THE VALLEY’S GUIDE TO SURVIVING A STORM

PREPARE
SURVIVE
BE SAFE
ASSISTANCE
EVACUATION ROUTES

HURRICANE SEASON
May 31, 2020

HURRICANE TRACKING MAP
PULLOUT
PGS 10 & 11

EVACUATION ROUTES
MAP
PG. 17
A hurricane can cause widespread devastation during and after it occurs. This guide is designed to help you properly prepare for a hurricane and know how to protect yourself during and after one.

Planning and preparing can make a big difference in safety and resiliency in the wake of a hurricane. The ability to quickly recover following a hurricane requires a focus on preparedness, advance planning, and knowing what to do in the event of a hurricane.
## Locations Valley Wide

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<td><strong>Alamo</strong></td>
<td>713 South Tower Road (Cavazos' Drive Thru)**</td>
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<td><strong>Brownsville</strong></td>
<td>3831 FM 511 (Port of Brownsville)**</td>
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<td>East 14th and Austin**</td>
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<td>2563 S. Raul Longoria (Ducky's Carwash)</td>
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<td>2800 S. Clover (Fiesta Foods)</td>
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<td>4420 W. University (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td>2824 E. Freddy Gonzales (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td>2504 E. University (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td><strong>La Feria</strong></td>
<td>601 North Main*</td>
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<td><strong>Los Fresnos</strong></td>
<td>Highway 100 and Brazil*</td>
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<td>101 E. Ocean Blvd. (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td><strong>Lyford</strong></td>
<td>13511 Broadway Ave*</td>
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<td><strong>Mercedes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>South Conway and Ramirez*</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>Inspiration and Business 83*</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>1700 E. Griffin Parkway*</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>2416 E. Expressway 83 (Walmart/Murphy USA)*</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>520 Inspiration (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>5500 West 7 Mile Road (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>1824 Garland &amp; Moorefield St. (Meat Market)</td>
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<td><strong>Progreso</strong></td>
<td>FM 1015 &amp; Palm Drive (Red Ant Mart)</td>
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<td><strong>Raymondville</strong></td>
<td>1483 FM490* (Murphy USA)</td>
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<td><strong>San Benito</strong></td>
<td>156 Bonner Street (Walmart/Murphy USA)</td>
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<td><strong>San Benito</strong></td>
<td>McCulloch &amp; Pennsylvania (Bright's)</td>
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<td><strong>San Benito</strong></td>
<td>12616 W. Hwy. 281 (Bluetown)</td>
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<td><strong>San Benito</strong></td>
<td>22341 W. Highway 281 (Johnny's Country Store)</td>
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<td><strong>San Benito</strong></td>
<td>21888 FM 600 (Tecoville)</td>
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<td><strong>San Benito</strong></td>
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<td>24523 US Hwy 281 (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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<td><strong>Weslaco</strong></td>
<td>1015 and 11 Mile Road*</td>
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<td><strong>Weslaco</strong></td>
<td>2424 E. Business 83 (Moreno's Feed Store)*</td>
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<td><strong>Weslaco</strong></td>
<td>Mile 12 by Mile 3½ West (Los Naranjas)*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weslaco</strong></td>
<td>725 S. Texas Blvd. (Stripes Convenience Store)</td>
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</tbody>
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* Ice Available at these locations

### Locations Valley Wide

1-800-297-5839

Go to our website to find the location closest to you • www.avantwater.com
4 • The Valley’s Guide to SURVIVING A STORM

NOW/prepare

Sign up for local alerts and warnings. Monitor local news and weather reports.

Prepare to evacuate by testing your emergency communication plan(s), learning evacuation routes, having a place to stay, and packing a “go bag.”

Stock emergency supplies.

Protect your property by installing sewer backflow valves, anchoring fuel tanks, reviewing insurance policies, and cataloging belongings.

Collect and safeguard critical financial, medical, educational, and legal documents and records.

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over ocean water and often move toward land. Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and tornadoes. The heavy winds of hurricanes can cause damage or destroy homes, buildings, and roads, as well as cause power, water, and gas outages. These effects can injure or kill people, disrupt transportation, and pollute drinking water.

Hurricanes cause deaths and injuries primarily from drowning, wind, and wind-borne debris. The impact from hurricanes can extend from the coast to several hundred miles inland. To find your risk, visit FEMA’s “Know Your Risk Map.” Be better prepared for this hurricane season, and learn more at ready.gov/prepare.

IF a hurricane is likely in your area, you should: Stay informed by monitoring the storm via radio, TV, and internet. Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors. Turn off utilities if instructed by authorities to do so. Turn off propane tanks.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale

1 119-155 kph 74-95 mph
Minimal Damage

2 154-177 kph 96-110 mph
Moderate Damage

3 178-208 kph 111-129 mph
Extensive Damage

4 209-251 kph 130-156 mph
Extreme Damage

5 >252 kph >157 mph
Catastrophic Damage

DURING/Survive

Follow guidance from local authorities.

If advised to evacuate, grab your “go bag” and leave immediately.

For protection from high winds, stay away from windows and seek shelter on the lowest level in an interior room.

Move to higher ground if there is flooding or a flood warning.

Turn Around Don’t Drown.® Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through floodwaters.

Call 9-1-1 if you are in life threatening danger.

AFTER/Be Safe

Return to the area only after authorities say it is safe to do so. Do not enter damaged buildings until they are inspected by qualified professionals.

Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through floodwaters.

Look out for downed or unstable trees, poles, and power lines.

Do not remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear gloves and sturdy, thick-soled shoes to protect your hands and feet.

Do not drink tap water unless authorities say it is safe.
During a disaster, the goal and responsibility of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB) is to deploy work crews and work with other organizations to continue to deliver the best service safely and reliably.

