

# Hurricane Preparation Fact Sheet

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**H**urricanes threaten the Texas Gulf Coast every year from mid-summer through fall. These dangerous storms come ashore with heavy rains, powerful winds, tornadoes, and deadly storm surge. As the storms move inland, they often bring flooding rains and strong winds to other areas of the state.

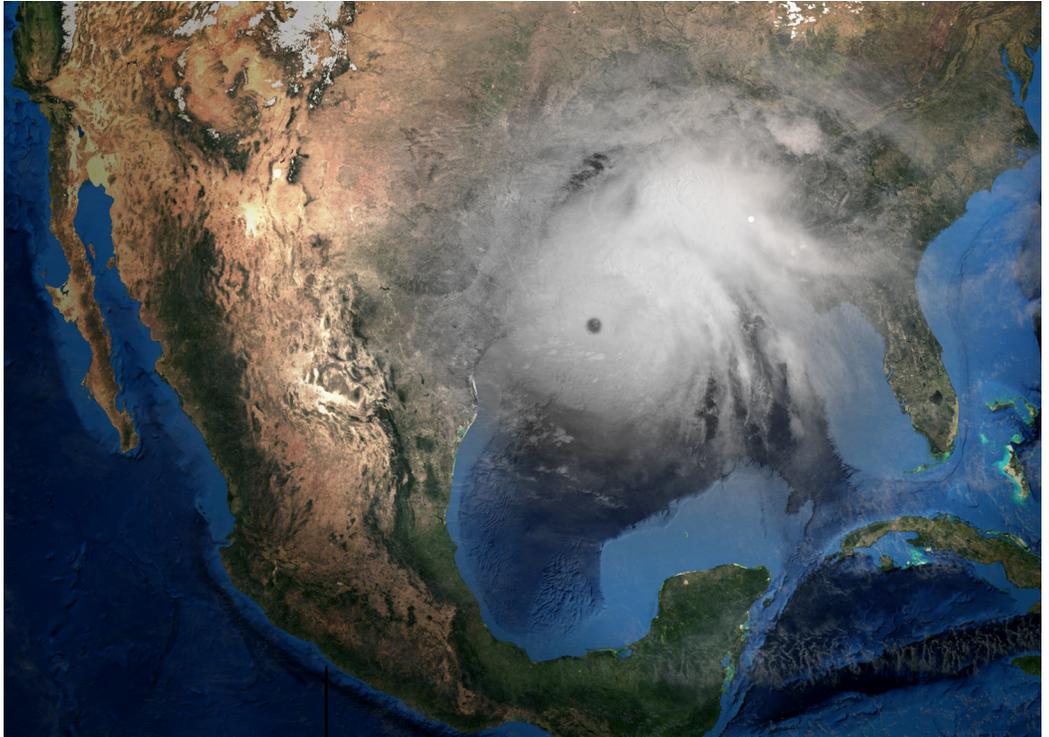
## Hurricane Watch Versus Hurricane Warning

A hurricane **warning** means sustained winds of 74 miles per hour (mph) or higher are **expected**. A hurricane **watch** means hurricane **conditions are possible**. A hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance because preparing for a hurricane becomes difficult once winds reach **tropical storm force** (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph). By issuing the hurricane warning before the onset of tropical storm-force winds, it allows time to prepare.

## Preparing for a Hurricane

If your area is under a hurricane watch or warning, here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the storm:

- **Shutter or board-up windows and doors in advance.** According to the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA), shutters offer the best protection. A second option is to use cut-to-fit 5/8"

