

# Storm Watch

## How to prepare your family and property for severe weather

### Outside

**1. Trim dead or weak branches from surrounding trees.** Do not leave them for curbside pickup during a storm watch.

**2. Moor boat securely, store it upside down against a wall or move it to a safer place.** Remove canvas. Anchor a boat trailer with strong rope.

**3. Protect your windows with custom-fit shutters or 5/8-inch plywood.** Check with your local building inspector.

**4. Keep roof drains clear.**

**5. If you live in a flood-prone area, elevate or move structures to higher ground.**

**6. Bring indoors objects that may be blown or swept away,** such as lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines and hanging plants.

**7. Lower water level in pool 6 inches.** Add extra chlorine. Turn off electricity to pool equipment and wrap up any exposed filter pumps with a waterproof covering.

**8. Plan how to take care of your pets.** Leave them with a friend. If you must evacuate, it is best to take your pets with you, but most shelters will not allow them. Large animals in barns should have plenty of food and water.

**9. If a storm is pending, fuel your vehicle.**

**10. Keep a smaller Disaster Supplies Kit (see next page) in the trunk of each car.**

**11. Keep sliding glass doors wedged shut in high wind.**

**12. If you use a portable generator, make sure you know what loads it can handle, including start-up wattage.** If you connect the generator to household circuit, you must have a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch installed between the generator and outside power, or the "back-feed" could seriously harm or kill utility line workers.

**13. Remove outdoor antennas, after unplugging televisions.**

### Resource information

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20472  
Phone: (800) 480-2520  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

**American Red Cross**  
Attn: Public Inquiry Office  
431 18th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Phone: (202) 639-3520  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

### Inside

**14. Store valuables in a waterproof container at the highest point in your home.**

**15. Make two photocopies of vital documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box.** Keep one copy in a safe place in the house, and give the second copy to someone out-of-town. Vital documents include birth and marriage certificates, tax records, credit card numbers, financial records, wills and trusts.

**16. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.** Use the test button to test them once a month. Replace batteries at least once a year.

**17. If a family member relies on life-support equipment, make sure your electric cooperative knows ahead of time.**

**18. Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.**

**19. Pick a "safe" room in the house, usually a first-floor interior hallway, room or closet without windows.**

**20. Plan home escape routes.** Find two ways out of each room.

**21. Check and protect objects that could cause harm during a bad storm:** bookshelf, hanging pictures, gas appliances, chemicals.

**22. Write and videotape an inventory of your home, garage, and surrounding property.** Include information such as serial numbers, make and model numbers, physical descriptions, and price of purchases (receipts, if possible). Store a copy somewhere away from home, such as in a safe deposit box.

**23. Keep a portable, battery-operated radio or television and extra batteries.**

**24. Post emergency telephone numbers.**

**25. Show adult family members where your fire extinguishers are and how they work.**

**26. Make a plan for family members to reunite if separated (if children are at school and adults are at work).** Designate an out-of-state relative or friend as a contact person and make sure everybody in the family knows how to reach the person.

**27. Teach all responsible family members how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches or valves.** Keep a wrench near gas and water shut-off valves. Turn off utilities only if you suspect a leak or damaged lines, or if you are instructed to do so by authorities.

### A Disaster Supply Kit (recommended by the American Red Cross)

Have enough disaster supplies for 2 weeks ready. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Replace stored food and water every six months. Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year. (Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.) Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

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| Emergency food & drinking water     | Lantern with extra fuel                                      |
| At least one change of clothes      | Manual can opener  |
| Baby food, diapers & formula        | Matches  |
| Batteries                           | Medicines, glasses or contact lens supplies                  |
| Bleach (without lemon or additives) | Mosquito repellent   |
| Books, magazines, cards & games     | Personal identification.                                     |
| Butane lighters                     | Pet food   |
| Cash & credit cards                 | Phone numbers of places you could go.                        |
| Camera & film                       | Plastic trash bags   |
| Car keys.                           | Radio (battery-operated) or TV                               |
| Charcoal & lighter fluid            | Rope (100 ft.)   |
| Clock (non-electric)                | Sleeping bags, pillows & blankets                            |
| Cooler (with ice)                   | Soap & shampoo   |
| Duct & masking tape                 | Sturdy shoes   |
| Extension cords                     | Toilet paper & towelettes                                    |
| Fire extinguisher                   | Tool kit including hammer, crowbar, nails, saw, gloves, etc. |
| First Aid kit                       | Water purification tablets                                   |
| Flashlight                          |  |
| Grill or camp stove                 |  |
| Heavy plastic (for roof if damaged) |  |

### If you must evacuate

leave as quickly as possible. Unplug your appliances, but leave on your refrigerator. Turn off the main water valve. If time allows, move furniture to a higher place. Take sleeping bags, blankets, warm protective clothing, emergency supplies, eating utensils and identification showing proof of residency. Tell somebody where you are going.

