The Valley's Guide to Surviving a Storm

- Prepare
- Survive
- Be Safe
- Assistance
- Evacuation Routes

HURRICANE SEASON

June, 2020

The Monitor

We Appreciate you! #RGVSTRONG

Bert Ogden

MISSION - McALLEN  BERTOGDEN.COM  EDINBURG - HARLINGEN
A hurricane can cause widespread devastation during and after it occurs. This guide is designed to help you properly prepare for a hurricane and know how to protect yourself during and after one.

Planning and preparing can make a big difference in safety and resiliency in the wake of a hurricane. The ability to quickly recover following a hurricane requires a focus on preparedness, advance planning, and knowing what to do in the event of a hurricane.

INTRODUCTION

Stay informed: Prepare. Survive a hurricane. Evacuation map.

How to prepare for a hurricane. Predictions for 2020.

Residents should know flood risks. Assume you are going to be hit.

Safety plan is key before the storm. Prepare for the financial impact of natural disasters.

Hurricane tracking map. Insurance tips for hurricane preparation.

Stay safe when caught outdoors. Protect your property.

Preparation starts at home. How to build a pet hurricane kit.

Protect your home and family from flooding.

Secure your medicine. What to put in your hurricane kit.

It’s not too early to PREPARE FOR THE SEASON.

Hurricane season is upon us. State Farm® can help before as well as after it strikes. Contact one of these State Farm agents to learn how to prepare or visit statefarm.com®.
## Locations Valley Wide

**Alamo**
- El Gato Road and South Tower Road*
- 713 South Tower Road (Cavazo’s Drive Thru)**

**Brownsville**
- 3831 Boca Chica Blvd. (AV Lopez)*
- 3031 FM 511 (Port of Brownsville)**
  - East 14th and Austin**
  - 301 E. Elizabeth**
    - N. Paredes Lane and Gregory**
  - Southmost & Morning Side*
- 384 Military Highway 281 (AV Lopez)*
  - Coffeeport and Old Port Isabel**
- 6125 E. FM 802 (Walmart/Murphy USA)
- 2601 Nanette (Cameron Park)
- 7877 Boca Chica (Myram’s Country Store)
- 3405 S. Dakota
- 384 S. Iowa Street (corner of El Valle St. & Iowa)
- 2719 Boca Chica Blvd. (Walmart/Murphy USA)*
- 1600 Alton Gloor (Gloor Hardware and Lumber)**
- 1944 Southmost Road*
- 1375 La Posada Drive (Chavez Grocery)*
- 7951 Southmost Road (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 1180 E. Alton Gloor (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 2305 FM 511 (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 1600 Military Hwy. (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 2255 East Loop (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 2302 Delia Ave. (Lopez)

**Combes**
- Hwy. 107 & Business 77

**Donna**
- South Salinas and South Avenue*
- 416 W. Expressway 83 (Stripes Convenience Store)

**Edinburg**
- *West Sprague and 4th*
  - 2202 W. Monte Cristo (Stripes Convenience Store)
  - West University and Jackson*
  - Owsassa and Tower Rd. (San Marcos Country Store)
  - 1318 S. Tower Rd. (Tortilleria Fiesta)
  - 2563 S. Raul Longoria (Ducky’s Carwash)
  - 2800 S. Clooney (Fiesta Foods)
  - Terry & Ramsayer (El Tendajo)
  - Trenton and McColl (Walmart/Murphy USA)*
  - 8405 E. Harah Drive (DeAlba Bakery)
  - 9224 E. Highway 107 (Stripes Convenience Store)
  - 4420 W. University (Stripes Convenience Store)
  - 2824 E. Freddy Gonzalez (Stripes Convenience Store)

**Harlingen**
- South 17th Street and Buchanan*
- 7th Street and Rio Hondo Rd.
- Morgan Blvd. (across from HEB)*
- Expressway 83 and Stuart Place*
- 1805 W. Lincoln Street (Walmart/Murphy USA)*
- 310 Lozano (Big M)
- 8999 W. Business 83 (Express Foodmart)
- 1560 Sunshine Strip (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 1837 North Stuart Place Rd. (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 2426 East Loop 499 (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 602 North 1st Street (Stripes Convenience Store)

**La Feria**
- 601 North Main*

**Los Fresnos**
- Highway 100 and Brazil*
- 101 E. Ocean Blvd. (Stripes Convenience Store)

**Los Laureles**
- FM 1575 & FM 2893*

**Lyford**
- 13511 Broadway Ave*

**McAllen**
- Pecan and 27th (Pecan Plaza)*
- 620 E. Ridge Road (Tejano Mart)
- 3901 North Ware Rd. (Stripes Convenient Store)

**Mercedes**
- Business 83 & Texas Avenue*
- 16206 E. Indian Hills

**Mission**
- South Conway and Ramirez*
  - Inspiration and Business 83*
  - 1700 E. Griffin Parkway*
  - 2416 E. Expressway 83 (Walmart/Murphy USA)*
  - 520 Inspiration (Stripes Convenient Store)
- 5500 West 7 Mile Road (Stripes Convenient Store)
- 1824 Garland & Moorefield St. (Meat Market)

**Progreso**
- FM 1015 & Palm Drive (Red Ant Mart)

**Raymondville**
- 1483 FM 490* (Murphy USA)

**San Benito**
- 150 Bonner Street (Walmart/Murphy USA)
- 21107 W. Hwy. 281 (Bluett’s)

**San Benito**
- 150 Bonner Street (Walmart/Murphy USA)
- 12616 W. Hwy. 281 (Bluett’s)
- 22341 W. Highway 281 (Johnny’s Country Store)
- 21888 FM 600 (Toecosville)
- 2195 W. Business 77 (Stripes Convenience Store)
- 24523 US Hwy 281 (Stripes Convenience Store)

**Weslaco**
- 1015 and 11 Mile Road*
  - 2424 E. Business 83 (Morena’s Feed Store)*
  - Mile 12 by Mile 3 ½ West (Los Ranarupas)*
- 725 S. Texas Blvd. (Stripes Convenient Store)

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**Locations Valley Wide**

1-800-297-5839

Go to our website to find the location closest to you • www.avantwater.com

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**Ice Available at these locations**

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**The Valley’s Guide to SURVIVING A STORM**
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

You can receive alerts and warnings directly from the National Weather Service for all hazards with a NOAA Weather Radio (NWR). Some radio receivers are designed to work with external notification devices for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information on NWR receivers, visit nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/nwrrcvr.html.

Sign up for emergency alerts and notifications that your community may offer. Download Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings for a summary of notifications at ready.gov/prepare.