**Fallen Power Line Safety**
- Treat every fallen line as if it were energized.
- Never touch a power line.
- Call BPUB at (956) 983-6300 to report a downed power line or a service interruption or download our outage reporting app.

**Delivering Reliable Service**
At the Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB), year-round planning encompasses all areas of utility generation and delivery to minimize customer impact during a natural disaster.

**Before a storm hits**
Crews and staff drill in emergency response and cross-train to fill in where needed, including call and reporting centers. Agreements are secured with outlying utility providers.

**Imminent storm**
All BPUB personnel are placed on special alert and are ready to report for duty at any time. Staging areas are set up to deliver needed supplies to crews who respond in 16-hour rotations to get any downed utilities back online as quickly as possible.

**During a storm**
A 24-hour staffed BPUB command center continues to monitor, communicate and activate assessment and repair crews who remain deployed until conditions become too severe.

**Restoring power**
BPUB restores power plants and affected transmission lines and substations, which are essential to providing public utilities including water treatment plants. Meanwhile, BPUB restores electrical lines and equipment that serve critical facilities, like hospitals, police and fire stations and emergency broadcast centers. Crews restore service to the largest number of customers in the shortest amount of time.
SAFETY PLAN
IS KEY BEFORE
THE STORM

One of the lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey was the need for residents to take evacuation warnings seriously.

By RAUL GARCIA and NADIA TAMEZ-ROBLEDO
Staff Writers

There is no place on the Texas Gulf Coast that offers as beautiful a view than South Padre Island.

But emergency management leaders are reminding residents that hurricane season is upon us and planning and being prepared are the best answers when a storm approaches the Island and it’s time to evacuate.

Cameron County Parks Director Joe Vega is one who is planning. He will be keeping watch so the public has enough time to execute their safety or evacuation plan.

One of the ways he’s going to keep everyone on the Island informed is by tracking and monitoring any activity that is forming in the Atlantic and the Gulf.

“We get daily Atlantic briefings of disturbances or things to watch happening in the Atlantic,” Vega said. “If there is a storm heading our way, we start tracking the storm and we make sure if the RVs need to be relocated.”

He said the county has more than 600 RV sites to alert if a storm is heading to the Island.

“We want to make sure if there is a storm heading our way, we give them ample warning,” Vega said.

Vega said the county emergency management team and the county judge work together. But the county judge makes the decision on when to evacuate.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Tom Hushen stressed that residents should prepare for hurricane season by being aware of evacuation routes, particularly if they live in flood-prone areas.

Hushen said one of the lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey was the need for residents to take evacuation warnings seriously. A county judge or mayor doesn’t make the decision to issue a mandatory evacuation lightly, he said.

“We need to be prepared years in advance for the evacuation side, emergency medical need, shelters and how people will evacuate,” Hushen said.

Hushen said Hurricane Harvey did affect us in some manner, even though it turned out of the Valley’s way.

Since 1851 Texas has had 64 direct hurricane hits. Florida leads with 117 and Louisiana third with 54.

What are the lessons we learned from Hurricane Harvey?

- Counties and cities held conference calls twice a day in preparation for Hurricane Harvey and it paid off.
- Officials said having better communications with local schools would have made a big difference.
- Cities need to better track labor and equipment records for reimbursement from the state.
- Evacuation plans for those on evacuation need lists.
- Officials said individuals with evacuation needs were not aware of the proper window of evacuation.
- Officials said there is a need to educate the public about when to evacuate.
- The urge for the public to self-deploy with boats and trailers filled with supplies became hazardous and unorganized.
- Officials said many of the self-deployment efforts created more problems, liability costs and safety issues and concerns.
- Officials asked in the future to donate money and supplies to an appropriate charity already in place to help those in need.
- Officials also stated planning for debris removal after the storm is necessary.
STAY SAFE WHEN CAUGHT OUTDOORS

For the unprepared, the potential for injury is significant. So it’s important to routinely brush up on surviving a storm when caught in one outdoors.

When storms roll in, they might bring along high winds, thunder and lightning and drops in temperature. Many people ride out storms indoors, but some may find themselves suddenly caught in a storm and not know what to do.

For the unprepared, the potential for injury is significant. So it’s important to routinely brush up on surviving a storm when caught in one outdoors.

Lightning

Lightning can pose a significant threat. Real Clear Science says the average bolt of lightning, striking房屋 and ground, carries roughly 300 million joules of energy, 300 million volts and 30,000 amps. Lightning also generates temperatures hotter than the surface of the sun. According to data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in North America, Florida, Texas and Colorado had the highest number of lightning-related fatalities between 2005 and 2014. Environment Canada says that roughly 10 people die in Canada each year because of lightning.

Finding shelter when lightning strikes is ideal but not always possible. If you cannot get indoors, the next best thing is to stay low to the ground. Lightning strikes to the tallest items around. Therefore, staying put in a ditch or depression in the ground can protect you against a possible lightning strike.

NOAA says to stay away from tall, isolated trees, which can become lightning rods. The same can be said for seeking shelter under a tent or pavilion, as these structures are often metal and can conduct the lightning.

Cars can be a somewhat safe spot if there is nothing else available. The metal shell of the car will disperse the lightning to the ground, offers AccuWeather.

The National Weather Service says groups caught outside during lightning storms should spread out to avoid the current traveling between group members. Also, remember that, while water will not attract lightning, it can conduct and spread the charge, so avoid bodies of water and wet areas.

