

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

A GUIDE TO WEATHERING THE STORM



COMPLIMENTS OF SKALAMANDER

Living in the Sunshine State means enjoying beautiful beaches and vibrant communities. However, it also means understanding and preparing for the potential impact of hurricanes.

At Skalamander, we're committed to the safety and well-being of our Florida neighbors. This guide provides essential steps to help you prepare for and stay safe during a hurricane.

Know Your Risk and Have a Plan:

Understand Hurricane Categories: Familiarize yourself with the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale to understand the potential damage associated with different hurricane strengths.

1. **Know Your Evacuation Zone:** Determine if you live in an evacuation zone. Evacuation orders are issued for a reason – your safety! Know your designated evacuation route and have a plan for where you will go. Consider staying with family or friends outside the evacuation zone or identify designated shelters in advance.

2. **Develop a Family Communication Plan:** Designate an out-of-state contact person who everyone can check in with. Ensure everyone in your family knows this contact information. Have a plan for how you will communicate if separated (e.g., a meeting place).

3. **Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit:** Prepare a well-stocked kit at least a week before the anticipated arrival of a hurricane. This kit should include:
 - **Water:** At least one gallon per person per day for several days.
 - **Food:** Non-perishable food supply for several days, including a manual can opener.
 - **First-Aid Kit:** Include necessary medications, pain relievers, antiseptic wipes, bandages, etc.
 - **Flashlight:** And extra batteries.
 - **Battery-Powered or Hand-Crank Radio:** To receive weather updates.
 - **NOAA Weather Radio with Tone Alert:** Provides specific alerts for your area.
 - **Whistle:** To signal for help.
 - **Dust Mask:** To help filter contaminated air.
 - **Plastic Sheeting and Duct Tape:** To shelter-in-place if necessary.
 - **Moist Towelettes, Garbage Bags, and Plastic Ties:** For personal sanitation.
 - **Wrench or Pliers:** To turn off utilities.
 - **Local Maps:** In case GPS is unavailable.
 - **Cell Phone with Chargers and a Backup Battery/Power Bank.**
 - **Cash:** ATMs may not be operational.
 - **Prescription Medications:** With enough supply for several days.
 - **Infant Supplies:** Formula, diapers, wipes (if applicable).
 - **Pet Supplies:** Food, water, medications, carrier, leash (if applicable).
 - **Important Documents:** Copies of insurance policies, identification, medical information in a waterproof bag.

Preparing Your Home:

Trim Trees and Shrubs: Remove dead or weak branches that could fall and cause damage during high winds.

1. **Secure Loose Outdoor Items:** Bring inside or securely fasten anything that could become airborne, such as patio furniture, trash cans, decorations, and garden tools.
2. **Protect Windows and Doors:** Install hurricane shutters or board up windows and doors with plywood. Measure and cut plywood to size in advance and pre-drill holes for easier installation.
3. **Clear Gutters and Downspouts:** Ensure they are free of debris to allow for proper drainage.
4. **Review Your Insurance Policies:** Make sure you have adequate homeowner's or renter's insurance, including flood insurance if you live in a flood-prone area. Keep copies of your policies and contact information in a safe and accessible place.
5. **Charge Electronic Devices:** Fully charge your cell phones, laptops, and any other battery-powered devices before the storm arrives.
6. **Know How to Turn Off Utilities:** Locate your main water shut-off valve and electrical breaker box and know how to turn them off in case of emergency. **However, only turn off utilities if instructed by authorities or if there is a clear danger.** Improperly turning off power can create additional hazards.

Electrical Safety During a Hurricane (Important Considerations):

Never Touch Downed Power Lines: Treat all downed power lines as live and extremely dangerous. Stay at least 30 feet away and report them immediately to your local power company.

1. **Avoid Driving Through Standing Water:** Floodwater can hide downed power lines and other electrical hazards.
2. **Do Not Use Electrical Appliances in Wet Areas:** Wait until the area is completely dry before using any electrical devices.
3. **If Your Home Floods:** Do not enter flooded areas where electrical equipment may be present. If your power is on and your home is flooding, try to turn off the main breaker *if you can safely reach it without entering the water*. If you cannot, evacuate immediately and contact your power company.

Use Generators Safely: If using a portable generator:

- **Never run a generator indoors or in a partially enclosed space.** Carbon monoxide fumes are deadly. Operate it in a well-ventilated outdoor area, away from windows and doors.
 - **Connect appliances directly to the generator using heavy-duty extension cords.** Do not plug the generator directly into a wall outlet. This can back feed power into the utility lines, creating a serious danger for utility workers and your neighbors.
 - **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it under a canopy or other protective cover.
 - **Follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and maintenance.**
 - **Never overload the generator.**
1. **Unplug Sensitive Electronics:** Before the storm arrives, unplug sensitive electronic equipment like computers, televisions, and gaming consoles to protect them from power surges.

During the Hurricane:

1. **Stay Informed:** Monitor local news, NOAA Weather Radio, and official emergency management channels for the latest updates and instructions.
2. **Seek Shelter:** If you are not in an evacuation zone, stay indoors in the safest part of your home – usually an interior room on the lowest level without windows.
3. **Avoid Windows and Glass Doors:** Stay away from windows, skylights, and glass doors.
4. **Do Not Go Outside:** Even if the eye of the storm passes over, conditions can change rapidly, and dangerous winds and rain will return.
5. **Conserve Power and Water:** Use these resources sparingly.

After the Hurricane:

1. **Wait for the All-Clear:** Do not venture outside until authorities have declared it safe. Be aware of potential hazards like downed power lines, debris, and flooding.
2. **Be Aware of Structural Damage:** Inspect your home carefully for any structural damage before re-entering.
3. **Beware of Snakes and Other Wildlife:** Storm surges and flooding can displace animals.
4. **Report Power Outages:** Contact your local power company to report outages. Do not assume they are aware of your specific situation.
5. **Do Not Touch Downed Power Lines:** As emphasized before, maintain a safe distance and report them immediately.
6. **Use Flashlights, Not Candles:** Avoid using open flames indoors after a storm due to the risk of gas leaks or flammable materials.
7. **Boil Water:** If you lose power or experience a drop in water pressure, boil water for at least one minute before using it for drinking, cooking, or brushing teeth, until authorities declare the water supply safe.
8. **Document Damage:** Take photos and videos of any damage to your property for insurance purposes.
9. **Be Patient:** Recovery efforts can take time. Follow instructions from emergency officials and be considerate of your neighbors.

Stay Prepared, Stay Safe, Florida!