

## SEVERE STORM PREPAREDNESS

Learn how you can minimize the effects of a hurricane disaster by knowing what actions you should take when a storm may be coming your way. Hurricanes and other disasters can strike quickly, but you and your family can be prepared by planning ahead. In addition to installing your shutter panels at least two days in advance, there are other precautions you should take.

### EMERGENCY SUPPLIES:

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffel bags or covered trash containers. Your supplies should include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil.
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first-aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications.
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler's checks.
- Sanitation supplies.
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of glasses.

You should also keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car.

### UTILITIES:

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves. Remember; turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn off the gas, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

### FOUR STEPS TO SAFETY BY THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

The National Hurricane Center has also outlined these four steps to safety in case disaster should strike:

1. **Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office and American Red Cross chapter to:**

### EMERGENCY SUPPLIES:

- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Ask about animal care after disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Next, find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare center and other places where your family spends time.

2. **Meet with your family to discuss why you need to prepare for disaster.**

*Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.*

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
  1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
  2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

3. **Complete this checklist:**

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc).
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency medical services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

4. **Practice and maintain your plan by:**

- Quizzing your kids every six months so they remember what to do.
- Conducting fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replacing stored water every three months and stored food every six months.
- Testing and recharging your fire extinguisher(s) according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Testing your smoke detectors monthly and changing the batteries at least once a year.