

## **Instructions for Safeguarding Against Hurricanes**

### **A. General Information- Warnings**

- A HURRICANE ALERT means that a hurricane may threaten an area within 60 Hours. When your area is under a Hurricane Alert, you should have an established plan and ensure that everyone in your house and place of business is familiar with it. You should also prepare your home and office with supplies well in advance and execute your plan and take notes so as to make adjustments as necessary.
- A HURRICANE WATCH means a hurricane may threaten an area within 48 Hours. A Hurricane Watch is not a hurricane warning, but a first alert for emergency forces and the general public in prospective threatened areas. When your area is under a Hurricane Watch, you should continue normal activities, but stay tuned to radio or television for all Weather Service Advisories.
- A HURRICANE WARNING becomes part of advisories when a hurricane is expected to strike an area within 36 hours. Advisories containing Hurricane Warning include an assessment of flood danger in coastal and inland areas, small craft warnings, gale warnings for the storm's periphery, and estimated storm effects. Recommended emergency procedures are often issued with warnings broadcast on radios, televisions with the internet broadcasting the latest hurricane advisories.

### **B. Precautionary Measures- After Warning and Prior to Hurricane**

- Keep your radios or televisions on and listen for the latest weather service warnings and advisories. If power fails, use portable battery radios or your car radio. Check your battery-powered equipment. Your radio may be your only link with the outside world during a hurricane, and emergency cooking facilities and flashlights will be essential if utility services are interrupted.
- Plan your time before storms arrive. Waiting until the "last minute" might mean you will be marooned.
- Leave beaches or other low lying areas that may be swept by high tides. Leave early; don't run the risk of being marooned.

- Moor your boat securely before the storm arrives, or move it to a designated safe area. When your boat is moored, leave it, and don't return once the wind and waves increase.

- Board up windows or protect them with storm shutters or tape. Danger to small windows is mainly due to wind driven debris. Larger windows may be broken by wind pressure.
- Secure outdoor objects that might be blown away or uprooted. Garbage cans, garden tools, toys, signs, porch furniture, and a number of other harmless items become missiles of destruction in hurricane winds. Anchor them or store them inside before the storm strikes.
- Store drinking water in clean, closed containers, such as jugs, bottles, and cooking utensils. Your community's water supply may be contaminated by flooding or damaged by the hurricane.
- Keep your car fueled. Service stations may be inoperable for several days after the storm strikes due to flooding or interrupted electrical power.
- Unless advised to evacuate, stay at home if your house is sturdy and on high ground. If it is not, move to a designated shelter and stay there until the storm passes.
- Remain indoors during the hurricane. Travel is extremely dangerous when winds and tides are whipping through your area.
- Beware of the "eye" of the hurricane. If the calm storm center passes directly overhead, there will be a lull in the wind lasting from a few minutes to half-an-hour or more. Stay in a safe place unless emergency repairs are absolutely necessary. But remember, on the other side of the "eye" the winds increase very rapidly to hurricane force, and come from the opposite direction.

### **C. Evacuation**

- Past experiences have shown that many major hurricanes can produce surges and floods. If you are warned to evacuate your home and to move to another location (including pre-designated hurricane shelters) temporarily, there are certain things to remember and do. The following are the most important ones:
  - Follow the instructions and advice of local authorities. If you are told to evacuate, do so promptly. If you are instructed to move to a certain location, go there don't go anywhere else. If certain travel routes are specified or recommended, use those routes rather than trying to find short cuts of your own. If you are told to turn off your water, gas or electric service before leaving home, do so.

- Secure your home before leaving. If you have time, and if you have not received other instructions from the local authorities, you should lock your house doors and windows. Similarly, also find a way to secure your vehicle.
- Travel with care. If the authorities are arranging transportation for you, precautions will be taken for your safety. But if you are walking or driving your own car to another location, keep in mind these things:
  - Leave early enough so as not to be stranded by flood roads, fallen trees, and wires.
  - Make sure you have enough gasoline in your car. Follow recommended routes.
  - As you travel, continue listening to the radio for additional information and instructions from your local government.

#### **D. Safety Measures – After Passage of Hurricane**

- Remain in shelters until informed by the authorities that you may return to your home.
- Stay tuned to your radio or television stations for advice and instructions from your local government on:
  - (a) where to go to obtain medical assistance if necessary;
  - (b) where to go for necessary emergency assistance for housing, clothing, food, etc.;
  - (c) ways to help yourself and your community recover from the emergency.
- Use extreme caution in entering or working in buildings that may have been damaged or weakened by the disaster; they may collapse without warning. Also, there may be gas leaks or electrical short circuits.
- Don't take lanterns, naked lights, or lighted cigarettes into buildings that have been damaged by a hurricane; there may be leaking gas lines or flammable materials present. Use battery-power, sports flashlights, etc., if available.
- Stay away from fallen or damaged electric wires, which may still be dangerous. Notify the power company, or the police or the fire department.

- Check for leaking pipes in your home. Do this by smell – don't use matches or candles. If you smell gas, do the following:
  - (1) open all windows and doors;
  - (2) leave the house immediately;
  - (3) turn off the main gas valve at the tank;
  - (4) notify a gas company or competing technician;
  - (5) don't re-enter the house until you are told it is safe to do so.
  
- If any of your electrical appliances are wet, first turn off the main power switch in your house, then unplug the wet appliance, dry it out, reconnect it, and finally, turn on the main power switch. (Caution: Don't do any of these things while you are wet or standing in water.) If fuses blow when the electrical power is restored, turn off the main power switch again and then inspect for short circuits in your home wiring, appliances and equipment.
  
- Check your food and water supplies before using them. Foods that require refrigeration may be spoiled if electric power has been off for some time. Also, do not use fresh food that has come in contact with flood waters.
  
- Stay away from disaster areas. Sightseeing could interfere with first- aid or rescue work, and may also be dangerous as well.
  
- Don't drive unless necessary, but if you must, drive with caution. Watch for hazards to yourself and others, and report them to the local police or fire department.
  
- Report broken sewer or water mains to Water and Sewerage Corporation.

**REMEMBER:** Hurricanes moving inland can cause flooding. Stay away from lakes and ponds to avert any potential danger.