Winds

High winds also pose a safety risk. These winds may accompany thunderstorms, tornadoes or hurricanes. For those who are caught outside in high winds, The Weather Channel advises taking cover next to a building or under a secure shelter. Wind can easily bring down trees, branches and power lines. It also may blow around outdoor furniture and other heavy items. FEMA says to stay away from balconies or elevated areas to avoid falling objects. Avoid roadways and train tracks when on foot, as gusts can blow people into the path of oncoming vehicles.

Electrocution from downed power lines is a potential side effect of high winds. Avoid anything that might be touching power lines.

Being indoors during severe weather is ideal but not always possible when a storm arrives unexpectedly. Knowing how to behave in these emergency situations can prevent injury and even death.

RETIRED DRAINAGE ENGINEER RECALLS DOCUMENTING BEULAH

By Michael Rodriguez

Staff Writer

September 17, 2017

WESLACO — With winds well exceeding 100 mph and a torrential downpour flooding city streets, it’s uncommon to see power lines down, palm trees eerily slanted toward one direction and roofs torn off homes and businesses. And yet it was an otherwise ordinary scene that struck a then 28-year-old Bob Rektorik who, while venturing out into what would become the Rio Grande Valley’s most destructive storm witnessed a 12-year-old boy running and playing in the rain.

It was an odd sight the night 78-year-old Rektorik recalled — the youngster having fun juxtaposed with the devastation that Hurricane Beulah rained down that day in September 1967. But this is what the retired drainage engineer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture remembered most about his harrowing experience documenting the storm.

“I think his name was Daniel,” Rektorik said of the boy he saw playing in the vicinity of Sixth Street and Bridge Avenue in Weslaco. “I knew him; I had coached him in Little League. ... (He was) running around being a kid.”

Undaunted by Beulah’s fury, such sights were visible to the young Rektorik upon grabbing his 35mm Konica Minolta camera on the way out of his Weslaco home. It’s been almost 50 years to the day that he then climbed into a ton-and-a-half state truck and decided to take a drive.

His destination was anywhere the truck would take him; his mission, although he was unaware at the time, was to capture the catastrophic flooding and wind damage that would forever change the Valley landscape.

Between Sept. 20 and 22, Beulah’s winds reached as high as 136 mph with gusts recorded at 109 mph at the Brownsville airport, according to the National Weather Service, which also recorded 100 mph gusts as far inland as Pharr and Edinburg.

“An estimated storm surge of 8 to 14 feet swept South Padre Island, Port Isabel and Boca Chica; tides were measured as high as 18 feet along the Cameron/Wallis/Wilco county line south of Port Mansfield,” read the NWS history of hurricanes impacting the Valley, further explaining that Beulah’s “slow movement and relatively large size dropped tremendous rains across Starr, Hidalgo and Brooks County.”

This overflowed creeks that “inundated Falfurrias” and led to “excessive water flowing down the Rio Grande and into adjacent floodways,” as well as leaving homes in Harlingen flooded as high up as the rooftops.

For Rektorik, who at the time was manning an in-house refugee center for USDA employees, documenting Beulah’s impact was not a task assigned to him, but an obligation considering the resources at his disposal.

“It was just something that should have been done,” Rektorik said before adding that he even shot video of the storm using 16mm film. “I could do it; I had the cameras; I had the film.”

Scenes he captured as a result included an overwhelmed floodway inundating Mile 2 Road in Mercedes, citrus harvest losses, a portion of the McAllen airport under water, aluminum sheds left torn and mangled, and the curious sight of floodwater nearly spilling into a rain gauge located a couple feet off the ground.

Because there were areas he couldn’t access due to high water, Rektorik waited until the storm passed and boarded a small airplane the USDA had under contract at the Weslaco airport — one of few in the Valley with a terminal still on dry land.

The aerial photos he subsequently captured helped tell the Valley’s story of what’s still considered the region’s great devastation.

“One of the impressive pictures that captured helped tell the Valley’s story of what’s still considered the region’s great devastation,” one of few in the Valley with a terminal still on dry land.

The aerial photos he subsequently captured helped tell the Valley’s story of what’s still considered the region’s great devastation.

“Most of Willacy County was under water ... for weeks,” he recalled.

“There was no drainage channel, so they came in — one of the government programs — and dug drainage ditches right away.”

Among the scenes he photographed were Treasure Hills residences in Harlingen almost completely under water, a tractor washing through floodwater in San Portilla, and a Queenset hut in the same area that appeared not unlike an island.

Rektorik said he was too young to be frightened during the storm, but he was not a task assigned to him, but an obligation considering the resources at his disposal.

“Not really,” he said when asked if he had seen anything like Beulah’s destructive power. “Year is age-dependent. The younger you are, the less fear you have. The older I get I think I shouldn’t have done that, but it was done.”

Cars travel through flooded streets in Weslaco after Hurricane Beulah in September 1967. Photos courtesy of Bob Retorik/USDA
From non-perishable food items to sheets of plywood to protect your homes, everyone seems to have avoided buying supplies until it's almost too late.

By GARY LONG
Staff Writer

The closer a hurricane gets to Cameron County, the more likely you are to find stores filled with shoppers buying last-minute hurricane supplies. From non-perishable food items to sheets of plywood to protect homes, everyone seems to have avoided buying supplies until it's almost too late.

Which begs the question, what hurricane supplies should you buy now while you still have time?

From a survival standpoint, the answer according to Tom Hushen, the Cameron County Emergency Management coordinator, is to make sure you have everything needed to sustain yourself for a minimum of three days — basically the items recommended on the Department of Homeland Security's hurricane-preparedness website.

These include one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food, batteries, flashlights, emergency radios and cell phones with chargers and backup batteries. The supplies should be stored in airtight bags and kept in a duffel bag or backpack ready to go in case of a storm.

Property protection is another matter and a question of individual preference.