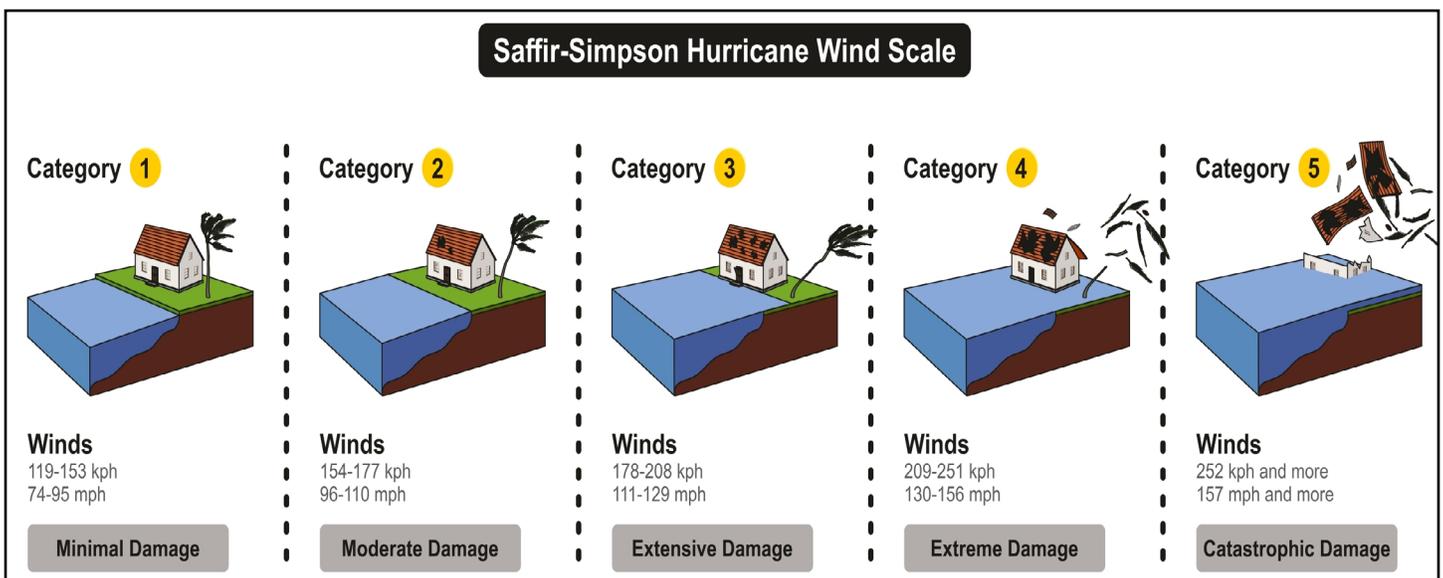


plywood on windows. FEMA does not recommend taping since it does not prevent windows from breaking.

- **Learn about your community's emergency plans.** Know where all the [evacuation routes](#) and [emergency shelter locations](#) are. If emergency managers say to evacuate, then do so.
- **Create a [Grab-and-Go Bag](#).** Ensure you have an emergency kit and all the supplies recommended on FEMA's [hurricane preparedness checklist](#). Look to see if any emergency supplies are missing. (A sample supply list is available on page 3 of this publication.)
- **Turn Down the Temperature.** Adjust refrigerators and freezers to the coldest possible temperature to help preserve food in the event of power loss.

- **Fill Sinks and Bathtubs with Water.**  
If utilities are turned off following a hurricane, filling sinks and tubs with water provides an extra supply for washing and filling toilet tanks.
- **Check Drainage Systems.**  
Clean out gutters, floor drains, and catch basins. Ensure sump pumps are working.
- **Protect Documents.**  
Make sure your vital records are protected or duplicate them and move them offsite to a safe area. Keep computer data backed up and stored in a cloud service.
- **Check Fire Protection Equipment.**  
Inspect all fire protection equipment -- such as sprinkler and extinguishing systems -- to ensure they are in working order. Purchase and make sure your family and employees know [how to use a fire extinguisher](#).
- **Secure Unstable Building Materials.**  
Bring in or secure outdoor objects that could become projectiles, such as propane tanks, grills, and bicycles. Consider securing roofs with [hurricane straps](#).

- **Keep Your Cell Phone Charged.**  
Program emergency phone numbers into cellular phones and keep your phones charged. Purchase solar-powered or portable battery-pack cell phone chargers in the event of a prolonged power outage after the storm.
- **Make a Plan for Your Livestock and Pets.**  
Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Contact your local humane society or veterinary hospital for information on where you can take pets if an evacuation is ordered. Learn in advance which hotels are pet-friendly should you choose to evacuate with your family pets. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters cannot accept animals.
- **Help Others.**  
Confirm that your contact lists are up to date. Check on friends, neighbors, employees, or others to see if they need assistance. Inform local authorities about people with special needs, the elderly, bedridden adults, or [those with disabilities](#) who may need additional help securing hurricane plans.



## Emergency Supplies

**Having the proper supplies on hand is key to getting through an emergency period.** Keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry emergency-preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you if you must evacuate. At a minimum, ensure the following supplies are on hand:

- **Water.**  
Fill your clean water containers. FEMA recommends one gallon per person per day. Plan for a three-day supply for evacuation and a two-week supply for home.
- **Food.**  
Choose nonperishable, easy-to-prepare items. Plan for a three-day supply for evacuation and a two-week supply for home.
- **Flashlight.**  
Remember to get extra batteries.
- **Weather Alert Radio.**  
Keep a battery-powered or hand-crank radio available for emergency alerts. FEMA recommends a [NOAA Weather Radio](#).
- **Medications.**  
Plan for a seven-day supply of medication and any other medical items needed.
- **Multi-Purpose Tool.**  
Select a multitool, such as a Swiss Army Knife, with several tools built into a lightweight, compact design.
- **Sanitation and Personal Hygiene Items.**  
Include soap, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, and disposable cleaning cloths or baby wipes for use if bathing facilities are not available.

