

Hurricanes

Who is vulnerable?

Hurricanes aren't only a coastal problem. High winds, tornadoes and flooding can impact hundreds of miles inland. That's pretty much our entire Aglow Mid-Atlantic Region. Visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes for tips to prepare.

Plan Now

- Learn your area's risk of hurricanes. Sign up for your community's warning system (is there one?) and the Emergency Alert System. NOAA weather radios also provide emergency alerts.
- Practice going to safe shelter to protect from high winds and waters. This is particularly important if you have recently moved, have children or grandchildren at home, or are responsible for someone infirm or elderly.
- Gather enough supplies for at least three days. Don't forget medications and pets.
- Keep important documents in a safe place—waterproof, fireproof, cyber proof. Consider creating password-protected digital copies. You may have to re-create your identity, home/auto ownership, insurance coverage, etc.

Before the Hurricane

Get your kit and check it for completeness. You haven't been borrowing from it, have you? See www.ready.gov/hurricanes for suggestions on what to include and what to do.

Implement your plan. You do have a plan, don't you?

- Charge your cell phone and other needed battery devices. Dig out your solar charger. You did buy at least one, right? \$15-50 at Walmart and Amazon.
- Fill your vehicles' gas tanks.
- Clear the yard, patio and deck of loose, wind-blown projectiles. That means all your furniture, toys, BBQs, yard ornaments, etc. You'll have enough warning to do this. You can say goodbye to anything left outside or in a carport. Don't count on seeing it again.
- Close and secure storm shutters if you have them. Figure out how to stay away from windows...if you're staying home. Why are you staying in place?
- If told to evacuate, grab your kit and go! Every disaster news report has stunned people mumbling into the camera: "I never expected it to be this bad." And "It happened so fast." This is not the way you want to make the news.
- Do not drive through water. It only takes 12" of moving water to move your vehicle. Don't drive around roadblocks or barricades. If you evacuate in time, there won't be any moving water to get through, so leave now.
- Don't wade or swim through flooding. Good grief, what are you thinking? I'll wait this out, wade this out? All you're likely to do is thin out the gene pool while risking the lives of emergency responders. Again, not the way to make the evening news.

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- If you don't evacuate—and there better be a really good reason—let departing friends and family know. Authorities may need help locating and identifying your bodies.

During the Hurricane

- Stay where you are. It's much too late to be on the move and you should be securely sheltered. Don't try to take pictures for news feed or social media. Let someone else risk their life for that 5-second clip on the evening news, which you won't be able to watch if the power is out.
- Marshall your supplies in a safe area so as not to lose any during the hurricane.
- You won't have much to do other than pay attention to what's happening to your shelter. Listen to the windows blowing in, garage door collapsing, trees falling, windblown water seeping in, power going out to the sound of exploding transformers, the roof beginning to lift off. Sounds like a freight train going through your living room.
- You might have nothing else to do but pray. At least until the calamity passes.

After the Hurricane

This period can be equally dangerous and even more challenging than during the storm.

- Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.
- Be careful during cleanup. Wear protective clothing and don't work alone.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or you are standing in water. If safe to do so, turn off your home's main breaker or fuse box to prevent shock while doing other work to recover.
- Don't wade in flooded areas. Downed electric lines in the water can kill you.
- Avoid using your telephone, as the lines—if operable—will be crowded with emergency calls and persons whose cell phones are dead. SO: use your fully charged cell phone to communicate via text message or social media.
- Document property damage using the camera on your fully charged cell phone. Notify your insurance company for follow-on assistance and claims.
- If your home was on the Atlantic coast, consider the consequences of rising oceans and more frequent, violent weather. Blame it on climate change or methane from cows. Doesn't matter because the effects are with us and will only worsen during our lives. FEMA would want you to "elevate or relocate." I'd opt to get 'way away.

We live in an increasingly electronic and connected world. Start using your phone, pad, laptop, or desktop computer to find the resource for your likely situation. Print out critical items of interest. Show some initiative, some concern. Your preparation is the key to your success.

Consider: Hope is Not a Plan.