"What we want everyone to do if we have a really bad storm coming is evacuate. That's just the bottom line," Hushen said, distinguishing between the damage caused by high winds and the danger posed by the flooding afterward. He said storm shutters and the like can minimize wind damage, "but when you get 45 and 50 inches of rain, it's going to flood."

Hurricane Harvey proved that the biggest danger is flooding, he said. The emergency kit becomes important after the storm hits and the lines for food and water grow.

"Hopefully Harvey was an eye-opener." "We haven't had a bad storm in a long time, and people get complacent," he said. "If it's going to happen, it's going to happen. You have to assume you're going to be hit. Always."

**COSTLIEST HURRICANES**

The 10 Costliest Hurricanes and Tropical/Post-Tropical Storms in the United States - 1900-2017:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category or Type</th>
<th>Damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$125 billion (tied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Sandy</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Post-Tropical</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Irma</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$50 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ike</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
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<td>3</td>
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**SOURCE:** NOAA

*Graphic by Eddie Mirza/The Monitor*
PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Planning and preparing before a hurricane strikes can help you manage the impact of high winds and floodwaters. Take the steps outlined below to keep you and your family safe while protecting your home and property. If you are a renter, talk with your landlord or property manager about the steps you can take together to protect yourself, your family, your home, and your property.

WIND
High winds: The best way to reduce the risk of damage to a structure from hurricane winds is to reinforce or strengthen the building including doors, windows, walls, and roofs. The best way to protect yourself is to consider either constructing a safe room that meets FEMA criteria or a storm shelter that meets ICC 500 criteria.

Wind-borne debris: Bring loose, lightweight objects (e.g., patio furniture, garbage cans, and bicycles) inside; anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (e.g., gas grills and propane tanks); and trim or remove trees close enough to fall on buildings.

FLOOD
There are steps that you or your property owner can take now to make your home or business more flood resistant. Some improvements are simple and inexpensive. As your budget allows, take these steps to protect your property from flood damage and manage your risks.

- Keep gutters and drains free of debris
- Stockpile emergency protective materials such as plywood, plastic sheeting, and sandbags.
- Elevate the heating system (furnace), water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Waterproof the basement.
- In areas with repetitive flooding, consider elevating the building.

FLOOD INSURANCE
Most property insurance policies do not cover flood losses, so you will need to purchase separate flood insurance if your property is at risk for flooding. Talk to your insurance agent about buying flood insurance. Flood insurance is available for homeowners, renters, and business owners through the National Flood Insurance Program in participating communities. Keep in mind that a policy purchased today will take 30 days to go into effect, so act now!

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION
Make sure you have everything you’ll need to get in touch with your family either through cellular phones or email.

MEDICAL NEEDS
Be equipped to tend to any current or unexpected medical conditions your family may have.

CRITICAL DOCUMENTS
Place any important documents in a waterproof container to help keep them dry and easily accessible.

TOOLS AND SAFETY ITEMS
Small items like matches, flashlights, a multi-purpose tool, and a whistle can make a huge difference for your family while weathering the storm.

FOOD/SUPPLIES
Have at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water for your family. Remember to pack anything specific to your family’s needs.

HYGIENE AND SANITATION
Practicing good hygiene can stop the spread of bacteria and infectious disease.

PROTECTIVE GEAR
Protect yourself by packing warm clothes and blankets to prevent hypothermia. Don’t forget protective footwear and gloves too.

COMFORT & PRICELESS ITEMS
You may be away from your home for an extended period and your property may be damaged. Grab any items that are irreplaceable or may provide comfort to your family, especially your children. Ask yourself, “What would I need for myself and my family if a hurricane struck?” Add any of these specific items to your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist.
EMERGENCY NUMBERS:
State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry
211 REGISTRY for special assistance. To register call: 877-541-7905.

Hidalgo County
- Pharr PD: 956-581-2602
- Donna PD: 956-581-4955
- Cameron County: 956-547-7000
- Combes: 956-843-2737
- La Joya PD: 956-585-4855
- Ph: 956-425-7131
- Harlingen: 956-427-8880
- Indian Lake: 956-233-6445
- Brownsville: 956-787-2261
- Laguna Vista: 956-943-8855
- Los Fresnos: 956-943-1793
- Los Indios: 956-233-4473
- Los Javalis: 956-383-8114
- Ph: 956-547-7000
- Ph: 956-423-8384
- Ph: 956-761-3040

Cameron County
- Ph: 956-787-7000
- Ph: 956-464-4481
- Ph: 956-381-3825
- Ph: 956-262-4721
- Ph: 956-548-7153
- Ph: 956-585-4855
- Ph: 956-427-8880
- Ph: 956-233-6445
- Ph: 956-787-2261
- Ph: 956-943-8855
- Ph: 956-943-1793
- Ph: 956-423-8384
- Ph: 956-761-3040

2020 HURRICANE NAMES
- ARTHUR
- BERTHA
- CRISTOBAL
- DOLLY
- EDOUARD
- FAY
- GONZALO
- HANNA
- ISAIAS
- JOSEPHINE
- KYLE
- LAURA
- MARCO
- NANA
- OMAR
- PAULETTE
- RENE
- SALLY
- TEDDY
- VICKY
- WILFRED
**PREPARATION STARTS AT HOME**

Families should know in advance where to go if evacuation becomes necessary, which means knowing the local hurricane-evacuation route or routes and having a plan for lodging.

By STEVE CLARK
Staff Writer

For starters, here’s an explanation of the difference between a hurricane warning and a hurricane watch.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a warning means sustained winds of 74 mph or higher — hurricane conditions — are expected somewhere within a specified area. A warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds, or sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph, to give people enough time to prepare, and evacuate if so directed by local officials.