- **Personal Documents.**  
Bring copies of personal documents, such as a medication list and related medical information, proof of address, deed or lease to your home, passports, birth certificates, and insurance policies.
- **Cash.**  
Keep extra cash on hand. Automated Teller Machines may be inoperable after a hurricane.
- **Gasoline.**  
Keep your automobile's gas tank full. Get extra fuel for generators and vehicles. If you do not have access to a vehicle, make plans with family or friends for transportation.
- **Water-Purifying Supplies.**  
Chlorine or iodine tablets or unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach can help purify contaminated water after the hurricane. (Most emergency experts and health officials suggest a mixture of eight drops of bleach to a gallon of generally clear water.) An eyedropper and an emergency water filter, such as a LifeStraw®, can also aid in the water-purification process.



- **Emergency Road Kit.**  
Include flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a fire extinguisher, and tire-changing supplies.
- **First Aid Kit.**  
Ensure your kit includes a first aid manual. For a family of four, the [American Red Cross](#) recommends your first aid kit include:
  - ✓ absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches);
  - ✓ 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes);
  - ✓ one adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch);
  - ✓ five antibiotic ointment packets (approximately 1 gram);
  - ✓ five antiseptic wipe packets;
  - ✓ two packets of aspirin (81 mg each);
  - ✓ one emergency blanket;
  - ✓ one breathing barrier with a one-way valve;
  - ✓ one instant cold compress;
  - ✓ two pairs of large non-latex gloves;
  - ✓ two hydrocortisone ointment packets (approximately 1 gram each);
  - ✓ one 3-inch gauze roll bandage;
  - ✓ one roll of 4-inch-wide bandage;
  - ✓ five 3-inch x 3-inch sterile gauze pads;
  - ✓ five sterile 4-inch x 4-inch gauze pads;
  - ✓ one oral non-mercury, non-glass thermometer;
  - ✓ two triangular bandages; and
  - ✓ tweezers.

Additional supplies might include **towels, plastic sheeting, sleeping bags, extra blankets, duct tape, scissors, and work gloves**. Also, depending on your family's requirements, you may need to include **baby supplies, pet supplies**, and other items, such as **extra car and house keys**.

Resources that offer additional information on supplies needed for emergency kits are [Ready.gov](#) and the [American Red Cross](#).

### If Ordered to Evacuate

Because of the destructive power of a hurricane, never ignore an evacuation order. If ordered to evacuate, authorities will likely direct you to leave low-lying areas within the path of the storm. If a hurricane evacuation order is given:

- **Turn Off Utilities.**  
If you have time before evacuating, turn off all utilities (gas, electricity, and water), including water heaters, gas tanks, and heaters.
- **Disconnect Appliances and Electronics.**  
Unplug appliances, computers, electronics, and home and business equipment to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.
- **Take Essential Items Only.**  
Remember to take your grab-and-go bag and your emergency kits.
- **Follow Designated Evacuation Routes.**  
All routes other than designated evacuation routes may be blocked. Expect and prepare for heavy traffic.
- **Stay Away from Low-Lying and Flood-Prone Areas.**  
Winds and storm surge from hurricanes can drive ocean water up rivers and streams, triggering inland flooding, landslides, and mudslides. Always stay on high ground.

## If Ordered NOT to Evacuate

Most injuries during a hurricane are cuts caused by flying glass or other debris. Other injuries include bone fractures and puncture wounds, most caused by exposed nails, metal, or glass.

These steps can help get you through the storm in the safest possible manner:

- **Monitor the Radio or Television for Weather Conditions.**  
Weather alert radios and powerful stations inland can provide vital emergency information and instructions.
- **Shelter in a Strong, Secure Building Away from Windows.**  
Stay indoors until the hurricane passes. Even if the weather appears calm, going outdoors before authorities notify you

that the storm is over may place you in the [eye of the storm](#). A hurricane's eye can pass quickly, leaving you outside when strong winds resume. Therefore, always remain inside until emergency managers verify that the storm has passed.

- **Prepare to Evacuate to a Shelter or a Neighbor's Home.**

If your home is damaged, or if you are instructed to relocate or evacuate by emergency personnel, do so immediately.

For more details on preparing for a hurricane or other weather emergencies, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Natural Disasters and Severe Weather](#) website. Or download any of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation-Workplace Safety's [Natural Disaster Preparedness and Recovery](#) free publications.



[www.txsafetyatwork.com](http://www.txsafetyatwork.com)

**1-800-252-7031, Option 2**

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