



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RECOVERY

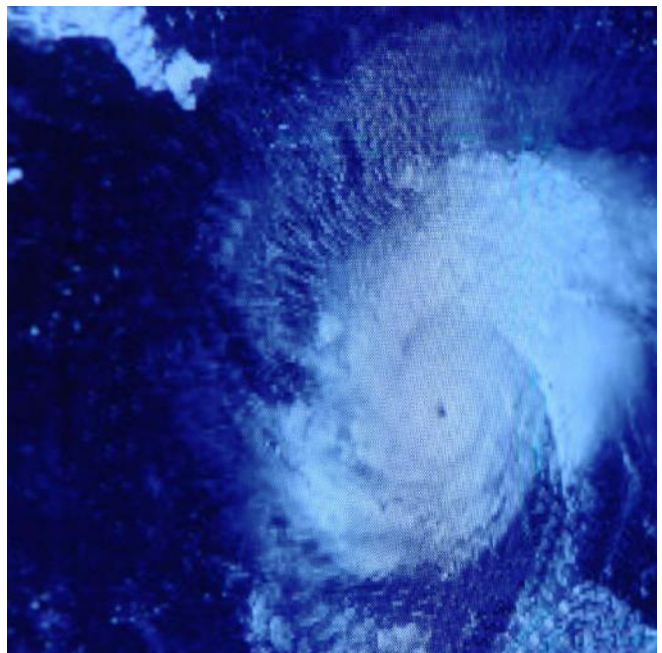
**HURRICANE  
PREPAREDNESS AND  
CLEAN-UP**

# ABOUT HURRICANES

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In Canada, hurricane season usually runs from June through November. Consult the [Canadian Hurricane Centre](#) to help make informed decisions about how to react to a weather system in your area. You will know it's time to react if Environment Canada or local authorities issue a [watch or warning bulletin](#). There's also plenty you can do to prepare ahead of time to keep your family and property safe. If a storm does hit, we can help you find what you need to help protect your home, and to get back up and running.



# PREPARATION

Once a hurricane watch or warning bulletin has been issued, you may not have too much time to react, so it's important to take steps well ahead of time.



Your first priority is safety for you and your family. Have a plan and keep an emergency kit ready. To secure your home, be aware of its vulnerable spots and keep them well maintained. For instance, if you know that you're vulnerable to flooding in your area, be sure to have sump pumps installed or at the ready. Here's where to start to ensure you're as prepared as you can be.

## FAQS ABOUT PREPARING FOR HURRICANES AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

**What are some ways I can stay prepared all the time?**

- Make sure the street number of your house is clearly visible from the road so emergency vehicles can easily locate you.
- Have a safe place in mind to move your vehicle and/or boat.
- Check your insurance to see if it covers damage caused by high winds and floods.
- Store all important records, including passports, health and insurance records in a waterproof container. It is also a good idea to make copies of birth and marriage certificates, passports, licences, wills, land deeds and insurance, and take photographs of family members in case a lost

person record is created. Keep these items in a safe place, such as a safety deposit box, or give them to a family or friends who live out of town.

- Add at least one battery-operated smoke alarm and carbon monoxide (CO) alarm to every floor of your home and in sleeping areas. Hard-wired alarms with battery back-up are considered to offer a higher level of protection.
- Regularly test alarms and/or batteries to ensure they are working properly.
- Regularly check to make sure fuel-burning appliances are properly installed and working according to the manufacturer's instructions. Inspect these appliances and ensure they are properly ventilated.
- Have a generator ready and know how to use it so you can keep things running after a storm.

### **What are some areas of my house I should focus on when preparing for a hurricane?**

- Roofing Shingles: Older asphalt shingles can bend and be torn off in high winds. If you can easily lift a shingle tab with your hand, apply a little roofing cement under each loose tab and secure with a ring shank nail. If you find shingles that are already damaged, consider replacing them before the wind picks up.

