

Preparing for Emergencies: When a Storm Approaches

As a storm approaches, you should prepare your house and your yard. Use this checklist to ensure you are prepared.

- Turn down the temperature on your freezer and refrigerator as low as possible. This will buy you more time in the event of a power loss. (24 to 48 hours before will cool the food.) Avoid opening the freezer and refrigerator whenever possible. If you are evacuating, this step is probably unnecessary.
- Before you evacuate, call at least one person out of state to let them know your plans.
- Ensure that your Hurricane Emergency Kit is fully stocked.
- Charge electronic devices, for example, computers, cell phones, rechargeable batteries, razors, and the like.
- Make extra ice, bag it—this will be useful to use and to keep the freezer cold.
- Turn down your home air conditioner. It gets very hot and very humid very quickly. If you are evacuating, this is not necessary.
- If you have a generator, do NOT run it inside or near the house. But make sure you have fuel to run it.
- Make sure your car has fuel.
- Pick up yard debris—furniture, tools, decorative items, branches—anything loose that could become a missile.
- Secure boats, trailers, campers, RVs, and the like in the safest place you can find. Tie them down, anchor them, or however you can best secure them. But, take into account that there may be a storm surge.
- Secure all doors and windows with locks, and shutters if available. Plywood, properly secured, can be effective. Don't forget your garage doors.
- Move items that may be damaged by water to higher areas of your home if you cannot take them with you if evacuating. Move them away from windows in case they are broken.
- Secure even huge items in big storms. An engine block was found 40 or 50 feet up in a pine tree in the Homestead area after Hurricane Andrew. Don't think that something is too big to be moved by the wind.
- Re-check tie-downs.
- Bring cars, bikes, scooters and similar items into your garage if possible.
- Bring in grills or other cooking items.
- Bring in hoses, trash cans, hot tub covers, wind-chimes, plants.
- Caulk and fill bathtubs—extra water comes in handy for toilets and more.
- It may sound strange, but do your laundry, dishes, and take a shower. Why? Because if you lose power, having as much clean as possible will make a big difference.
- Check if your pool pump should be on or off.
- Close and fasten gates so they don't swing.
- Close chimney flues.
- Close/latch inside doors and cabinets.
- Buy extra prescriptions, bottled water, food, etc. that you might need if you shelter in place or evacuate.
- Make sure pets and large animals are as safe as possible.

