, he published a list of the best hurricane tips around. Please read these tips and understand how they can help you before and during a hurricane.

1. Charge any device that provides light. Laptops, tablets, cameras, video cameras, and old phones. Old cell phones can still be used for dialing 911. Charge external battery back ups. (Glow sticks also provide light for a few hours. Stand them upright in a glass or jar to make a lantern.)
2. Wash all trash cans, big and small, and fill with water for flushing toilets. Line outdoor trash cans with trash bags, fill with water and store in the garage. Add bleach to sterilize.
3. Fill every tub and sink with water. Cover sinks with Saran Wrap to keep it from collecting dust. Fill washing machine and leave lid up to store water.
4. Fill old empty water bottles and other containers with water and keep near sinks for washing hands.
5. Fill every Tupperware with water and store in freezer. These will help keep food cold longer and serve as a back up water supply.
6. Fill drinking cups with water and cover with Saran Wrap. Store as many as possible in fridge. The rest you can store on the counter and use first before any water bottles are opened. Ice is impossible to find after the storm.
7. Reserve fridge space for storing tap water and keep the sealed water bottles on the counter.
8. Cook any meats in advance and other perishable foods. You can freeze cooked food. Hard boil eggs for snacks for first day without power.
9. Be well hydrated before the storm hits and avoid salty foods that make you dehydrated.
10. Wash all dirty clothes and bed sheets. Anything dirty will smell without the A/C, you may need the items, and with no A/C, you'll be sweating a lot. You're going to want clean sheets.
11. Toss out any expiring food, clean cat litter boxes, empty all trash cans in the house, including bathrooms. Remove anything that will cause an odor when the A/C is off. If you don't have a trash day pickup before the storm, find a dumpster.
12. Bring in any yard decor, secure anything that will fly around, secure gates, bring in hoses, potted plants, etc. Bring in patio furniture and grills.
13. Clean your environment so you have clear, easy escape routes. Even if that means temporarily moving furniture to one area.

14. Scrub all bathrooms so you are starting with a clean odor free environment. Store water filled trash cans next to each toilet for flushing.
15. Place everything you own that is important and necessary in a backpack or small file box that is easy to grab. Include your wallet with ID, phone, hand sanitizer, snacks, etc. Get plastic sleeves for important documents.
16. Make sure you have cash on hand.
17. Stock up on pet food and fill up bowls of water for pets.
18. Refill any medications. Most insurance companies allow for 2 emergency refills per year.
19. Fill your propane tanks. You can heat soup cans, boil water, make coffee, and other stuff besides just grilling meat. Get an extra, if possible.
20. Drop your A/C in advance and lower temperatures in your fridges.
21. Gather all candles, flashlights, lighters, matches, batteries, and other items and keep them accessible.
22. Clean all counters in advance. Start with a clean surface. Buy Clorox Wipes for cleaning when there is no power. Mop your floors and vacuum. If power is out for 10 days, you'll have to live in the mess you started with.
23. Pick your emergency safe place such as a closet under the stairs. Store the items you'll need in that location for the brunt of the storm. Make a hand fan for when the power is out.
24. Shower just before the storm is scheduled to hit.
25. Keep baby wipes next to each toilet. Don't flush them. It's not the time to risk clogging your toilet!
26. Run your dishwasher, don't risk having dirty smelly dishes and you need every container for water! Remember you'll need clean water for brushing your teeth, washing yourself, and cleaning your hands.
27. Put a small suitcase in your car in case you decide to evacuate. Also put at least one jug of water in your car. It will still be there if you don't evacuate! You don't need to store all water in the house. Remember to pack for pets as well.
28. Check on all family members, set up emergency back up plans, and check on elderly neighbors.
29. Remember, pets are family too. Take them with you!
30. Before the storm, unplug all electronics. There will be power surges during and after the storm.
31. Gas up your car and have a spare gas container for your generator or your car when you run out.
- 32 . Use plastic cups and paper plates. You need water to wash dishes....
- 33 . Also if you run out of water tap your hot water heater it can have up to 30 gallons stored in there.
- 34 . Put water in balloons and store in freezer.
- 35 . If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown Flush it down!

If you can, take a video of your house and contents....walk room to room--open cabinets/drawers and closets. This will help if you need to make a claim later. It will show proof of items and help you list all the items (help your memory, so you don't forget anything)...I highly recommend!!!

I also heard you should freeze a cup of water, place a coin on top after it is frozen...keep this in your freezer to help you gauge the temperature if the power goes out. If the coin stays on top, the food is staying frozen. If the coin falls into the water, the freezer thawed out and most food will likely need to be thrown away. This is super helpful if you have to leave and come back, as it may appear everything is still frozen, but if the coin is in the cup--you will know!!

Finally, anything that you want to try and preserve, but you can't take with you---place it in a plastic bin and put in your dishwasher, lock the door---this should make it water tight in case of any water intrusion into your home. But of course, take all the important/irreplaceable items you can!!
