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PREPARE FOR THE STORM

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The key to protection is preparation. It may not be possible to prevent hurricane damage, but advance preparation can protect lives and minimize property damage.

When the National Weather Service determines that a particular section of a coastal area may be struck by a hurricane, a "hurricane warning" is issued. Everyone in the designated area should take all possible precaution immediately. When a "hurricane warning" is issued, there usually is time to prepare but no time to waste.

Evacuate beaches and low-lying coastal areas immediately when a "hurricane warning" is issued. These areas are especially susceptible to flooding by storm tides and rain. Do not delay evacuation since roads to safer areas may be flooded well ahead of the main fury of the storm.

If you live in a reasonably safe area and your home is well constructed, stay at home and make emergency preparations unless Civil Defense authorities recommend evacuation.

Check everything outside your home that might be blown away or against the house. Garbage cans, garden tools, toys, lawn furniture, awnings and other loose objects can become destructive weapons in hurricane-force winds. Cut down any loose limbs. Lower television antennas and store them. Firmly secure objects that cannot be stored.

Check your automobile, fill the gas tank (in case evacuation is necessary), and be sure that windshield wipers are in working order. The best place for the car is in a garage or shelter. If one is not available, park your car on high ground in case of flooding, or any place where trees are not likely to fall. Set the brakes after parking.

Take small boats out of the water and put them on a trailer. Remove accessories which may be stripped away by wind, let the air out of the trailer tires and tie down the trailer securely. Boats moored in water should have enough slack in the line to allow for pitching or rising seas. The best place for a large

boat to weather a hurricane is in an inland creek or waterway. Secure the boat away from docks, pilings and overhanging trees.

Windows are vulnerable to flying debris and wind pressure. Board up, tape or put storm shutters on windows. Although tape may not keep a window from breaking, it will help prevent flying glass.

A hurricane may cause prolonged power and water failure. Each family should have the following articles available: flashlights and batteries, candles, a gasoline camp stove or canned heat, battery-powered radio and batteries, food that requires no refrigeration and little preparation and plenty of water for drinking and bathing. Water for emergency sanitation purposes can be stored in a clean bathtub.

Frozen food in a home freezer will remain in good condition for a longer time if preparation is made in advance of an approaching storm. Set the temperature control to the coldest setting to get the food as cold as possible. The colder the food the longer it will remain frozen if the power fails. Food should keep satisfactorily up to 36 hours provided the freezer is kept closed. If the power goes off, wrap the freezer with blankets for added insulation.

Finally, when the wind starts blowing, open a window slightly on the side of the house away from the wind to equalize inside and outside pressure. Line the opening with towels, if necessary, to absorb water.

By using common sense and preparing in advance, you should be able to escape injury and minimize damage. The best defense against the dangers of a hurricane is healthy respect for the storm and sensible action--not complacency or panic.

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