

Hurricane Facts

Hurricanes usually start in the tropics as a low-pressure system accompanied by powerful thunderstorms and, at times, tornadoes. In the Northern Hemisphere, the storm starts as a counterclockwise circulation of winds near the Earth's surface.

Hurricanes typically move at a forward speed of 8 to 25 miles per hour, can be as much as 200 miles wide, eight miles high, and, have winds from 74 mph to more than 156 mph. The storm surge (water that is pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm) can be as high as 18 feet or more above the ocean's tide.

Hurricanes are powerful and dangerous.

Categories

Tropical Depression has winds up to 39 miles per hour.

Tropical Storms have winds from 39 to 73 mph.

Category 1 hurricanes have winds from 74 to 95 mph.

Category 2 hurricanes have winds from 96 to 110 mph.

Category 3 hurricanes have winds from 111 to 130 mph.

Category 4 hurricanes have winds from 131 to 155 mph.

Category 5 hurricanes have winds 156 mph or greater.

Hurricane Preparations

There simply won't be time to think of everything when a storm gets close. Think things through now and develop a plan for you and your family. Your plan should include evacuation preparations. No mobile / manufactured home is safe in hurricane force winds. Those residents should evacuate to a safer structure once local officials issue a hurricane evacuation order for their community.

If you decide to evacuate determine beforehand where you will go. If you need to go to a shelter, find out now where the shelter would be located. Shelters do not allow pets, so decide now how you will care for your pets.

Map out your evacuation route. Determine how long it will take to pick up everyone in your family and notify other family members where you plan to be. Bring your three-day survival kit with you. (See below).

If you decide to stay, be sure to have shutters for all windows and openings and determine how long it will take you to put them up. Is rising water an issue in your home?

Notify any out-of-area relatives that you are staying. Determine what special supplies and food you will need to have on hand and how you will cope with any family member with medical needs.

Move vehicles to a covered area to prevent damage from high winds, flying debris and hail. Identify loose items located outside, such as lawn furniture, grills, toys, yard equipment, etc., that should be brought inside before a storm. When picked up by high winds, these items can become deadly missiles.

Have you videotaped, photographed or compiled a written inventory of your home and belongings for insurance purposes? Have you stored those and other important documents in a secure location such as a bank's safe deposit box?

Be prepared to live without utilities and normal services for as long as two weeks after the storm. Have equipment available for clean-up after the storm such as saws, wheelbarrows or plastic sheeting.

Three-day supply kit

Start with an easy to carry, water tight container - a large plastic trash can will do, or line a sturdy cardboard box with a couple of trash bags. Next gather up the following items and place them in your kit:

- Water - 1 gallon per person per day
- Water purification kit or bleach (use 8 drops of regular bleach per gallon of water)
- First aid kit and first aid book
- Pre-cooked, non-perishable foods, such as canned meats, granola bars, instant soup & cereals, etc.
- Baby supplies: formula, bottle, pacifier, soap, baby powder, clothing, blankets, baby wipes, disposable diapers, canned food and juices
- Food, water, leash and carrier for pets
- Non-electric can opener
- Anti-bacterial hand wipes or gel
- Blanket or sleeping bag per person
- Portable radio or portable TV and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Essential medications
- Extra pair of eyeglasses
- Extra house and car keys
- Fire extinguisher - ABC-type
- Cash and change
- Seasonal change of clothing, including sturdy shoes

Sanitation Supplies

- Large plastic trash bags for waste, tarps and rain ponchos
- Large trash cans
- Bar soap and liquid detergent
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Toilet paper
- Household bleach for cleaning
- Rubber gloves

Fourteen-day Supply Kit

The experiences of Hurricanes Hugo, Bertha and Fran have taught North Carolinians to be prepared to live without utilities and basic services for up to two weeks or more. In addition to the three-day supply kit, these supplies will be helpful for 14 days without electricity or running water:

- Disposable plates, cups, utensils
- Plastic garbage bags
- Mosquito repellent
- Cooler
- Ice
- Toiletries
- Detergent for dishes and clothes
- Clothesline and pins
- Games such as cards & quiet toys
- Duct and masking tape
- Rolls of plastic
- Lantern & fuel (not candles)
- Gloves & goggles
- Small tools
- Cleaning supplies
- Brooms & mops
- Pails and buckets
- Ladders
- Plywood & nails
- Rakes & shovels
- Chain saw, gas & oil
- Wheelbarrow
- Battery operated clock
- Butane lighter or matches
- Axes, hatchets, pruners
- Rope

It is also important to fuel all vehicles before a storm hits, get to the ATM or bank and secure some cash since banks will probably be closed for some time after a severe storm, and keep a photo I.D. that shows your home address.

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