



spotlight on safety

Protecting Your Family And Property From Hurricanes

(NAPS)—We all know about the devastating impact of hurricanes. They often cause extreme damage in our communities, destroying homes, businesses, and personal property. Hurricanes can also cause extensive flooding as a result of the torrential rains that often accompany these storms. In fact, residual rainfall from hurricanes often causes flooding inland in communities far from the shore.

With hurricane season underway, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is urging the public to take precautions. Below are some simple steps to take in preparation for this deadly force of nature:

Before A Hurricane

- Make sure you and your family have a planned evacuation route.
- Have disaster supplies on hand, e.g., battery-operated radio, flashlight and extra batteries, first aid kit, emergency food and water, essential medicines, and cash and credit cards.
- Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- Teach children how and when to call 911, police or fire departments.
- Have supplies on hand to protect your windows.
- Trim back dead or weak branches from trees.
- Develop an emergency communication plan: In case family members are separated from each other during a disaster, have a plan in place for getting back together.
- Purchase flood insurance.

You can find out about the National Flood Insurance Program through your local insurance agent or by calling 1-800-427-9662. (Note: there is normally a 30-day waiting period before a new policy becomes effective, so act sooner, rather than later. Homeowner policies do not cover flood damage.)

During A Hurricane Watch

- Listen to a radio or television for hurricane updates.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys, garden



tools and anchor other objects that cannot be brought inside.

- Review your evacuation plan.
- Secure buildings by closing and boarding up windows.

If officials indicate an evacuation is necessary, leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch out for washed-out bridges. After the hurricane, stay tuned to a local radio station for information. Only return home after authorities advise that it is safe to do so.

After A Hurricane

If you have had the misfortune of experiencing a hurricane, you should, of course, care first for any injured or trapped people in your community. However, when returning to your home and property for assessment, FEMA urges the public to follow a few common sense procedures:

- Enter your home with caution.
- Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the power company, police, or fire department.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Take pictures of the damage to both the inside and outside of the home, as well as damage to contents, for insurance claims.
- Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed out bridges.
- Call your insurance agent to file a claim for damage.

For more information about National Flood Insurance, call 1-800-427-9662. For more information about hurricane season, flooding and the steps you can take to make your community more disaster resistant, visit FEMA's web site at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip>.