

## Hurricanes

One of the most powerful natural hazards to strike North America from the Caribbean to the Canadian Maritimes is the hurricane. In recent years they've caused extensive property damage and loss of life. Hurricanes have proven themselves to be dangerously unpredictable in exactly what their impact will be. The damage caused by hurricanes comes from storm surges, high winds, heavy rainfall and flooding and tornadoes which can be spun off the main storm system.

### Preparing for a Hurricane

- Although their path might move erratically, hurricanes can usually be predicted a few days in advance which gives time to prepare for their arrival and evacuate if necessary.
- During the hurricane season, pay attention to weather forecasts and warnings.
- If you live along the coast or in a low lying area you should move away from the water to higher ground until the storm has passed.
- Have your family emergency kit packed and ready to go at all times.
- Avoid sightseeing down by the shore. While it is a dramatic view, think of how the excitement will pale when a rogue wave or sudden surge carries you out into the ocean
- Secure your home with permanent storm shutters or board up the windows with 5/8 inch plywood. You can reduce the risk of damage to the roof of your home if you secure it with straps or additional clips to the frame of your home.
- Get your lawn and patio furniture into a garage or safe place.
- If there is a broken or damaged branch or large tree, clear it before any major storm strikes
- Ensure that your basement windows and any doors at ground level are well sealed in the event that you're at risk of storm surges or flooding.
- Once it becomes clear that you will need to evacuate, go.
- Have your gas tank full.
- Monitor the television and radio stations for updates and instructions.
- If you have livestock, leaving them outside could very well be preferable to placing them in a shelter that won't withstand the power of the storm.
- If you live in a mobile home, high rise, on the coast, a floodplain on the banks of a river or other low lying area, there is a higher probability that you will need to evacuate.
- If you feel you are in danger – go.

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## During A Hurricane

- Fill your bathtub and several buckets and jugs with water before the storm hits.
- Stay indoors, away from windows, doors and any glass doors – all of which should be securely closed and braced to keep them that way.
- Keep any window coverings you have closed during the storm.
- Close all the doors inside your house.
- Take shelter in a small interior space on the lowest level of your home. When necessary, be prepared to seek additional shelter under a sturdy table to afford more protection in case of collapse.
- Don't be fooled by the calm if the eye of the storm passes over you. The winds will return momentarily, from a different direction and possibly with increased ferocity.
- Keep your Family Emergency Kit close at hand.

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## After the Storm

Much will depend on the severity of the storm and the impact it has had on your home and your community. In instances of widespread flooding it will possibly be a while before you can return home. Regardless of that, some general principles will always apply:

- Carefully inspect your home for structural damage before you move back in.
- Don't drink the local water or turn your power back on until you are specifically cleared to do so.
- Thoroughly wash and disinfect any possessions affected by flooding and discard anything that can't be completely cleaned. It could easily become a long term health hazard for you and your family.

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