WATCHES & WARNINGS

The National Weather Service (NWS), part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), issues alerts when weather conditions make hurricanes more likely. Know the terms used to describe changing hurricane conditions and be prepared to take appropriate action.

TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE ADVISORY

The NWS issues an Advisory when it expects conditions to cause significant inconveniences that may be hazardous. If caution is used, these situations should not be life-threatening.

TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE WATCH

The NWS issues a Watch when a tropical storm or hurricane is possible within 48 hours. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, local radio, TV, or other news sources for more information. Monitor alerts, check your emergency supplies, and gather any items you may need if you lose power.

TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE WARNING

The NWS issues a Warning when it expects a tropical storm or hurricane within 36 hours. During a Warning, complete your storm preparations, and immediately leave the threatened area if directed to do so by local officials.

CREATE YOUR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Your family may not be together when a hurricane occurs, so it is important to know how to contact one another and how to get back together.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

You can build your supplies over time by adding a few items each week or month. Gather in advance the necessary supplies and items you will need to stay safe after the hurricane passes and as you start to recover. Stock food items that do not need refrigeration and will last. Regularly replace items like water, food, medications, and batteries that go bad over time. For a complete list of emergency supplies, visit ready.gov/prepare and then check them off your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist once you add them to your emergency kit.
CITY OF McALLEN HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

www.mcallen.net

311 CITY OF McALLEN CUSTOMER SERVICE CALL CENTER
City of McAllen customer service representatives can answer concerns or provide information. For more information, call 311.

MCALLEN 311 MOBILE APP
Download the McAllen 311 app to any smart phone and stay connected. Use the app to report severe non-emergency weather related issues like downed power lines, traffic signals and other concerns.

CODERED EMERGENCY ALERTS
Sign up for CodeRed Emergency Alerts. Subscribe to real-time alerts via phone, text, email, and TDD via the CodeRed link.

MCALLEN CABLE NETWORK
Watch McAllen Cable Network (MCN) 24 hours a day for news and important information on Spectrum Channel 1100 and also web stream live on www.mcallen.net.

CITY OF McALLEN SOCIAL MEDIA
Follow the City of McAllen on Facebook and Twitter for the most accurate and up-to-date information and instructions during an emergency.

211 TEXAS
Register with the Emergency Assistance Registry. This program from the State of Texas is a FREE registry that provides emergency planners and responders with additional information on the needs of the community.

EMERGENCY CALL 911
POLICE | FIRE | MEDICAL

Scan QR code to sign up for emergency alerts from the City of McAllen.
SURVIVE A HURRICANE

If you are in an area where authorities advise or order you to evacuate - EVACUATE!

DECIDING TO STAY OR GO

If authorities advise or order you to evacuate, grab your “go bag” and leave immediately. If you are not in a mandatory evacuation zone, you may still decide to leave the area, you may need to move to higher ground, or you may choose to stay in your home. If you decide to stay home, remember that even if the high winds and floodwaters do not reach your home, you may lose power and water, and you may not be able to leave your home for several days if the roads are impassable.

TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY

Grab your “go bag” and leave immediately. Follow posted evacuation routes and do not try to take shortcuts because they may be blocked. Stick to designated evacuation routes. For localized information: Evacuation routes: Check with your state’s Department of Transportation or Office of Emergency Management website to find routes near you. Emergency shelter location: To find a shelter near you, check the FEMA mobile app: fema.gov/mobile-app.

DON’T FORGET

Write down your evacuation route and shelter information on your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist.
June 1st marked the beginning of hurricane season, MVEC wants to remind you to take precautions to stay safe during hurricane season. Visit magicvalley.coop to learn more about how you can be ready.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Available at magicvalley.coop

REPORT OUTAGES

MVEC Connect App
magicvalley.coop
1-866-225-5683

STAY INFORMED ABOUT OUTAGES
HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HURRICANE

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should: Stay informed by monitoring the storm via radio, TV, and internet. Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors. Turn off utilities if instructed by authorities to do so. Turn off propane tanks.

Now/Prepare

Sign up for local alerts and warnings. Monitor local news and weather reports.

Prepare to evacuate by testing your emergency communication plan(s), learning evacuation routes, having a place to stay, and packing a "go bag." Stock emergency supplies.

Protect your property by installing sewer backflow valves, anchoring fuel tanks, reviewing insurance policies, and cataloging belongings.

Collect and safeguard critical financial, medical, educational, and legal documents and records.

During/Survive

Follow guidance from local authorities.

If advised to evacuate, grab your “go bag” and leave immediately.

For protection from high winds, stay away from windows and seek shelter on the lowest level in an interior room.

Move to higher ground if there is flooding or a flood warning.

Turn Around Don’t Drown.® Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through floodwaters.

Call 9-1-1 if you are in life threatening danger.

After/Be Safe

Return to the area only after authorities say it is safe to do so. Do not enter damaged buildings until they are inspected by qualified professionals.

Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through floodwaters.

Look out for downed or unstable trees, poles, and power lines.

Do not remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear gloves and sturdy, thick-soled shoes to protect your hands and feet.

Do not drink tap water unless authorities say it is safe.

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale:

- **1** 119-153 kph (74-95 mph) Minimal Damage
- **2** 154-177 kph (96-110 mph) Moderate Damage
- **3** 178-208 kph (111-129 mph) Extensive Damage
- **4** 209-251 kph (130-156 mph) Extreme Damage
- **5** >252 kph (>157 mph) Catastrophic Damage
Multiple climate factors indicate above-normal activity is most likely

An above-normal 2020 Atlantic hurricane season is expected, according to forecasters with NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service. The outlook predicts a 60% chance of an above-normal season, compared to a 30% chance of a neutral season, and only a 10% chance of a below-normal season. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30.

NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center is forecasting a likely range of 13 to 19 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 6 to 10 conditions have been producing storms of 74 mph or higher, including 3 to 6 major hurricanes (category 3, 4, or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher). NOAA provides these ranges with a 70% confidence. An average hurricane season produces 10 named storms, of which 6 become hurricanes, including 3 major hurricanes.

“As Americans focus their attention on a safe and healthy reopening of our country, it remains critically important that we also remember to make the necessary preparations for the upcoming hurricane season,” said Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. “Just as in years past, NOAA experts will stay watchful of developing conditions, and tropical storms and provide the forecasts and warnings we depend on to stay safe.”

