

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

1. Before the hurricane, decide whether you will: (a) go to a designated shelter; (b) go to a safer place inland or (c) ride out the storm in your home (if local authorities permit you to stay). Consider what to do about pets. Most shelters won't accept pets. Find a place, in advance, to take your pet, such as the Humane Society. Plan your escape route.
2. Get extra cash, including coins for vending machines or pay phones. Fill your car with gas, and get a sufficient supply of prescription medications. Gas stations and pharmacies may be closed during and after the storm. If you are forced to evacuate once the storm has begun, you will be prepared.
3. If planning to stay home, stock up on non-perishable foods and water. Make sure your home is equipped with a battery-operated radio and flashlights, and have spare batteries on hand as replacements. Do not use candles, as they can be very dangerous.
4. Make copies of your important documents (bank statements, insurance policies, registrations, retirement or medicare information, both sides of credit cards, etc.) Keep the originals in a safe or a safe deposit box. Take the copies if / when you evacuate. If your home suffers damage, you may need these papers to prove residency, home ownership, or to acquire government benefits.
5. Put hurricane shutters on windows and secure screen doors. Do not tape windows with duct tape - it's been proven to be ineffective. And, don't crack a window during the storm - any wind that enters your home needs to find a way out, which will likely cause damage to your home. Instead, keep windows closed and close all interior doors of your home, which adds additional strength to the structure during windstorms.
6. Place lanai furniture, satellite dish and other exposed objects inside the house or garage. Bolt garage door using slide bolts at each side.
7. Secure cars left behind. If possible, store car in garage.
8. If you'll be turning off the utilities of your home, be sure to empty the refrigerator first. Perishable foods left without refrigeration can create permanent "smell stains" as well as attract undesirable "guests".
9. Make sure your relatives know where you will be.
10. During the hurricane, if you go to a shelter or inland, go directly there. If you stay home, determine the safest part of the unit - preferably a room or area without windows. Walk-in closets, laundry rooms or bathrooms are usually best. Stay in this "safe room" until the storm has passed.
11. These are just the basics. For a more complete and detailed guide to hurricane preparedness, purchase a copy of "Hurricane Guide" by Sandra Fontana, one of our own VWS members, available at most local bookstores or by e-mailing sandrafontana03@comcast.net