Also, research has shown that metal strips connecting the roof to the walls for additional support, called hurricane straps or ties, are helpful in preventing wind damage to roofs during hurricanes. When shingles are lost or damaged, water can enter the attic and flow into a house, damaging walls, ceilings and belongings.



- Roof Framing: If the uplift of the wind removes the plywood sheathing of a roof, it compromises the whole structure. Most of the time, the sheathing is held in place with nails, but you can strengthen things by running a ¼-inch bead of construction adhesive along both sides of the rafters or trusses where they meet the sheathing. For tight spots, apply the adhesive to the flat sides of ¾-inch wide quarter round molding and press it into the corner between the rafter and decking.
- Windows and Doors: Consider replacing existing windows and doors with impact-resistant ones. If you need a fast solution, ordinary plywood makes an effective barrier. You'll want a minimum of ½-inch plywood, although 5/8- or 3/4-inch plywood is even better. If your windows are surrounded by wood, cut the plywood to cover the opening and secure it with wood screws every 12-inches or so. For brick or stucco openings, you'll need to buy special clips to secure the plywood or use masonry fasteners. (Note: tempered glass can withstand stronger winds than regular glass.)

- **Garage Doors:** The garage has the largest opening to your home and is often the least prepared for hurricane force winds. You may need to create temporary bracing to reinforce it. Attach a 2x4 to the floor with masonry anchors to use as a base for two or three vertical support beams. Connect each of the vertical support beams to the wall above the door. Be sure to disconnect the door operator before you put the bracing in place. If you're buying a new garage door, look for one that's reinforced or that offers extra bracing that can be added to the closed door.
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet. It can only be connected to the home's electrical system through an approved transfer panel and switch installed by a licensed electrician. Plug appliances and other items directly into the generator or into a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that leads to the generator.

### **Should I have a generator on hand? If so, how do I select the right one?**

- When used safely, generators can be indispensable in a storm. They supply emergency power to keep food refrigerated and the lights on.
- It's critical that you find a safe spot to store your generator. Generator engines emit poisonous carbon monoxide gas, so generators should only be operated outside in the open and at a safe distance from any homes. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Before you choose a generator, determine what you will need to power. Do you need just the basics such as general lighting and basic appliances? Or do you have special needs such as medical equipment to consider?
- Determine if the items you need to power require a portable or stationary generator. Consult the manual or manufacturer if you are unsure.
- Determine how many outlets you will need (and how many types) for the generator.
- You may also want to consider a whole-house generator which runs from your gas utility line or L.P. tank to supply electrical power to pre-selected emergency circuits to supply power for lighting, heating, air conditioning, water and appliances.

- The total wattage of all the electrical devices combined should never exceed the rated capacity of the generator or the extension cord.
- Make sure the generator is properly grounded and don't touch it if it's wet or if you are wet.
- To prevent fires, turn the generator off and allow it to cool before refilling it with fuel.
- To choose the right generator for your home, visit our [Generators Buying Guide](#), which outlines the various types of generators and their features to help you determine which is best suited to your needs.

### **What should I include in my Family Emergency Plan?**

- Create an evacuation plan with your family. Discuss how you would reach each other from school, work or home. What routes would you take? How would you communicate if cellphones are not working? How will you reach and transport pets?
- Include children in your plan: Prep them for potential emergencies and scenarios, teach them to dial 9-1-1 and reassure them that this plan is "just in case."
- Plan for two scenarios: Remaining in your home after a disaster or evacuating to a safer location.
- Identify more than one evacuation route from your residence. Draw a floor plan for each storey of your house and circle escape routes.
- Familiarize yourself with the nearest shelter.

- Choose designated meeting places nearby and far away in case you get separated. Choose a friend who lives in another region or province to be your “check-in contact.”
- Keep a list of key phone numbers by each phone in the house, stored in your cell phone and in your Family Emergency Kit. Include each family member’s cell phone number, your check-in contact and emergency resources including your doctor, the nearest emergency room, and the closest shelter or local emergency support such as the Canadian Red Cross.
- Make sure all family members know where your Family Emergency Kit is stored.