The combination of several climate factors is driving the forecast of an active hurricane season in the Atlantic this year. El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are expected to either remain neutral or to trend toward La Nina, meaning there will not be an El Nino present to cool ocean temperatures in the tropical Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, coupled with reduced vertical wind shear, weaker tropical Atlantic trade winds, and an enhanced west-southwest monsoon airflow. Combined, these conditions increase the likelihood for an above-normal 2020 Atlantic hurricane season. Similar conditions have produced active hurricane seasons in recent years.

NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center will update the 2020 Atlantic seasonal outlook in August prior to the historical peak of the hurricane season.

As with every hurricane season, the need to be prepared is critically important this year.

“Social distancing and other CDC guidance to keep you safe from COVID-19 may impact the disaster preparedness plan you had in place, including what is in your go-kit, evacuation routes, shelters and more. With tornado season at its peak, hurricane track and intensity will be defined by COVID-19 impacts,” said Carlos Castillo, acting deputy administrator for OMM.

In addition to the Atlantic hurricane season outlook, NOAA also issued seasonal hurricane outlooks for the eastern and central Pacific basins. NOAA’s outlook is for overall seasonal activity; whether or not it is a typical event is not a forecast. The Climate Prediction Center will update the 2020 Atlantic seasonal outlook in August prior to the historical peak of the hurricane season.

Hurricane preparedness is critically important for our forecasters and computer models.

When Disaster Hits, Will You Be Ready?

1. Make a Plan

Disasters can strike quickly without warning. Your family may not be together in the same place when it happens, so it is important to plan for a disaster or emergency in advance.

• Emergency Contacts - Write down all this information now, before an emergency hits.

• Family meeting spots, both near home and out of town, to meet up with your family in case you are separated.

• Extermination Plan - If you have to leave home, know what preparations you need to make to keep your home's utilities.

2. Build a Kit

You need to have essential supplies that will support you and your family during all types of emergency situations.

• Food & Water - Plan to have enough food and water for up to 3 days, including 2 quarts of water per person per day.

• First Aid & Medication - Keep a medical supply of prescription and non-prescription medication, including any over-the-counter medications you use regularly.

• Lighting & Communication - Keep a flashlight and extra batteries, a radio, and a charged cell phone. Have a backup plan for family and friends.

• Personal Items - Keep your family safe and healthy by having emergency supplies for personal care.

• For Pets - Keep your pet's ID tag visible at all times. If your pet is missing, check with local animal control agencies.

• For Babies - Infants need special attention and care when disaster strikes. Keep a supply of formula and extra diapers. Have a backup plan for child care.

• For Adults - Keep your family safe and healthy by having emergency supplies for personal care.

• For Elderly & Disabled - Keep a supply of medication and emergency supplies for family members with special needs.

• For Children - Keep a supply of food and water for up to 3 days, including 2 quarts of water per child per day.

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• For Elderly & Disabled - Keep a supply of medication and emergency supplies for family members with special needs.

• For Children - Keep a supply of food and water for up to 3 days, including 2 quarts of water per child per day.

3. Get Informed

Whether it’s a severe storm or a pandemic disaster, you need to stay informed. Know what types of emergencies are common in your area and how to prepare for those situations. Ask local officials about the threats that face your area and how to be prepared for them.

Learn the difference between a watch and a warning. A warning means it’s about to happen; seek shelter now. For more information, contact your local emergency management office.

Basic preparation can help keep your family safe

Basic preparation can help keep your family safe from any type of emergency. Make a plan and gather essential items now to avoid a truly disastrous situation. You never know when a disaster will strike. Be prepared.

Go to TexasPrepares.org today, or dial 211 for more information.
While Cameron County officials prepare for hurricane season, officials said ensuring residents are safe has a lot to do with how residents prepare.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Tom Hushen said Cameron County's job during a hurricane is to coordinate state resources for and lead an emergency operations center. He said the county undertakes tabletop meetings and drills with its emergency management partners as part of preparations. The exercises allow officials to ensure rescue points and sandbag distribution areas are ready.

Nathan Flores, a planner with the Emergency Management Department, said officials coordinate communication not only internally but with the sheriff’s department, public health agency and transportation agencies. Dispatchers are equipped with satellite phones to be used in the event cellular towers are damaged, he added, and dispatch centers performed a test of their communication protocol earlier this month.

They also meet with and presented information on hurricane preparation with city governments, schools, hospitals and community organizations.

Hushen stressed that Cameron County residents should prepare for hurricane season by being aware of evacuation routes, particularly if they live in flood-prone areas. Flores echoed that message and said residents should know whether they are at risk for storm surges from resacas, rivers or other bodies of water.

Hushen said one of the lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey was the need for residents to take evacuation warnings seriously. A county judge or mayor doesn’t make the decision to issue a mandatory evacuation lightly, he said.

“The number of water rescues needed shows people didn’t evacuate,” he said. “A lot of people wouldn’t have been injured.”

Hushen added that the more resources used to rescue people from flooded areas means less resources for the recovery that comes after.

Residents should not only know where they would go in the event of an evacuation, Hushen said. They should give their hosts an expected arrival time so that, in the event they don’t get there, someone can be prepared to search for them.
The closer a hurricane gets to Cameron County, the more likely you are to find stores filled with shoppers buying last-minute hurricane supplies. From non-perishable food items to sheets of plywood to protect homes, everyone seems to have avoided buying supplies until it’s almost too late.

Which begs the question, what hurricane supplies should you buy now while you still have time? From a survival standpoint, the answer according to Tom Hushen, the Cameron County Emergency Management coordinator, is to make sure you have everything needed to sustain yourself for a minimum of three days — basically the items recommended on the Department of Homeland Security’s hurricane-preparedness website.

These include one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food, batteries, flashlights, emergency radios and cell phones with chargers and backup batteries. The supplies should be stored in airtight bags and kept in a duffel bag or backpack ready to go in case of a storm.

Property protection is another matter and a question of individual preference. “What we want everyone to do if we have a really bad storm coming is evacuate. That’s just the bottom line,” Hushen said, distinguishing between the damage caused by high winds and the danger posed by the flooding afterward. He said storm shutters and the like can minimize wind damage, “but when you get 45 and 50 inches of rain, it’s going to flood.”

Hurricane Harvey proved that the biggest danger is flooding, he said. The emergency kit becomes important after the storm hits and the lines for food and water grow. “Hopefully Harvey was an eye-opener.” “We haven’t had a bad storm in a long time, and people get complacent,” he said. “If it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen. You have to assume you’re going to be hit. Always.”

