

# Before, During, and After a Tropical Event

## Before

The best time to [prepare for a hurricane](#) is before hurricane season begins on June 1. It is vital to understand your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, and wind. Here is your checklist of things to do BEFORE hurricane seasons begins.

- Know your zone: Find out if you live in a hurricane [evacuation area](#).
- Be prepared for hurricane season: The [National Weather Service](#) hurricane preparedness information can help you be prepared.
- Put together an emergency kit: Put together a [hurricane disaster supply kit](#). Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators, and storm shutters. Ensure you have enough [medications](#) on hand.
- Before an emergency, discuss with family or friends how to contact each other, where to meet, and what actions to take. Store a copy of this plan in your emergency kit or another safe, accessible location. Start at the [Ready.Gov emergency plan webpage](#).
- Review your insurance policies: Review your insurance policies to ensure that you have adequate coverage for your home and personal property.

## During

When a hurricane threatens your community, be prepared to evacuate if you live in a storm surge risk area. Allow enough time to pack and inform friends and family if you need to leave your home.

- Secure your home: For storm safety, cover your home's windows. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection. Alternatively, use 5/8 inch exterior grade or marine plywood to board up windows. Ensure they fit and are ready to install. Purchase materials before hurricane season to avoid last-minute rushes.
- Stayed tuned in: Check the websites of your local National Weather Service office and local government/emergency management office. Find out what type of emergencies could occur and how you should respond. Listen to the weather radio at [NOAA Weather Radio](#) or other radio or TV stations for the latest storm news.
- Follow instructions issued by local officials. Leave immediately if ordered.
- If Not Ordered to Evacuate:
  - Seek Shelter: Find a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
  - Maximize Protection: Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible.
  - Avoid Glass: Stay away from windows, skylights, and glass doors.
  - Be Aware: If the storm's eye passes, expect calm followed by strong winds from the opposite direction.

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## After

- Stay informed: Continue listening to a NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates. If you evacuated, return home only when officials say it is safe.
- Stay alert: Once home, drive only if necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects in the road, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks that might collapse.
- Assess the damage: Walk carefully around the outside of your home to check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. Stay out of any building if you smell gas, if floodwaters remain around the building, if the building or home was damaged by fire, or if the authorities have not declared it safe.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the leading causes of death after storms in areas dealing with power outages. Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage. When the power goes out, keep your generator outside. Generator tips available [here](#).
- Use battery-powered flashlights. Do NOT use candles. Turn on your flashlight before entering a vacated building. The battery could produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present. Power outage tips available [here](#).
- Know where to get disaster assistance. Click here for [FEMA](#) disaster assistance information.

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### In case of an emergency dial 911

As a reminder, the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center (VA Health Connect) is operational 24/7/365 for virtual care and tele-emergency care and support to Veterans enrolled for VA Health Care in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



1-877-741-3400