

Protect Your Property

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Keep an "in case of hurricane" to-do list.
- Get proper protection for all windows and doors.

If you are at risk from hurricanes, well before a hurricane threatens, you should:

- **Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a storm.** A list will help you remember anything that can be broken or picked up by strong winds.
- **Install permanent hurricane shutters if possible.**
- **If you do not have hurricane shutters, buy the plywood and other items needed to board up windows and doors.** Get half-inch outdoor plywood—marine plywood is best. Cut it to fit the outside frame of each window and door and drill the holes and install the anchors for the screws. Write on each board which window it fits. **Do not tape windows.** Taping does not prevent windows from breaking and takes critical time from more effective preparedness measures.
- **Remove any debris or loose items in your yard.** Hurricane winds, often in excess of 100 miles (161 kilometers) per hour, can turn unanchored items into deadly missiles.
- **Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed.** Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased or damaged limbs, then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through. Hurricane winds frequently break weak limbs and hurl them at great speed, damaging whatever they hit. Debris collection services may not be operating just before a storm, so it is best to do this well in advance of an approaching storm.
- **Fix loose rain gutters and downspouts and clear them if they are clogged.** Hurricanes often bring long periods of heavy rain. Cleaning and securing drainage systems will help protect your home from water damage.
- **Strengthen garage doors.** Hurricane winds can enter through a damaged garage door, lift the roof, and destroy the home.
- **Have an engineer check your home and tell you about ways to make it more resistant to hurricane winds.** There are a variety of ways to protect your home. Professionals can advise you of engineering requirements, building permits, or local planning and zoning regulations that could help you protect your home, and can inspect your home to see if the roof is tied to the mainframe securely with metal straps, the house is bolted to its foundation, and the best place in your home to prepare a "wind safe" room.
- **Elevate coastal homes.** Raising structures to a certain height will make them more resistant to hurricane-driven water. There may be many local codes affecting how and where homes can be elevated. Meet with your emergency manager or planning and zoning official to learn about having your home elevated. Community funds may be available for such measures.
- **If you live in a floodplain or area prone to flooding, follow flood preparedness precautions.** Tropical cyclones can bring great amounts of rain and frequently cause floods. Some hurricanes have dropped more than 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain in just a few hours.
- **Take similar measures to protect your animals.** Make sure that you strengthen and protect any outbuildings that may house animals in the same way you protect your home.