**COSTLIEST HURRICANES**

The 10 Costliest Hurricanes and Tropical/Post-Tropical Storms in the United States - 1900-2017:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category or Type</th>
<th>Damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Katrina</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$125 billion (tied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Harvey</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$125 billion (tied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Maria</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$90 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sandy</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Post-Tropical</td>
<td>$65 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Irma</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$50 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ike</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$30 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Andrew</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$27 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ivan</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$20.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Wilma</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$19 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Rita</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$18.5 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: NOAA

Graphic by Eddie Mirza/The Monitor
One of the lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey was the need for residents to take evacuation warnings seriously.

By RAUL GARCIA and NADIA TAMEZ-ROBLEDO
Staff Writers

There is no place on the Texas Gulf Coast that offers as beautiful a view than South Padre Island.

But emergency management leaders are reminding residents that hurricane season is upon us and planning and being prepared are the best answers when a storm approaches the Island and it’s time to evacuate.

Cameron County Parks Director Joe Vega is one who is planning. He will be keeping watch so the public has enough time to execute their safety or evacuation plan.

One of the ways he’s going to keep everyone on the Island informed is by tracking and monitoring any activity that is forming in the Atlantic and the Gulf.

“We get daily Atlantic briefings of disturbances or things to watch happening in the Atlantic,” Vega said. “If there is a storm heading our way, we start tracking the storm and we make sure if the RVs need to be relocated.”

He said the county has more than 600 RV sites to alert if a storm is heading to the Island.

“We want to make sure if there is a storm heading our way, we give them ample warning,” Vega said.

Vega said the county emergency management team and the county judge work together. But the county judge makes the decision on when to evacuate.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Tom Hushen stressed that residents should prepare for hurricane season by being aware of evacuation routes, particularly if they live in flood-prone areas.

Hushen said one of the lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey was the need for residents to take evacuation warnings seriously. A county judge or mayor doesn’t make the decision to issue a mandatory evacuation lightly, he said.

“We need to be prepared years in advance for the evacuation side, emergency medical need, shelters and how people will evacuate,” Hushen said.

Hushen said Hurricane Harvey did affect us in some manner, even though it turned out of the Valley’s way since 1851 Texas has had 64 direct hurricane hits. Florida leads with 117 and Louisiana third with 54.
PREPARE FOR THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS

It's easy to underestimate the scope of the financial burdens caused by natural disasters. Here are a few ways to protect one's financial interests in advance of natural disasters.

Story Courtesy of NOAA

The fury of Mother Nature's wrath is displayed in vivid color during stormy times of year, including hurricane season. And it seems no area of the planet is safe from such fury. In September 2018, Hurricane Florence battered the southeastern coast of the United States while Typhoon Mangkhut hit Hong Kong. Just a few months earlier, California saw devastating wild fires, and in August torrential rain flooded many areas of Taiwan.

After the flood waters recede and the rain or smoke has passed, people affected by storms must face the financial ramifications. Whether storms touch down nearby or overseas, the globalized economy means the financial fallout from natural disasters can be felt near and wide. The National Centers for Environmental Information estimates that hurricanes cost an average of $21.8 billion per event in damages for the United States. Since 1980, when data started to be collected, NCEI indicates hurricanes (tropical cyclones), drought, flooding, wildfires, freezes, and winter storms tend to be the most costly events.

It's easy to underestimate the scope of the financial burdens caused by natural disasters. Here are a few ways to protect one's financial interests in advance of natural disasters.

• Recognize your portfolio may suffer damage when they roll through. Be prepared to protect your financial interests.

HOW DO HURRICANES FORM?

Hurricanes are powerhouse weather events that suck heat from tropical waters to fuel their fury. These violent storms form over the ocean, often beginning as a tropical wave—a large area of low pressure area that moves through the moisture-rich tropics, possibly enhancing shower and thunderstorm activity.

As this weather system moves westward across the tropics, warm ocean air rises into the storm, forming an area of low pressure underneath. This causes more air to rush in. The air then rises and cools, forming clouds and thunderstorms. Up in the clouds, water condenses and forms droplets, releasing even more heat to power the storm.

When winds speeds within such a storm reach 74 mph, it's classified as a hurricane. The terms "hurricane" and "tropical cyclone" refer to the same kind of storm: a rotating, organized system of clouds and thunderstorms that originates over tropical or subtropical waters and has closed, low-level circulation.

During just one hurricane, raging winds can churn out about half as much energy as the electrical generating capacity of the entire world, while cloud and rain formation from the same storm might release a staggering 400 times that amount.

Warm ocean waters and thunderstorms fuel power-hungry hurricanes

Recipe for a Hurricane

Whipping up a hurricane calls for a number of ingredients readily available in tropical areas:

A pre-existing weather disturbance: A hurricane often starts out as a tropical wave.

Warm water: Water at least 26.5 degrees Celsius over a depth of 50 meters powers the storm.

A large difference in wind speed and direction around or near the storm can weaken it. Mix it all together, and you've got a hurricane—maybe. Even when all these factors come together, a hurricane doesn't always develop.

The Eye of a Hurricane

The eye is located in the center of a hurricane. Typically circular or oval, the formation has the appearance reminiscent of a human eye when viewed from above. While the area inside of the eye is relatively calm, the surrounding eyewall is where the harshest weather and winds occur. If the eye of a storm is over your area, you will experience a short period of calm. Then, as the other side of the eyewall passes over, hurricane force winds will quickly ramp up from the opposite direction.

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HURRICANE TRACKING MAP

EMERGENCY NUMBERS:
State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry
211 REGISTRY for special assistance. To register call: 877-541-7905.

2020 HURRICANE NAMES

ARTHUR  BERTHA  CRISTOBAL  DOLLY  EDOUARD  FAY  GONZALO
HANNA  ISAIAS  JOSEPHINE  KYLE  LAURA  MARCO  NANA
OMAR  PAULETTE  RENE  SALLY  TEDDY  VICKY  WILFRED

Source: NOAA
Property owners also need to make sure they have the right type of insurance, depending on where their residence and/or business is located, and what type of property they wish to cover.

By STEVE CLARK
Staff Writer

An above-normal 2020 Atlantic hurricane season is expected, according to forecasters with NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service. The outlook predicts a 65% chance of an above-normal season, a 30% chance of a near-normal season and only a 10% chance of a below-normal season. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30.

At the top of the list is “keep an inventory.” TDI has available on its website a Home Inventory Checklist that can be printed or emailed. It’s important to take photos or video of each room of a house and the exterior as part of the inventory.

Also, families should gather important documents, insurance cards and policies. If you’re forced to evacuate and you don’t have a storm-proof location to store such documents, take them with you, TDI advises. Business owners should consider alternative ways to store company files, such as scanning and emailing, and taking photos of office equipment and furniture.