A hurricane watch, according to NOAA, means hurricane conditions are possible within the specified area. Watches are issued 48 hours before the anticipated onset of tropical storm-force winds in the area. When a watch is issued, that means it’s time to secure your home, review your evacuation plan and stay alert for a hurricane warning.

Preparing one’s home or business includes trimming or removing damaged trees and limbs, securing loose rain gutters and downspouts, and clearing out any clogged areas or debris to prevent water damage to the property, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA says property owners can reduce damage by retrofitting to secure and reinforce roof, windows and doors, including garage doors. The agency recommends buying a portable generator or installing a “whole house” generator for power outages. Also, residents may consider building or installing a “whole house” generator for power outages. Also, residents may consider building a FEMA safe room or OCC 500 storm shelter designed for protection from high winds, as long as it’s above flood level.

Families should know in advance where to go if evacuation becomes necessary, which means knowing the local hurricane-evacuation route or routes and having a plan for lodging. Evacuation “go bags” should include a flashlight and batteries, cash, first aid supplies, medications and vital documents. Families should have an emergency communication plan.

Residents who aren’t advised to evacuate and stay home during a storm, or can’t because of flooding or blocked roads, should make sure to have adequate supplies for several days of no water and power, FEMA says.

The agency notes that many communities have text or email emergency alert systems, and that residents can find details about their local alert system by searching the internet.

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**211 REGISTRY FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

By ALEXIS AGUIRRE
Staff Writer

Hurricane season is hastily approaching and the time to prepare for emergencies is now. In the case of strong weather, emergency evacuations will be ordered. For some, the ability to leave their home in a hurry is not easy or even feasible. Those residents are being asked to call 2-1-1 to be placed on the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry or STEAR.

STEAR was created after the 2005 hurricane season by the University of Texas Center for Space Research to help evacuate those in need of special assistance during emergencies. The registry allows residents with disabilities or transportation barriers to plan their escape route before the storm hits.

By dialing 2-1-1 and answering standard questions about their status and needs, residents at-risk can ask for the help they need and plan ahead.

The number is not an emergency line and should not be used as such. While registering, residents will be asked basic information such as their name and address along with their primary language, caregiver info and whether or not they have pets. All information is completely confidential and the registry is voluntary. Charles Hoskins, deputy emergency management coordinator of Cameron County Emergency Management, said the registry is for those that feel they would need assistance in evacuating.

All emergency responders with additional information on the needs in their community.

Who Should Register for STEAR?

People with Disabilities
People with access and functional needs such as:
- People who have limited mobility
- People who have communication barriers
- People who require additional medical assistance during an emergency event
- People who require transportation assistance
- People who require personal care assistance

How to register for STEAR
Call: 877-541-7905

The STEAR program is a free registry that provides local emergency planners and emergency responders with additional information on the needs in their community.

State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)

**Who Should Register for STEAR?**

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How to register for STEAR
Call: 877-541-7905

The STEAR program is a free registry that provides local emergency planners and emergency responders with additional information on the needs in their community.
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

You can receive alerts and warnings directly from the National Weather Service for all hazards with a NOAA Weather Radio (NWR). Some radio receivers are designed to work with external notification devices for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information on NWR receivers, visit nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/nwrrcvr.html.

Sign up for emergency alerts and notifications that your community may offer. Download Be Smart, Know Your Alerts and Warnings for a summary of notifications at ready.gov/prepare.

WATCHES & WARNINGS

The National Weather Service (NWS), part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), issues alerts when weather conditions make hurricanes more likely. Know the terms used to describe changing hurricane conditions and be prepared to take appropriate action.

TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE ADVISORY

The NWS issues an Advisory when it expects conditions to cause significant inconveniences that may be hazardous. If caution is used, these situations should not be life-threatening.

TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE WATCH

The NWS issues a Watch when a tropical storm or hurricane is possible within 48 hours. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, local radio, TV, or other news sources for more information. Monitor alerts, check your emergency supplies, and gather any items you may need if you lose power.

TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE WARNING

The NWS issues a Warning when it expects a tropical storm or hurricane within 36 hours. During a Warning, complete your storm preparations, and immediately leave the threatened area if directed to do so by local officials.

STAY INFORMED

PREPARE

Keep important numbers written down in your wallet in case you cannot access the contact list in your phone. Landline and cellular phone systems are often overwhelmed following a disaster, so you may need to use text messages and social media.

Designate an out-of-town contact who can help your household reconnect. Be sure to practice your plan with your family. Get more information by downloading Be Smart Create Your Family Emergency Communication Plan or visit ready.gov/make-a-plan.

Write down any important phone numbers on your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist so you can access them easily.

CREATE YOUR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Your family may not be together when a hurricane occurs, so it is important to know how to contact one another and how to get back together.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

You can build your supplies over time by adding a few items each week or month. Gather in advance the necessary supplies and items you will need to stay safe after the hurricane passes and as you start to recover. Stock food items that do not need refrigeration and will last. Regularly replace items like water, food, medications, and batteries that go bad over time. For a complete list of emergency supplies, visit ready.gov/prepare and then check them off your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist once you add them to your emergency kit.
INSURANCE TIPS FOR HURRICANE PREPARATION

Property owners also need to make sure they have the right type of insurance, depending on where their residence and/or business is located, and what type of property they wish to cover.

By STEVE CLARK
Staff Writer

An above-normal 2020 Atlantic hurricane season is expected, according to forecasters with NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service. The outlook predicts a 60% chance of an above-normal season, a 30% chance of a near-normal season and only a 10% chance of a below-normal season. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30. NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center is forecasting a likely range of 13 to 19 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 6 to 10 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 3 to 6 major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher). NOAA provides these ranges with a 70% confidence. An average hurricane season produces 12 named storms, of which 6 become hurricanes, including 3 major hurricanes.

