

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

A hurricane is a severe tropical storm. The Atlantic hurricane season lasts from June to November, with the peak season from mid-August to late October. Hurricanes can cause catastrophic damage to coastlines and several hundred miles inland. Hurricanes can produce winds exceeding 155 miles per hour as well as [tornadoes](#). Hurricanes cause extensive damage from heavy rainfall. [Floods](#) and flying debris from the excessive winds are often the deadly and destructive results of these weather events. Flash flooding can occur due to intense rainfall.

Before a Hurricane

To prepare for a hurricane, you should take the following measures:

- To begin preparing, you should build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan.
- Learn community hurricane evacuation routes and how to find higher ground. Determine where you would go and how you would get there if you needed to evacuate.
- Make plans to secure your property:
 - Cover all of your home's windows. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
 - Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
 - Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant.
 - Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
 - Reinforce your garage doors; if wind enters a garage it can cause dangerous and expensive structural damage.
 - Plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything else that is not tied down.
 - Determine how and where to secure your boat.
- If in a high-rise building, be prepared to take shelter on or below the 10th floor.

During a Hurricane

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should:

- During any storm, listen to local news and utilize a NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone to receive warnings.
- Secure your home, close storm shutters and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks
- Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Moor your boat if time permits.

- Ensure a [supply of water](#) for sanitary purpose such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other larger containers with water.
- Find out how to [keep food safe](#) during an after and emergency.

You should evacuate under the following conditions:

- If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions.
- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure – such shelter are particularly hazardous during a hurricane no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- If you live in a high-rise building – hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- If you live on the coast, in a floodplain, near a river, or on an island waterway.

If you are unable to evacuate, follow these guidelines:

- Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors – secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm – winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.
- Avoid elevators.

Residents of the County can obtain additional information on [hurricane preparedness](#) as well as other emergency preparedness topics by utilizing the Department of Emergency Services' web site at www.wicomicocounty.org/es in the section entitled *Emergency Preparedness Topics* or by calling 410-548-4820 for information.