The department reminds policyholders to check what their policies actually cover, and make sure their homeowners and/or commercial property coverage is still in force and that it will cover the full replacement cost of storm-damaged property if needed.

Vehicle policies that include “other than collision” coverage will provide coverage in the event a vehicle is damaged by fire, flooding or storm damage, TDI says. Also, policyholders need to know the limits of their policy and the amount of their deductible — the portion of the loss the policy holder is responsible for paying.

The best way to find that out is to contact your insurance agent, according to TDI.

Property owners also need to make sure they have the right type of insurance, depending on where their residence and/or business is located, and what type of property they wish to cover. For instance, flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program is necessary to protect from losses caused by most flooding, although it takes 30 days for flood insurance to become effective.

Also, families should gather important documents, insurance cards and policies. If you’ve evacuated the area, wait for public officials to say it is safe before returning. Each year, a significant number of people are injured or killed while cleaning up after a hurricane. As you begin cleanup, keep these safety tips in mind:

**STAY SAFE**

Do not wade in floodwaters, which can contain dangerous debris like broken glass, metal, dead animals, sewage, gasoline, oil, and downed power lines. Do not enter a building until it has been inspected for damage to the electrical system, gas lines, septic systems, and water lines or wells. Wear appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, rubber boots, and masks to protect you from debris and airborne particles, e.g., mold and dust. Do not use electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water.

**STAY HEALTHY**

Throw out any food including canned items that were not maintained at a proper temperature or have been exposed to floodwaters. Do not eat food from a flooded garden. When in doubt, throw it out. Avoid drinking tap water until you know it is safe. If uncertain, boil or purify it first. Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals. Protect your pet following a hurricane. To learn more, visit [ready.gov/animals](http://ready.gov/animals).

**STEPS FOR POST-HURRICANE CLEAN-UP**

Use appropriate personal protective equipment to avoid injury from possible exposure to mold and bacteria including gloves, goggles, rubber boots, and N95 masks.

**AIR OUT**

by opening all doors and windows whenever you are present. Leave as many windows open when you are not present as security concerns allow

**MOVE OUT**

saturated porous materials such as mattresses or upholstered items, especially those with visible fungal growth.

**TEAR OUT**

drying, paneling, drywall, insulation, and electrical outlets saturated by floodwater.

**CLEAN OUT**

and disinfect any remaining debris and mud.

**DRY OUT**

the building and any remaining contents.

**BE SAFE POST-DISASTER TIPS**

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   - **MOVE OUT** saturated porous materials such as mattresses or upholstered items, especially those with visible fungal growth.
   - **TEAR OUT** flooring, paneling, drywall, insulation, and electrical outlets saturated by floodwater.
   - **CLEAN OUT** and disinfect any remaining debris and mud.
   - **DRY OUT** the building and any remaining contents.
For the unprepared, the potential for injury is significant. So it’s important to routinely brush up on surviving a storm when caught in one outdoors.

Lightning
Lightning can pose a significant threat. Real Clear Science says the average bolt of lightning, striking from a cloud to ground, carries roughly one billion joules of energy, 300 million volts and 30,000 amps. Lightning also generates temperatures hotter than the surface of the sun. According to data monitored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in North America, Florida, Texas and Colorado had the highest number of lightning-related fatalities between 2005 and 2014. Environment Canada says that roughly 10 people die in Canada each year because of lightning. NOAA says to stay away from tall, isolated trees, which can become lightning rods. The same can be said regarding power lines. It also may blow around outdoor stores. Finding shelter when lightning strikes is ideal but not always possible. If you cannot get indoors, the next best thing is to stay low to the ground. Lightning tends to strike the tallest items around. Therefore, staying put in a ditch or depression in the ground can protect you against a possible lightning strike.

Environment Canada says that roughly 10 people die in Canada each year because of lightning. NOAA says to stay away from tall, isolated trees, which can become lightning rods. The same can be said for seeking shelter under a tent or pavilion, as these structures are often metal and can conduct the lightning.

Winds
High winds also pose a safety risk. These winds may accompany thunderstorms, tornados or hurricanes. For those who are caught outside in high winds, The Weather Channel advises taking cover next to a tree or a building, although he was unaware that, but it was done. "During the storm, there was nobody out saying you can’t go down this road and whatnot," Rektorik said. "I probably shouldn’t have been out there, but when you’re 20-something-years-old, you’re infallible. You can’t get hurt." Asked whether he was ever frightened during the storm, Rektorik said he was too young to know any better. "I think his name was Daniel," Rektorik said of the boy he saw playing in the vicinity of Sixth Street and Bridge Avenue in Weslaco. "I knew him; I had coached him in Little League. . . . (He was) running around being a kid. "

For the unprepared, the potential for injury is significant. So it’s important to routinely brush up on surviving a storm when caught in one outdoors.
PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Planning and preparing before a hurricane strikes can help you manage the impact of high winds and floodwaters. Take the steps outlined below to keep you and your family safe while protecting your home and property. If you are a renter, talk with your landlord or property manager about the steps you can take together to protect yourself, your family, your home, and your property.

WIND
High winds: The best way to reduce the risk of damage to a structure from hurricane winds is to reinforce or strengthen the building including doors, windows, walls, and roofs. The best way to protect yourself is to consider either constructing a safe room that meets FEMA criteria or a storm shelter that meets ICC 500 criteria. Wind-borne debris: Bring loose, lightweight objects (e.g., patio furniture, garbage cans, and bicycles) inside; anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (e.g., gas grills and propane tanks); and trim or remove trees close enough to fall on buildings.

FLOOD
There are steps that you or your property owner can take now to make your home or business more flood resistant. Some improvements are simple and inexpensive. As your budget allows, take these steps to protect your property from flood damage and manage your risks. Keep gutters and drains free of debris. Stockpile emergency protective materials such as plywood, plastic sheeting, and sandbags. Elevate the heating system (furnace), water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding. Waterproof the basement. In areas with repetitive flooding, consider elevating the building.

FLOOD INSURANCE
Most property insurance policies do not cover flood losses, so you will need to purchase separate flood insurance if your property is at risk for flooding. Talk to your insurance agent about buying flood insurance. Flood insurance is available for homeowners, renters, and business owners through the National Flood Insurance Program in participating communities. Keep in mind that a policy purchased today will take 30 days to go into effect, so act now!

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION
Make sure you have everything you’ll need to get in touch with your family either through cellular phones or email.

