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## How To Prepare For A Hurricane

Hurricanes are dangerous events. Those of us who have lived through one of these fierce storms are aware of their awesome potential. If you're new to the area, it's easy to fall victim to the "How bad can a storm be?" Syndrome. In this article, we look at the simple measures you can take now to ensure that your family is ready for hurricane season.

Select a safe place for the family to weather the storm. This may be a location in your home—consider a windowless room on the bottom floor. If your home doesn't have a safe area, you should know the location of at least two emergency shelters near your home. If you have special medical needs and don't think you'll be able to get to the shelter on your own, contact the county in advance to make prior arrangements.

Stock up on food and water. You should have enough non-perishable food and water in your home to last the family for at least a few weeks. If your stock of supplies is old, be sure to refresh it. You might want to purchase new canned goods every few years and rotate the rest through your pantry. Water should be replaced annually.

Prepare other disaster supplies. You'll need to stock up on batteries, flashlights, rope, tarps, plastic bags, bad-weather clothing and other essentials to help you through the aftermath of a bad storm.

Get your home ready. If you have hurricane shutters, make sure that you have all of the parts and have some extra screws/washers handy. If you don't, have a supply of plywood precut to fit your windows. Gather anything loose from your yard and store it in the garage. Watch the news when a storm is approaching and protect your home when advised by local authorities. If you wait until the rain starts, it may be too late.

Develop a family communications plan. You might become separated before or after the storm. It's a good idea to have an out-of-state contact (a relative up north?) to act as the point of contact for all family members in the event of an emergency. Make sure everyone in the family knows who that person is and carries their phone number in their wallet or purse.

Check your insurance coverage. Companies stop writing coverage when a storm is approaching. Ensure that your homeowner's insurance has enough windstorm coverage to rebuild your home in today's market. Also, remember that standard insurance doesn't cover flooding. You'll need special flood insurance from the federal government.

Plan for the family pets. Shelters will not accept pets. If you want to ensure your pet's livelihood, you may wish to consider evacuating early to a friend's home that's in a safe area.

Keep your vehicles gassed up to at least half a tank at all times throughout hurricane season. When a storm approaches, lines will get long (up to five hours!) and gas stations will run out of gas before the storm hits. You need to have enough gas to safely evacuate if the situation warrants.

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Non-perishable food – Drinking water – Batteries – Medication for all family members – First aid Kit – Flashlights – Battery-operated radio – Cash – Toiletries – Clothing

One of the most important decisions you will have to make is "Should I Evacuate?" If you are asked to evacuate, you should do so without delay.

**Ref:** <http://miami.about.com>