

## Preparing for Hurricane Season

by Staff

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NOW is the time!

Well before the actual start of Hurricane Season....you should already start stockpiling and preparing for a storm. After a storm necessities are not easily available. Some of the information here is from personal experience and our opinions.

Are you planning on using some of those left over MRE's and supplies you gathered after Katrina? Be sure you check expiration dates on old supplies and refresh as needed!!

"Are you living in temporary homes? Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, there are thousands now living in FEMA provide temporary homes. And many still waiting for housing such as mobile homes and trailers. Be prepared to leave. Do not try to ride out a storm in such a home. Your first home didn't survive the storms so don't expect a temporary home to survive."

The 2007 Hurricane Season is expected to be as bad.. The good news if possible, is Katrina and Rita helped us know how to prepare for any other storms. You may already have much of the needed emergency supplies left. Generators and extension cords, and fuel cans.

Primarily, by the time a storm hits you should have all your preparations completed! If you prepare in advance and plan ahead. Your stress levels will be much lower.

Step 1.

**KNOW SOME OF THE DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH A STORM.**

**Flooding**Can occur from heavy rains,rivers,drainage ditches.

**Storm Surge**Typically associated with the land falling hurricane.Depending on intensity of storm, can cover extremely large areas of coastline, as Katrina demonstrated.The storm surge typically causes the most deaths associated with a hurricane.

**High Wind**Roof damage,falling trees,power lines, can demolish entire homes.

**Tornadoes**Often occur with land falling hurricanes. Can cause tremendous wind type damage very far from the center of a hurricane in unexpected areas.

Know what potential hazards may affect you or your home. Flooding potential, storm surge susceptibility. If your home or residence may flood. **LEAVE.** Katrina has given us many stories of people who stayed in their homes and were flooded due to unexpected storm surge levels.

Step 2.

Start collecting material and supplies **NOW.** Wood / Shutters for boarding up windows. Don't wait until the last minute to try to acquire wood and then cut and mount it. Have it pre-cut and ready to mount. Store it until needed. I know from experience that trying to hold a 8x4 plywood sheet on a ladder in gusty wind is very difficult. Who would have guessed that the ply-lock clips used to mount plywood sheets on windows would disappear off the shelves as a storm approached.. Prepare Early.

Test your generator **NOW** and perform any repairs. A generator that doesn't work properly after the storm is not very helpful.

Step 3.

Have an evacuation plan. While you can not easily say where exactly you will evacuate months in advance. Have maps available and write down your plans. Ensure your friends and family know where you plan to evacuate. (It's very difficult to reserve motel rooms in some areas once people start evacuating. Rooms as far

as Memphis, TN become scarce during large mass evacuations. So make your reservations early. If you plan to evacuate).

#### Step 4.

If a hurricane develops. Stay Informed! Do not be caught by surprise if a storm's path or intensity changes. We know that a storm's path and intensity can change dramatically in hours. In some cases, in unexpected manners. OBEY your local government's recommendations. If they suggest you leave the area..seriously consider leaving. Know where local shelters are set up. Know what is allowed to take to a shelter. Don't just show up without food or water or blankets. They may not be set up to provide them. They will be providing a place that's safer to stay in than your home in most cases.

Your Disaster Supply Kit (Yes YOU should have one)-

The following (taken from the NHC Disaster Supply Kit Instructions) should be included in everyone's "Kit".

Water - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days

Food - at least enough for 3 to 7 days - non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices - foods for infants or the elderly - snack foods - non-electric can opener - cooking tools / fuel - paper plates / plastic utensils

Blankets / Pillows, etc.

Clothing - seasonal / rain gear/ sturdy shoes

First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs

Special Items - for babies and the elderly

Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture wipes

Flashlight / Batteries

Radio - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio

Cash (with some small bills) - Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.

Keys

Toys, Books and Games

Important documents - in a waterproof container or watertight resealable plastic bag - insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.

Tools - keep a set with you during the storm

Vehicle fuel tanks filled

Pet care items - proper identification / immunization records / medications - ample supply of food and water - a carrier or cage - muzzle and leash

Ensure your Generator is functional. Additionally we found that having several extra gas cans for our generator was VERY helpful. Also if you are able you might want to stockpile some fuel in advance, but be aware that long term storage of gas requires specific fuel additives and some very serious safety issues. After Katrina, we had a serious problem acquiring fuel for vehicles and generators.

Links to help you be informed:

The National Hurricane Centers Disaster Preparedness Week

Hurricanes: Nature's Greatest Storms - NOAA

FEMA Hurricane Information

Hurricane Strike! An Interactive Course in Hurricane Science and Safety

CDC Hurricanes Health and Safety

Hurricane forecasts and real time data:

National Weather Service NHC Tropical Prediction Center

The Weather Channel

Our Gulf Coast Hurricane Center site. Not an official outlet, but we gather and provide timely and related storm information for the impacted areas. We also have archived historical storm track data for Katrina and Ivan and other storms.

The picture below shows the power outage associated with Hurricane Katrina.

The read areas are shown on the image on the left, where lights existed prior to the storm but not afterwards. Where were you when the lights went out?

These images are from the National Geophysical Data Center (NGDC) Food - at least enough for 3 to 7 days - non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices - foods for infants or the elderly - snack foods - non-electric can opener - cooking tools / fuel - paper plates / plastic utensils

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