MEDICAL NEEDS
Be equipped to tend to any current or unexpected medical conditions your family may have.

CRITICAL DOCUMENTS
Place any important documents in a waterproof container to help keep them dry and easily accessible.

TOOLS AND SAFETY ITEMS
Small items like matches, flashlights, a multi-purpose tool, and a whistle can make a huge difference for your family while weathering the storm.

FOOD/SUPPLIES
Have at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water for your family. Remember to pack anything specific to your family’s needs.

HYGIENE AND SANITATION
Practicing good hygiene can stop the spread of bacteria and infectious disease.

PROTECTIVE GEAR
Protect yourself by packing warm clothes and blankets to prevent hypothermia. Don’t forget protective footwear and gloves too.

COMFORT & PRICELESS ITEMS
You may be away from your home for an extended period and your property may be damaged. Grab any items that are irreplaceable or may provide comfort to your family, especially your children. Ask yourself, “What would I need for myself and my family if a hurricane struck?” Add any of these specific items to your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist.

STRUCTURE OF A HURRICANE

SOURCE: NOAA Graphic by Eddie Mirza/The Monitor
Families should know in advance where to go if evacuation becomes necessary, which means knowing the local hurricane-evacuation route or routes and having a plan for lodging.

By STEVE CLARK
Staff Writer

For starters, here’s an explanation of the difference between a hurricane warning and a hurricane watch:

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a warning means sustained winds of 74 mph or higher — hurricane conditions — are expected somewhere within a specified area. A warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds, or sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph, to give people enough time to prepare, and evacuate if so directed by local officials.

A hurricane watch, according to NOAA, means hurricane conditions are possible within the specified area. Watches are issued 48 hours before the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds in the area. When a watch is issued, that means it’s time to secure your home, review your evacuation plan and stay alert for a hurricane warning.

Preparing one’s home or business includes trimming or removing damaged trees and limbs, securing loose rain gutters and downspouts, and clearing out any clogged areas or debris to prevent water damage to the property, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA says property owners can reduce damage by retrofitting to secure and reinforce roofs, windows and doors, including garage doors. The agency recommends buying a portable generator or installing a “whole house” generator for power outages. Also, residents may consider building a FEMA safe room or OCC 500 storm shelter designed for protection from high winds, as long as it’s above flood level.

Families should know in advance where to go if evacuation becomes necessary, which means knowing the local hurricane-evacuation route or routes and having a plan for lodging. Evacuation if necessary, which means knowing the local hurricane-evacuation route or routes and having a plan for lodging. Evacuation if necessary, which means knowing the local hurricane-evacuation route or routes and having a plan for lodging.

211 REGISTRY
FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)
The STEAR program is a free registry that provides local emergency planners and emergency responders with additional information on the needs in their community.

Who Should Register for STEAR?

People with Disabilities

People with access and functional needs such as:

- People who have limited mobility
- People who have communication barriers
- People who require additional medical assistance during an emergency event
- People who require transportation assistance
- People who require personal care assistance

How to register for STEAR

Call: 877-541-7905

By ALEXIS AGUIRRE
Staff Writer

Hurricane season is hysterically approaching and the time to prepare for emergencies is now. In the case of strong weather, emergency evacuations will be ordered. For some, the ability to leave their home in a hurry is not easy or even feasible.

Those residents are being asked to call 2-1-1 to be placed on the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry or STEAR. STEAR was created after the 2005 hurricane season by the University of Texas Center for Space Research to help evacuate those in need of special assistance during emergencies. The registry allows residents with disabilities or transportation barriers to plan their escape route before the storm hits.

By dialing 2-1-1 and answering standard questions about their status and needs, residents at-risk can ask for the help they need and plan ahead.

The number is not an emergency line and should not be used as such. While registering, residents will be asked basic information such as their name and address along with their primary language, caregiver info and whether or not they have pets. All information is completely confidential and the registry is voluntary.

Charles Hoskins, deputy emergency management coordinator of Cameron County Emergency Management, said the registry is for those that feel they would need assistance in evacuating.

During an emergency, those on the registry will be asked to go to a pick up point in the Cameron County area before being transferred to a safe haven and shelter away from danger. Hoskins said during emergencies, the center notifies the state of how many buses they’ll need to transport residents out of harm’s way. “The registry helps identify the number of buses needed in the case of an emergency,” Hoskins said.

For more information, visit the STEAR website at https://211texas.org/steartexas.
HOW TO BUILD A PET HURRICANE KIT

By MARK REAGAN
Staff Writer

When preparing for a hurricane, it’s important to remember any four-legged family members in the household. Just like it’s important to have a hurricane kit put together for the family, those prepping also should consider having a kit together for any pets in the home.

There are three categories to consider when putting together a kit for the pet, including documents; water, food and meds; and other miscellaneous supplies.

Starting with documents, each kit should include veterinary records for each pet. This type of information includes vaccinations, a medical summary, any prescriptions the animal needs and a record of the pet’s most-recent heartworm test.

Also, the kit should include the registration information, a pet description like breed, sex, color and weight, along with microchip information and your contact information, all placed in a waterproof container. This information should be included for each pet in the household.

Like humans, pets will need to eat and need to have an adequate supply of any medications they need.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends each kit have a two-week supply of food in a waterproof container and a two-week supply of water for each animal, along with non-spill food and water dishes. The kit should include feeding instructions for each animal.

Also, the kit should include a two-week supply of any relevant medications, medical instructions and a one-month supply of flea, tick and heartworm medications.

A pet supply kit should include a leash, collar with identification and a harness. It’s also important to have a pet carrier with bedding and a blanket on hand.

And in the event of an injury, the kit should include a pet first-aid book and kit.

When building a pet kit, don’t forget cleaning supplies like paper towels, plastic bags and disinfectant in case of an accident.

Oh, and maybe include the pet’s favorite toys, too.

6 HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS FOR PETS

1. Make a Plan
Simply put, be prepared. Decide on a course of action and make sure you can initiate it at a moment’s notice. Have supplies set aside in a safe, easily accessible place. It’s like having candles or a flashlight under the kitchen sink in case of a blackout. You may never need them, but if a blackout happens, there’s no need to scramble in the dark, because you know exactly where to go and what to do for light.

2. Be a Stickler
Whatever your decision is, stick to it. Otherwise, you may put your pet in real danger. If you decide to leave town at the first sign of warning, then do so as planned. No dilly-dallying. Changing your mind or changing the plan often leads to unnecessary accidents, as you’re no longer prepared.