## What should I include in my Family Disaster Kit?

Every family should have a Disaster Kit ready, be it for a flood or any other unexpected occurrence.

- Baby wipes or moist towelettes
- Backpacks or wheeled totes to carry essentials in case of evacuation
- Batteries and chargers (phones, flashlight, radio, etc.) Remember to replace batteries as they expire or at least once a year.
- Battery-powered or crank radio
- Bottled water. Replace as per expiration dates on packaging, or at least once a year. Recommendations are for at least two litres of water (and up to four) per person per day for three days, and remember to store the water in small bottles, which would make them easier to transport in the case of an evacuation order. Also, clean bathtubs and fill them with water in the case that water lines are damaged in the storm. Use this water for cleaning and cooking only. The water can also be used to flush the toilet.
- Can opener (manual)
- Cash in smaller bills and change for payphones
- A change of clothes, especially sweaters and raincoats
- Chlorine Bleach and a medicine dropper. (When diluted – nine parts water to one part bleach – bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use bleach to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color-safe or bleaches with added cleaners.)
- Copy of your emergency plan and contact information
- Duct tape and/or rope and/or Bungee cords (to secure tarp and seal windows or vents if necessary)
- Emergency candles
- Extra keys to your car and house
- First Aid kit
- Fire extinguisher and fire escape ladder. Be sure to have a large (5-10 pound), multi-purpose (ABC rated) fire extinguisher in all major rooms of the house including the kitchen, garage, bedroom, living room, laundry room and any room with a chimney. Be sure to check fire extinguishers annually to be sure the pressure gauge is functional and the unit is working. You can find companies that refill and service extinguishers online.
- Flashlights
- Hand sanitizer
- Household essentials that apply to the unique needs of your family (i.e. for pet owners: leashes, carriers, etc.; for families with children: diapers and infant formula (check expiry dates regularly); eyeglasses, and feminine hygiene products, etc.)
- List of emergency contacts including local authorities and your “check-in contact”
- Map showing routes to shelters and emergency contacts
- Paper and pencils

- Prescription medications (check regularly to ensure they don't expire)
- Re-sealable plastic bags
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Tarp or tent (makeshift shelter)
- Toiletries, including toothbrushes and toothpaste, and toilet paper
- Tools (basic: hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers (cordless and held-held) work gloves, dust mask, utility knives)
- Trash bags
- Utensils
- Water purification tablets
- Waterproof matches in a waterproof bag
- Whistle
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food (replace as it expires or at least once a year)

Note: Store items in large waterproof containers



## Helpful Products Checklist for Hurricane Preparation in addition to my Family Emergency Kit:

- 2x4s to reinforce garage doors if needed
- Battery Back-up Sump System
- Battery-Operated Water Alarm
- Caulking and Sealant
- Concrete, Cement and Masonry (such as stones or bricks) to ensure the foundations of your house are secure and landscaping is not loose
- Door Mats
- Door Sweeps and Weatherstripping
- Extension cords
- Ladder
- Plastic Sheeting
- Plywood
- Roof Coatings, caulk, felt, underlay, shingles and tiles
- Storm Doors

Tools and hardware (will vary according to the job but start with these basics):

- Saw horse and workbench
- Screwdrivers, cordless and hand-held
- Construction adhesive
- Hammers, mallets and sledges
- Measuring tape
- Nails
- Wood screws

# CLEAN-UP



If you've been evacuated during a hurricane, it may be tempting to rush back in after the storm to assess the damage, but safety is your first priority.

It's important to systematically assess the risks and begin clean-up with a plan. Here's where to start.