Vehicle policies that include “other than collision” coverage will provide coverage in the event a vehicle is damaged by fire, flooding or storm damage. TDI says. Also, families should gather important documents, insurance cards and policies. If you’re forced to evacuate and you don’t have a storm-proof location to store such documents, take them with you. TDI advises. Business owners should consider alternative ways to store company files, such as scanning and emailing, and taking photos of office equipment and furniture.

The department reminds policyholders to check what their policies actually cover, and make sure their homeowners and/or commercial property coverage is still in force and that it will cover the full replacement cost of storm-damaged property if needed.

Vehicle policies that include “other than collision” coverage will provide coverage in the event a vehicle is damaged by fire, flooding or storm damage. TDI says. Also, policyholders need to know the limits of their policy and the amount of their deductible — the portion of the loss the policy holder is responsible for paying. The best way to find that out is to contact your insurance agent, according to TDI. Property owners also need to make sure they have the right type of insurance, depending on where their residence and/or business is located, and what type of property they wish to cover. For instance, flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program is necessary to protect from losses caused by most flooding, though it takes 30 days for flood insurance to take effect once purchased. The program is administered through FEMA.

Conventional homeowners and commercial property policies specifically exclude coverage for flood damage from rising waters, according to TDI. Residents in Texas’ 14 coastal counties and parts of Harris County typically can only get windstorm and hail insurance through the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association. However, TWIA insurance cannot be purchased once a hurricane enters the Gulf of Mexico.

BE SAFE POST-DISASTER TIPS

If you’ve evacuated the area, wait for public officials to say it is safe before returning. Each year, a significant number of people are injured or killed while cleaning up after a hurricane. As you begin cleanup, keep these safety tips in mind:

STAY SAFE
Do not wade in floodwaters, which can contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals. Protect your pets following a hurricane. To learn more, visit ready.gov/animals.

STAY HEALTHY
Throw out any food including canned items that were not maintained at a proper temperature or have been exposed to floodwater. Do not eat food from a flooded garden. When in doubt, throw it out. Avoid drinking tap water until you know it is safe. If uncertain, boil or purify it first. Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals. Protect your pet following a hurricane.

Steps for Post-Hurricane Clean-Up

Use appropriate personal protective equipment to avoid injury from possible exposure to mold and bacteria including gloves, goggles, rubber boots, and N95 masks.

AIR OUT by opening all doors and windows whenever you are present. Leave as many windows open when you are not present as security concerns allow.

MOVE OUT saturated porous materials such as mattresses or upholstered items, especially those with visible fungal growth.

TEAR OUT flooring, paneling, drywall, insulation, and electrical outlets saturated by floodwater.

CLEAN OUT and disinfect any remaining debris and mud.

DRY OUT the building and any remaining contents.
While Cameron County officials prepare for hurricane season, officials said ensuring residents are safe has a lot to do with how residents prepare.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Tom Hushen said Cameron County’s job during a hurricane is to coordinate state resources for and lead an emergency operations center.

He said the county undertakes tabletop meetings and drills with its emergency management partners as part of preparations. The exercises allow officials to ensure rescue points and sandbag distribution areas are ready.

Nathan Flores, a planner with the Emergency Management Department, said officials coordinate communication not only internally but with the sheriff’s department, public health agency and transportation agencies. Dispatchers are equipped with satellite phones to be used in the event cellular towers are damaged, he added, and dispatch centers performed a test of their communication protocol earlier this month.

They also meet with and presented information on hurricane preparation with city governments, schools, hospitals and community organizations.

Hushen stressed that Cameron County residents should prepare for hurricane season by being aware of evacuation routes, particularly if they live in flood-prone areas. Flores echoed that message and said residents should know whether they are at risk for storm surges from resacas, rivers or other bodies of water.

Hushen said one of the lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey was the need for residents to take evacuation warnings seriously. A county judge or mayor doesn’t make the decision to issue a mandatory evacuation lightly, he said.

“The number of water rescues needed shows people didn’t evacuate,” he said. “A lot of people wouldn’t have been injured.”

Hushen added that the more resources used to rescue people from flooded areas means less resources for the recovery that comes after.

Residents should not only know where they would go in the event of an evacuation, Hushen said. They should give their hosts an expected arrival time so that, in the event they don’t get there, someone can be prepared to search for them.

**RESIDENTS SHOULD KNOW**

**FLOOD RISKS**

“Our today is the perfect opportunity for people to sit down and make a plan (for) how they're going to communicate before during and after,” Flores said.

By NADIA TAMEZ-ROBLED0
Staff Writer

The following resources and websites can help you further prepare, respond, and recover.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- FEMA Mobile App: fema.gov/mobile-app
- FEMA Against the Wind: Protecting Your Home From Hurricane and Wind Damage: fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/2988
- FEMA Community Hurricane Preparedness Training: training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-324.a

**RELATED WEBSITES**

- American Red Cross Hurricane Preparedness: redcross.org/prepare/disaster/hurricane
- FEMA Hurricane: ready.gov/hurricanes
- FloodSmart Campaign: FloodSmart.gov
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): noaa.gov
- Para obtener información y recursos en español visite community.fema.gov/?lang=es
HOW TO BUILD A PET HURRICANE KIT

By MARK REAGAN
Staff Writer

When preparing for a hurricane, it’s important to remember any four-legged family members in the household. Just like it’s important to have a hurricane kit put together for the family, those prepping also should consider having a kit together for any pets in the home.

There are three categories to consider when putting together a kit for the pet, including documents; water, food and meds; and other miscellaneous supplies.