3. Get Your Kit On
A pet emergency kit isn’t that much different to yours. Enough water for three days, non-perishable food (include a can opener if needed), a solid carrier, litter, litter box, puppy pads, plastic bags, medicine and medical records for both you and your pet in waterproof containers, extra leash, and a picture of your pet on you in case the worst happens and you get separated. Tags and/or microchipping your pet will also make it easier to recover, should it get lost.

4. Staying In
If you’re staying home to ride out the storm, keep your pet in its carrier or on a leash. You never know when you might be forced to evacuate. And even if that doesn’t happen, you don’t want to be tracking down a petrified pet during the chaos. Therefore, secure your pet before the storm hits.

5. Going Out
Stay tuned to the news reports. If you’re told to evacuate, you must do so at first warning. Moreover, it helps to have everything ready to go. We suggest a backpack that holds all the essentials for you and your pet. And make sure you know ahead of time exactly where all the shelters are and how to get there.

6. Stay Calm
Whether you leave early, choose to stay, or are required to evacuate due to the storm’s severity or due to house damage, remember to stay calm. Your pet can sense your emotions, so a calming demeanor can lead to a less-panicked pet. Oh, and don’t forget to speak to your pet in a calm, soothing voice, too.

SOURCE: PETMD.COM

Hurricanes, like floods, brushfires, and tornadoes, can be frightening things to be caught in (and these tips can be applied to those natural disasters, too). But with some forethought and preparation, you can make the storm easier and safer for you and your pet.
FLOODING is responsible for a significant portion of property damage in the United States, but only 38% of people living in a high risk flood zone have a flood insurance policy.

PROTECT YOUR HOME AND FAMILY FROM FLOODING

Flooding can cause considerable distress, uproot families and damage structures. But even people who live in flood zones can take steps to be flood-safe.

Flooding is a natural disaster that often strikes with little, if any, warning. The environmental awareness site Natural Rivers states that floods are the most common natural hazard in North America in terms of number of lives lost and property damage. Floods can occur day or night and any time of the year. Flooding can also occur in all different terrains.

In September 2018, many of the inland towns of North Carolina were flooded in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence, displacing millions. The following month saw severe flooding in central and southern Texas that prompted Governor Greg Abbott to declare a state of disaster in 18 counties. Accuweather reported in the summer of 2018 that historic flooding closed famed Hershey Park, shuttering attractions for a few days.

Flooding can cause considerable distress, uproot families and damage structures. But even people who live in flood zones can take steps to be flood-safe.

- **Purchase flood insurance.** Many people and properties are not covered for flooding under standard homeowners insurance policies. As a result, it is essential to purchase separate flood insurance. The home improvement and information site HouseLogic says that flood insurance may be required by mortgage companies for those financing homes in flood plains.
- **Have a ‘go bag’ ready.** This is a great idea in preparation for any type of emergency situation. Go bags can include a few changes of clothes, important documents and phone numbers, essential toiletries, extra cash, and non-perishable foods. You may want to stock go bags with flashlights, batteries and waterproof shoes as well. Evacuate if a flood is predicted to be severe.
- **Know your flood level.** Check flood maps at the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s website (FEMA.gov) or your local building department. This will help you know just how high the water might rise in certain scenarios so you can plan accordingly.
- **Safeguard key home systems.** Protect sockets, switches, breakers, and wiring in a home by placing them at least one foot above the expected flood level in your area, offers the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety. Move the furnace, water heater and any other key appliances so they sit above the property’s flood level.
- **Vent the water.** Foundation vents, sump pumps, drains, and more can help keep water from accumulating in or around the foundation of a home.
- **Consider a grading change.** The grading or slope of ground can be adjusted to direct water away from your home. If your street is prone to standing water after ordinary rainstorms, talk to your county planning or environmental services department about potential modifications.
- **Prepare for the worst.** Home piers or columns can lift the lowest floor of a home above flood level. It’s an expensive undertaking but can be worth it in high-flood areas.
- **Flooding is no joke.** Homeowners can safeguard their homes with some protective steps.
If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity, talk to your doctor or health care provider about how you can prepare for its use during a power outage.

By GARY LONG
Staff Writer

When preparing for a hurricane, the most important question to ask is "could I make it on my own for at least three days?"

The task then is to stockpile sufficient supplies so that the answer is "yes," according to the Department of Homeland Security's emergency preparedness website, www.ready.gov.

For people with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease and others, the advice is even more important because in many cases their medicines are life-sustaining. Such medicines include blood-sugar lowering drugs like insulin for Type 1 diabetics, and metformin for Type 2 diabetics. Cholesterol-lowering drugs, blood thinners and other drugs are important for people suffering from heart conditions.

"People need to check with their pharmacy, because during a disaster they're able to refill prescriptions earlier and for a longer period," said Tom Hushen, Cameron County Emergency Management coordinator.

For those dependent on kidney dialysis or other life-sustaining treatment, "they're the ones we're trying to reach to evacuate early," Hushen said, adding that dialysis centers in Cameron County near the coast usually evacuate to their nearest adjacent location in Hidalgo or Starr county.

The ready.gov website also advises:

- Wear medical alert tags
- If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity, talk to your doctor or health care provider about how you can prepare for its use during a power outage.
- Create a support network. Keep a contact list in a watertight container in your emergency kit.
- Contact your city or county government's emergency management agency or office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be helped quickly in a sudden emergency.

Test your knowledge

How to prepare a business ahead of the storm

By STEVE CLARK
Staff Writer

Getting your place of business ready for a hurricane is similar in many ways to preparing your home: fortifying the roof and doors and installing shutters or plywood to project windows from wind-borne debris, removing weak trees and limbs nearby, and the like.

And while it's important to safeguard vital documents at home, it's also vital to protect business-related documents. The National Hurricane Survival Initiative says business owners should preserve contacts crucial to business operations such as employees, banks, lawyers, accountants, suppliers, etc.

NHIS also recommends setting up a backup location in advance where business operations could continue smoothly if a hurricane strikes, and discussing the temporary location with all employees.

"If your business is damaged, remember to assess, document, and report them to your insurance company as soon as possible," says the NHIS.

As with residential properties, commercial property owners should talk to their agents to find out if their insurance coverage is adequate to cover full replacement in the event of storm damage, make sure the correct type of coverage is in place, and learn about deductibles.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov 30.
HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE

DO YOU HAVE FLOOD INSURANCE?

Did you know that your home insurance DOES NOT include FLOOD PROTECTION?

CALL TODAY FOR A FREE QUOTE!