## FAQ ABOUT HURRICANE RECOVERY

### What are my first steps after a hurricane?

- Before you return to an area that's been hit by a hurricane, ensure that local authorities have deemed the area safe.
- Approach the area with caution. Before entering your home, look outside for loose power lines, damaged gas lines, or other damage. Check for any structural damage to building foundation and any support structures. Do not enter the home if you hear the hissing of any gas lines or suspect danger from fire or flooding.
- Have water, gas, electric and sewer lines checked professionally before turning anything back on.

- Take photographs of any damage for your insurance company. And consult with them before you begin any repairs. Keep all receipts for repair costs as you go.

### It's time to begin the clean-up process. Where do I start?

- Wear work boots, long sleeves and pants and a dust mask for cleanup.
- If there has been flooding, dry water-damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours if you can to help prevent mold growth. For details, consult our [FAQs for dealing with a flood](#).
- Ensure that storm debris hasn't blocked or sealed your vehicle's tailpipe, or any exhaust flues or ducts for appliances like chimneys, water heaters, ranges and clothes dryers.



- During clean-up, place pumps and power units of high-pressure washers outside and away from air intakes to the home such as windows, doors and vents. Run only the wash line inside.
- Learn how to patch things up with small repairs. Consult these helpful Project Guides on [homedepot.ca](https://www.homedepot.ca):
  - o [Quick Tips: Repairing a Window Screen](#)
  - o [How to Repair a Fence](#)
  - o [Repairing a Deck](#)
  - o [How to Patch Drywall](#)

### **What should I do if I have no power?**

- Only operate generators outdoors in dry, ventilated areas away from your home's air intakes and protected from rain. Use appropriate power cords and never run them under rugs or carpet.
- To easily find the ideal standby generator for your home, use our [Generators Buying Guide](#).
- Never use a charcoal or gas grill inside your home or near a window where CO fumes could seep inside.
- Use battery-powered [flashlights](#) or lamps for light, if possible.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Never use gasoline in place of kerosene and keep combustible liquids away from any heat sources.

### **What should I do if my house floods?**

- If there has been flooding, dry water-damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to help prevent mold growth. For details, consult our [FAQs for dealing with a flood](#).

## Helpful Products Checklist for Hurricane Recovery:

- Broom
- Buckets and Mop Pails
- Camera for documenting damage
- Cleaning Solutions
- Desiccant such as DampRid®
- Exterior Paint and Stain
- Fans
- Furnace Air Filters
- Gasoline or propane for generator depending on the type
- Grill and fuel
- Insect and Mosquito Control
- Interior Paint
- Mould and Mildew Cleaners such as Concrobium Mold Control
- Paint Brushes and Rollers, and Paint Brush and Roller Covers
- Plywood to temporarily seal or cover any open or damaged areas
- Portable Generator
- Portable Water Heater (if running water is unavailable)
- Pressure Washer
- Protective Clothing (e.g. Long pants and Long Sleeves, work boots.)
- Pruning Shears
- Pumps
- Rags, Cloths and Sponges
- Wet/Dry Vacuum

# PROJECT ESSENTIALS

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## BUYING AND BRAND GUIDES

[GAF Lifetime Roofing System  
Insulation](#)

[Exterior Paint  
Exterior Doors](#)

## PROJECT GUIDES AND VIDEOS

[Repairing A Deck  
How To Repair A Fence](#)

## INSTALLATION SERVICES

[Fencing  
Roof Replacement  
Exterior Paint Services](#)

# PRODUCT ESSENTIALS

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## BUILDING MATERIALS

[Caulk, Adhesives and Sealants](#)

[Lumber & Composites](#)

[Roofing](#)

[Windows and Doors](#)

## GENERATORS & OTHER POWER

[Generators](#)

[Wet/Dry Vacs](#)

[Dehumidifiers](#)

[Sump Pumps](#)

## PREPARATION SUPPLIES

[Ladders and Scaffolding](#)

[Tarps](#)

[Portable Storage Boxes](#)

[Tape](#)

## CLEANING SUPPLIES

[Buckets](#)

[Gloves](#)

[Trash Bags](#)

[Protective Gear](#)