Starting with documents, each kit should include veterinary records for each pet. This type of information includes vaccinations, a medical summary, any prescriptions the animal needs and a record of the pet’s most-recent heartworm test.

Also, the kit should include the registration information, a pet description like breed, sex, color and weight, along with microchip information and your contact information, all placed in a waterproof container. This information should be included for each pet in the household.

Like humans, pets will need to eat and need to have an adequate supply of any medications they need. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends each kit have a two-week supply of food in a waterproof container and a two-week supply of water for each animal, along with non-spill food and water dishes. The kit should include feeding instructions for each animal.

Also, the kit should include a two-week supply of any relevant medications, medical instructions and a one-month supply of flea, tick and heartworm medications.

A pet supply kit should include a leash, collar with identification and a harness. It’s also important to have a pet carrier with bedding and a blanket on hand. And in the event of an injury, the kit should include a pet first-aid book and kit.

When building a pet kit, don’t forget cleaning supplies like paper towels, plastic bags and disinfectant in case of an accident. Oh, and maybe include the pet’s favorite toys, too.

6 HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS FOR PETS

1. Make a Plan
   Simply put, be prepared. Decide on a course of action and make sure you can initiate it at a moment’s notice. Have supplies set aside in a safe, easily accessible place. It’s like having candles or a flashlight under the kitchen sink in case of a blackout. You may never need them, but if a blackout happens, there’s no need to scramble in the dark, because you know exactly where to go and what to do for light.

2. Be a Stickler
   Whatever your decision is, stick to it. Otherwise, you may put your pet in real danger. If you decide to leave town at the first sign of warning, then do so as planned. No dilly-dallying. Changing your mind or changing the plan often leads to unnecessary accidents, as you’re no longer prepared.

3. Get Your Kit On
   A pet emergency kit isn’t that much different to yours. Enough water for three days, non-perishable food (include a can opener if needed), a solid carrier, litter, litter box, puppy pads, plastic bags, medicine and medical records for both you and your pet in waterproof containers, extra leash, and a picture of your pet on you in case the worst happens and you get separated. Tags and/or microchipping your pet will also make it easier to recover, should it get lost.

4. Staying In
   If you’re staying at home to ride out the storm, keep your pet in its carrier or on a leash. You never know when you might be forced to evacuate. And even if that doesn’t happen, you don’t want to be tracking down a petrified pet during the chaos. Therefore, secure your pet before the storm hits.

5. Going Out
   Stay tuned to the news reports. If you’re told to evacuate, you must do so at first warning. Moreover, it helps to have everything ready to go. We suggest a backpack that holds all the essentials for you and your pet. And make sure you know ahead of time exactly where all the shelters are and how to get there.

6. Stay Calm
   Whether you leave early, choose to stay, or are required to evacuate due to the storm’s severity or due to house damage, remember to stay calm. Your pet can sense your emotions, so a calming demeanor can lead to a less-paranoid pet. Oh, and don’t forget to speak to your pet in a calm, soothing voice, too.

SOURCE: PETMD.COM
SURVIVE A HURRICANE

If you are in an area where authorities advise or order you to evacuate - EVACUATE!

DECIDING TO STAY OR GO

If authorities advise or order you to evacuate, grab your “go bag” and leave immediately. If you are not in a mandatory evacuation zone, you may still decide to leave the area, you may need to move to higher ground, or you may choose to stay in your home. If you decide to stay home, remember that even if the high winds and floodwaters do not reach your home, you may lose power and water, and you may not be able to leave your home for several days if the roads are impassable.

TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY

Grab your “go bag” and leave immediately. Follow posted evacuation routes and do not try to take shortcuts because they may be blocked. Stick to designated evacuation routes. For localized information:

Evacuation routes: Check with your state’s Department of Transportation or Office of Emergency Management website to find routes near you.

Emergency shelter location: To find a shelter near you, check the FEMA mobile app: fema.gov/mobile-app.

DON’T FORGET

Write down your evacuation route and shelter information on your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist.

Make a plan for your pet. To learn more, go to ready.gov/animals
With food and water covered, people building a hurricane kit should be sure to have contact with the outside world in case power is out. Each kit should include a battery-powered radio as well as a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.

One of the most important aspects of preparing for hurricane season is making sure to have a hurricane kit prepared with the essential supplies needed to survive the aftermath.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends having a kit in the household where people can weather the storm, as well as in vehicles and at places of work.

The basic kit includes 10 essential items.

1. Key ingredient to the kit is water. Each kit should contain one gallon of water per person for at least three days. The water is designated not just for drinking, but for sanitation as well.
2. Second up is food. In the case that power is out for an extended amount of time, each kit should include at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food items. These are food items that do not need refrigeration, such as canned goods.
3. With food and water covered, people building a hurricane kit should be sure to have contact with the outside world in case power is out. This is simple. Each kit should include a battery-powered or hand crank radio as well as a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.

In the event of a disaster, the more batteries a person has in their kit, the better. Another battery-reliant item that is necessary for the hurricane kit is a flashlight. Each kit should include a flashlight, or a multi-purpose tool depending on how many live in the household. In the event of a disaster, people should be certain to turn off utilities to avoid serious accidents. That’s why each kit should include a wrench or pliers to turn off those utilities. Lastly, each kit should include a can opener for food and local maps to help navigate a world that may look completely different than it did before a major storm.

These are just the basic essential items needed for a kit. In the event of a major storm it’s best to be as prepared as possible, so there are a few more items people preparing a hurricane kit might consider.

For instance, prescription medication and glasses should be included if relevant. If there’s an infant in the house, be sure to include infant formula and diapers.

Important documents like insurance, identification and bank account records should be kept in a waterproof, portable container. And it’s also important to have cash, traveler’s checks or change included in the hurricane kit.

