

## Hurricane Preparedness

Cypress Breeze Plantation is a wonderful place to live and over the last year or two we have grown tremendously. As a result, we have many new full-time residents and owners that are not native to the Gulf Coast and familiar with what tropical storm season means for our homes and neighborhood.

In 2018, Hurricane Michael (CAT 5) was headed directly for us and we were fortunate to be spared. The 2021 Hurricane Season began on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and runs through November. This Tropical Storm Season is forecasted to be “average” which means we can expect to see 10-14 named storms, of which 7 are expected to become hurricanes. Any of these could affect us living near the Gulf of Mexico.

Here’s a great link to learn more about Tropical Storm Season 2021 and How to prepare... [State of Florida Hurricane Preparedness Guide 2021](#)

Bringing things closer to home, here are some special tips for Cypress Breeze owners and residents in case a storm threatens:

- We are in Evacuation Zone C. Follow all mandatory Walton County Emergency directives for evacuations but also have a game plan for your family as to what/when will trigger your personal decision to leave the area.
- Many homeowners may want to stay on-site and protect their property during lesser storms (Tropical storms, CAT 1-2 Hurricanes). However, even tropical storms can pack a punch and cause flooding, wind damage, and power outages. This will affect your home, our neighborhood, and area businesses. Make your plans accordingly.
- You may want to consider purchasing a generator to run essential appliances (AC, refrigerators, freezers, etc.). There are lots of choices out there RIGHT NOW, but they may be in short supply at the approach of a storm. Take some time to evaluate what the priorities would be for your home and family and decide if a generator is a good idea or not.
- Expect that you will lose power and cell service at some point – keep your gadgets charged and invest a few dollars to buy a solar-powered charging pack.
- Put a “walkie-talkie” app on your cell phones – Zello is a good example.
- Pick up a good AM/FM/NOAA/Short Wave Radio. Battery/Solar/hand crank models are available that cost under \$100. Remember, if power and cell service is knocked out information may be hard to come by for a few days after a storm.
- Have a “grab and go” container ready with some nonperishable food items, sanitizing wipes, important documents, etc – you may need to leave your house more quickly than you think (like last year’s fire emergency) or you may be stuck on the road while evacuating.
- Now is the time to ensure you have enough hardware (screws and washers) to hang your hurricane shutters. If you don’t have shutters, and want them, now would be a good time to look at getting some before a storm is headed this way and price or availability may be a problem.
- Many of the newer homes in Cypress Breeze have impact resistant windows. These are good and help significantly. Shutters can also be added for additional protection.
- For those owners with houses built by DR Horton –
  - Your shutters are numbered sequentially clockwise, generally starting on the first level. Find the right shutter for an atypical window and then you should be able to properly identify the rest based on that benchmark.
  - Assume it will take at least a half day to hang your shutters – and may require a ladder or help from others.

- Remove or loosen the painted caps that cover the screw holes in advance – salt air over time (and the paint job) may make some difficult.
- Identify a neighbor or friend that can help hang your shutters or otherwise hurricane-proof your home (moving outdoor furniture, etc) as a back-up. If you are out of town when a storm threatens, you may not be allowed back in.
- If you don't already have one, take a good pictorial inventory of your household contents by room – store the pictures in a cloud service. This will help with any insurance claim.
- ***Make sure you are covered for damages!*** – Homes in Cypress Breeze Plantation have appreciated dramatically over the last three years. Now would be a good time to re-evaluate the current value of your home and its contents that could have to be replaced as a result of a major hurricane. If the value has increased, consider contacting your insurance company and adjusting your coverage for the structure and contents. Keep in mind that some insurance companies require a few weeks to get the new coverage in-place.