

- **If you come upon a barricade, follow detour signs or turn around and go another way.** Barricades are put up by local officials to protect people from unsafe roads. Driving beyond them can be a serious risk.
- **Help injured or trapped persons.** Give first aid where appropriate. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- **Help people who require special assistance**—infants, elderly people, those without transportation, large families who may need additional help in an emergency situation, people with disabilities, and the people who care for them.
- **If someone needs to be rescued, call professionals with the right equipment to help.** Many people have been killed or injured trying to rescue others in flooded areas.
- **Stay away from damaged areas.** Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and put you at further risk from the residual effects of floods, such as contaminated water, crumbled roads, landslides, mudflows, and other hazards.
- **Avoid loose or dangling power lines;** immediately report them to the power company or the police or fire department. Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- **Stay out of any building that has water around it.** Floodwater often undermines foundations, causing buildings to sink, floors to crack, or walls to collapse.
- **Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes.**
- **Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings. DO NOT USE CANDLES.**
- **Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.**
- **Look for fire hazards.** There may be broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, or submerged furnaces or electrical appliances.
- **Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone outside quickly. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- **Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
- **Check for sewage and water line damage.** If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company, and avoid using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water from undamaged water heaters or by melting ice cubes made before the hurricane struck. Turn off the main water valve before using water from these sources.
- **Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated.** Hurricane-driven floodwater may have contaminated public water supplies or wells. Local officials should advise you on the safety of the drinking water.
- **Check refrigerated food for spoilage.** (See Appendix: Keeping Refrigerated Food Safe if the Power Goes Out.) If power was lost, some foods may be spoiled. If in doubt, throw it out.
- **Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes, that may have come into buildings with the floodwater.** Use a stick to poke through debris. Floodwater flushes many animals and snakes out of their homes.
- **Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.**