**BEFORE A HURRICANE**

**Stock your emergency kit and “go bag” with:**

- **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**
  - Important contact information for family, school, work, doctors, etc., including phone numbers and email addresses
  - Cellular phone, extra battery, and chargers for electrical equipment
  - Kit/FM radio/NOAA Weather Radio (extra batteries)
  - First aid kit
- **MEDICAL NEEDS**
  - Medications for at least one week and copies of prescriptions
  - Extra eyeglasses/contact lenses
  - Medical equipment/assistive technology and backup batteries
  - First aid kit

**TOOL & SAFETY ITEMS**

- Flashlight
- Multi-purpose tool
- Matches or lighter in waterproof container
- Whistle

**FOOD/SUPPLIES**

- At least a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food, supplies, and extra water

**HYGIENE & SANITATION**

- Soap/disinfectant/sanitizer
- Paper towels/moist towelettes
- Toilet paper
- Toothbrush and toothpaste

**PROTECTIVE GEAR & CLOTHING**

- Extra warm clothes
- Extra shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bags

**COMFORT & PRICELESS ITEMS**

- Items like: books, puzzles, favorite stuffed toy, photo albums, valuables

**IN YOUR CAR**

- To review a hurricane plan with family
- Water bottle
- Extra batteries
-风暴应急计划
- 水瓶
- 额外电池

**DURING A HURRICANE**

- Check in to channels:
  - Check for alerts on apps: FEMA App
  - Make sure to take these important numbers with you:
    - Family member’s name:
      - Phone #:
      - Email:
    - Local contact’s name:
      - Phone #:
      - Email:
    - Hospital’s name:
      - Phone #:
      - Email:
  - The closest shelter is:
  - Meet family at:
  - Use evacuation route:
  - Insurance company’s phone #:
If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity, talk to your doctor or health care provider about how you can prepare for its use during a power outage.

When preparing for a hurricane, the most important question to ask is “could I make it on my own for at least three days?”

The task then is to stockpile sufficient supplies so that the answer is “yes,” according to the Department of Homeland Security’s emergency preparedness website, www.ready.gov.

For people with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease and others, the advice is even more important because in many cases their medicines are life-sustaining. Such medicines include blood sugar-lowering drugs like insulin for Type 1 diabetics, and metformin for Type 2 diabetes. Cholesterol-lowering drugs, blood thinners and other drugs are important for people suffering from heart conditions.

“People need to check with their pharmacy because during a disaster they’re able to refill prescriptions earlier and for a longer period,” said Tom Hushen, Cameron County Emergency Management coordinator.

For those dependent on kidney dialysis or other life-sustaining treatment, “they’re the ones we’re trying to reach to evacuate early,” Hushen said, adding that dialysis centers in Cameron County near the coast usually evacuate to their nearest adjacent location in Hidalgo or Starr county.

The ready.gov website also advises:

Wear medical alert tags
If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity, talk to your doctor or health care provider about how you can prepare for its use during a power outage.

Create a support network. Keep a contact list in a watertight container in your emergency kit.

Contact your city or county government’s emergency management agency or office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be helped quickly in a sudden emergency.

1 MYTH: Preparing for disasters is time-consuming and expensive.
1 FACT: Signing up for local alerts and warnings is free. Many preparedness apps are also free.
1 FACT: Your home may already contain emergency kit items.
1 FACT: You can purchase items for an emergency kit and assemble it over time.
1 FACT: Having an adequate emergency supply of food and a communication plan can be of benefit no matter the hazard.

2 MYTH: My homeowners insurance should cover everything if a hurricane affects me.
2 FACT: This is not always the case. Check your insurance policy and consult your insurance agent.
2 FACT: Standard homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage.

3 MYTH: It’s okay if I drive through a small amount of floodwater.
3 FACT: As little as 12 inches of water can float smaller SUVs and 18 inches of water can float larger vehicles such as full-size SUVs.
3 FACT: The depth of the water is not always obvious, and moving water has tremendous power. Turn Around Don’t Drown®

4 MYTH: In an emergency, only first responders need to know what to do.
4 FACT: Everyone needs to know what to do before, during, and after a hurricane to protect themselves, their families, and their neighbors.
4 FACT: First responders may not reach you for hours or days after a hurricane strikes. Everyone needs to know what to do to stay safe.

5 MYTH: A person can safely wait to evacuate until confirmation that a hurricane is in their area.
5 FACT: Those who wait for actual confirmation of a hurricane may be trapped by high winds, flooding, or traffic.

6 MYTH: I am prepared for any emergency, including a hurricane, if I have an emergency kit packed.
6 FACT: Emergency preparedness requires more than a kit.
6 FACT: Having a family communication plan, signing up for alerts and warnings, and knowing what to do and how to evacuate are also important.
6 FACT: Many emergencies require knowledge of what to do to protect yourself.

7 MYTH: If I tape my windows, it will protect them from strong hurricane force winds.
7 FACT: Taping windows can create larger and deadlier shards of glass.
7 FACT: Hurricane shutters or impact-resistant windows are far more effective in protecting against breakage of windows.

HOW TO PREPARE A BUSINESS AHEAD OF THE STORM

Getting your place of business ready for a hurricane is similar in many ways to preparing your home: fortifying the roof and doors and installing shutters or plywood to project windows from wind-borne debris, removing weak trees and limbs nearby, and the like.

And while it’s important to safeguard vital documents at home, it’s also vital to protect business-related documents. The National Hurricane Survival Initiative says business owners should preserve contacts crucial to business operations such as employees, banks, lawyers, accountants, suppliers, etc.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30.

by GARY LONG
Staff Writer

by STEVE CLARK
Staff Writer

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