956-997-6777

Here are some samples of your flood insurance price for preferred risk:

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<th>Building / Content Protection</th>
<th>Deductible</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

FREE ESTIMATES AND ALL INSURANCE WELCOME

(956) 432-7288

Important Information: Your actual premium may be higher or lower based on a number of factors. Coverages are subject to policy terms, conditions, qualifications, and availability.
One of the most important aspects of preparing for hurricane season is making sure to have a hurricane kit prepared with the essential supplies needed to survive the aftermath.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends having a kit in the household where people can weather the storm, as well as in vehicles and at places of work.

The basic kit includes 10 essential items. One key ingredient to the kit is water. Each kit should contain one gallon of water per person for at least three days. The water is designated not just for drinking, but for sanitation as well.

Second up is food. In the case that power is out for an extended amount of time, each kit should include at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food items. These are food items that do not need refrigeration, such as canned goods.

With food and water covered, people building a hurricane kit should be sure to have contact with the outside world in case power is out. This is simple. Each kit should include a battery-powered or hand crank radio as well as a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.

In the event of a disaster, the more batteries a person has in their kit, the better. Another battery-reliant item that is necessary for the hurricane kit is a flashlight. Also, each kit should include a whistle. The whistle is important in case people need to signal their location to first responders for help.

Should a hurricane devastate Brownsville, all sorts of contaminants could be released into the atmosphere. With that said, each kit should include a dust mask, or masks, depending on how many live in the household. The kit should include plastic sheeting and duct tape to cover areas of a household that have been damaged to the extent that the household becomes exposed to the elements.

Each kit should include moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation.

In the event of a disaster, people should be certain to turn off utilities to avoid serious accidents. That’s why each kit should include a wrench or pliers to turn off those utilities.

Lastly, each kit should include a can opener for food and local maps to help navigate a world that may look completely different than it did before a major storm.

These are just the basic essential items needed for a kit. In the event of a major storm it’s best to be as prepared as possible, so there are a few more items people preparing a hurricane kit might consider.

For instance, prescription medication and glasses should be included if relevant. If there is an infant in the house, be sure to include infant formula and diapers. Important documents like insurance, identification and bank account records should be kept in a waterproof, portable container. And it’s also important to have cash, traveler’s checks or change included in the hurricane kit.

### CLEAN-UP CHECKLIST

### BEFORE A HURRICANE

**Stack your emergency kit and “go bag” with:**

- Flashlight
- Multi-purpose tool
- Matches or lighter in waterproof container
- Whistle
- Paper towels/moist towelettes
- Toilet paper
- Bleach

### PROTECTIVE GEAR & CLOTHING

- Extra warm clothes
- sturdy shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra socks

### MEDICAL NEEDS

- Meditations, for at least one week and copies of prescriptions
- Extra eyeglasses/contact lenses
- Medical equipment/assistive technology and backup batteries
- First aid kit

### CRITICAL DOCUMENTS

- AM/FM radio/NOAA Weather Radio (extra batteries)
- Cellular phone, extra battery, and chargers for electrical equipment
- Important documents like insurance, identification and bank account records
- Financial information (e.g., bank account or credit card information)
- Property records (e.g., insurance policies, deed, or lease)
- Important contact information for family, school, work, doctors, etc., including phone numbers and email addresses
- Financial information (e.g., bank account or credit card information)
- First aid kit

### TOOLS & SAFETY ITEMS

- First aid kit
- Multi-purpose tool
- Matches or lighter in waterproof container
- Whistle
- etc.

### FOOD/SUPPLIES

- At least a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food, supplies, and extra water
- etc.

### HYGIENE & SANITATION

- Soap/disinfectant/sanitizer
- Paper towels/moist towelettes
- Toilet paper
- Bleach

**The time to prepare for a hurricane is now.**

This helpful checklist will get you started.

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By MARK REAGAN

Staff Writer
Hidalgo County only opens sandbag distribution sites in anticipation of continuous and extended heavy rainfall events where severe, widespread flooding may occur. Please contact your respective precinct for more information.
Planning ahead can make a life-saving difference in the event of a natural disaster or emergency. Go to ready.gov for a comprehensive list of emergency preparedness tips.

Planificación con anticipación podría ser la diferencia para salvar vidas en el caso de un desastre natural o una emergencia. Vaya a ready.gov para una lista comprensiva de sugerencias de preparación.
June, 2020

CENSUS 2020

2020 Census Data in Times of Emergency

Every 10 years, the United States undertakes its largest and most extensive mobilization operation. The objective is to count everyone residing in the United States. At its core, an accurate Census count will mold the development of Hidalgo County for the next decade. Funding for education, economic development, housing, healthcare, and many other programs is dispersed using Census data. An undercount will result in reduced funding for many programs and organizations vital for the wellbeing of Hidalgo County. However, as we enter hurricane season, an accurate Census count is imperative for our community to be prepared for the unpredictable. Funds used for roads, highways, drainage, and other infrastructure development needed to withstand hurricanes or heavy rainfall are contingent on accurate Census data. Furthermore, data collected provides rapid and accurate identification of our at-risk populations during an emergency situation.

During a hurricane emergency, accurate Census data will allow us to be equipped to endure unprecedented events: completing your 2020 Census will bring this preparedness to our community.

Friday Night Lights is a football-themed competition between school districts in Hidalgo County. Each week, school districts will compete to increase the Census response rate within their geographical boundaries.

14 TEAMS

ONE WINNER

13 WEEKS

Rules:
- Every school district will “play” against each other over 13 weeks.
- The school district with the highest Census response rate increase within that week will be the winner of the head-to-head matchup.
- Each week’s response rate is independent; response rates will be compared every Thursday afternoon.
- School district geographical boundaries will be analyzed by Census tract to identify response rate increases.
- Similar to football, each district will have a win-to-loss ratio, indicating their performance record.
- The districts with the highest records at the end of the 13 weeks will be the winners.

To find the latest matchups and Census response rates, visit www.HidalgoCounty.us/FNL

*As of May 27

Respond Today!

We need your help!
The 2020 Census can be completed online, over the phone, or by mail.
- Online: www.2020Census.gov
- Phone: English: 1-844-330-2020
  Spanish: 1-844-468-2020

Completing the Census is important, easy and safe. Data collected through the Census is protected by Title 13 of the US Code and cannot be shared. Your information is confidential. You have the opportunity to mold the future of Hidalgo County.

united we count
unidos contamos
I can help you feel better prepared.
This weekend while cleaning up around the house, take the time to clean your yard. Removing damaged tree limbs can keep them from becoming a wind hazard. For more easy ways to prepare for hurricane season, call me first.

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