

Hurricane Preparedness

Check List

Nothing is worse than trying to deal with all of life's issues and then throwing in a visit by a hurricane. *Get ahead of the game and start preparing NOW!* If you wait until a storm is imminent, you will not be able to get everything done before you need to leave and/or before the storm hits.

Things you can do NOW, even before the season begins.

EXTERIOR

- Start at one corner of your lot and walk the perimeter, working your way in toward your house. **Look for dead trees and limbs. Have these cut down or trimmed as soon as possible.** They become deadly, devastating missiles during high winds.
- **Check your gutters and downspouts** to make sure none are loose. Tighten if they are.
- **Check your roof** to make sure you do not have any loose shingles or tiles or that you might have a problem area that might be the cause of a leak during heavy, prolonged rain. Loose items, especially tiles, cause a lot of damage to your and your neighbors' houses. (call a licensed roofing company if you don't like climbing ladders)
- **Check fencing;** make sure there are no loose panels and that the gates are properly secured to the post structure
- **Check around all windows and doors** to see if there any gaps where wind-driven rain might penetrate. Caulk as needed. Replace any broken or damaged ones; consider getting Impact Resistant (IR) replacements or replacing all in your house with IR's.
- **Check awnings and shutters,** make sure they are not loose or rusted where they could easily become dislodged during high winds. Repair as needed.
- **If you have a garage door** and it is not reinforced for high winds, call a reputable garage door company and have them reinforce your door or install a new one to meet the wind codes for your area. This is one of the weakest parts of your home's envelope.

- **If you have roll-down shutters** that protect your windows and doors, test them to make sure they are in full operational mode. Fully close and open EVERY one of them.

INTERIOR

- Walk from room-to-room with a video camera or camera, recording all personal items in each room, including closets and garage. **MAKE A COPY, KEEPING ONE IN YOUR GETAWAY BAG.** I suggest sending one to a relative that lives in an area not prone to hurricanes.
- Identify a water-proof container that you can easily locate in a hurry. Put all valuable documents such as insurance papers, wills, financials and of course, family & friends photos.
- Identify a large bag/suitcase that you can easily locate when in a hurry. This becomes your **GETAWAY BAG.** It would be wise to go ahead and stock it with batteries, flashlights and several waterproof zip-lock bags. You can pack your other items when a storm is predicted to hit your area within 1 week.

Once you have determined that you need to leave your house and/or that a storm is heading your way, there are several things you can do in your yard and around the house interior and exterior to help reduce damage to your own property and to your neighbors as well.

EXTERIOR

- Start at one corner of your lot and walk the perimeter, working your way in toward your house. **Look for dead trees and limbs once again.** You may need to remove those yourself at this point since most tree companies are either booked solid or making their own preparations to evacuate.
- As you walk your property, keep working your way in towards your house. **Decorative landscaping items** such as small rocks, pebbles, lighting, gnomes and bird feeders/baths can also become missiles. Gather all of these and put in garage, closet or storage. For rocks, pebbles or other landscaping materials you cannot remove, stake down a landscape cloth (readily available at big box hardware) over these areas. Be sure to make the material taut and that all stake connections are secure. This will keep those materials from disappearing in high winds AND keep them from becoming missiles.

- Also **remove any signs**, such as real estate or contractor signs **and all lawn furniture**. If you do not have room for lawn furniture inside, tightly secure them with rope or chains to a sturdy tree in your yard. If you do not have a tree but do have a pool, sink your furniture in the pool, assuming it is indeed waterproof!
- **Check gutters** one last time.
- It's probably too late to worry about the roof unless you can make repairs quickly yourself.
- **Check fencing & gates** one last time

INTERIOR

If you plan to leave

- Fill your vehicle(s) fuel tanks
- Pack 2 weeks of light-weight clothing (per person)
- Grab your **GETAWAY BAG**; check for batteries, flashlights and waterproof baggies. Add a lot of bottled water, a battery operated portable radio, toiletries, feminine products and games for children (with plenty of batteries) . Assume you may be somewhere without power for 2 weeks.
- Grab your waterproof container with aforementioned important docs., adding other documents that you deem not replaceable (stock certificates, etc.)
- If you are in an area prone to flooding, put your furniture on blocks a couple of feet off the floor. Remove all items from the floor, stacking in closet's as high as possible. This in case the water rises enough to enter your home. (This will not do much good if a direct hit of a Cat 3 or higher occurs)

If you plan to stay

- **Keep an eye on weather reports**, if the storm forecast shows your area as a high probability, ask yourself, is it worth risking your life and lives of your family members? Probably should seriously think about leaving.
- Hopefully you planned ahead and have 2 weeks' worth of non-perishable food and water on-hand. If not, **LEAVE**.
- **If you plan to stay, this check list isn't for you**. You probably have already made the proper preparations because that check list is completely different.

Compliments of: _____