



National Hurricane Survival Initiative

NEWS RELEASE

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Hurricane Experts Release Top 10 Mistakes Made By Homeowners in Hurricane-Prone Areas, Warn About Complacency

Small Steps Can Make Big Impact in Reducing Hurricane Loss and Aiding Recovery, Hurricane Experts Say

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – With hurricane season officially starting Sunday, the National Hurricane Survival Initiative today released a list informed by hurricane experts of the “Top 10 Mistakes” Americans make that increase their risk from deadly storms and make recovery harder.

As part of [Get Ready, America! The National Hurricane Survival Initiative](#), hurricane experts also recommended simple but important steps that Americans should take to protect their property and their loved ones before the next hurricane strikes.

“We’re entering the most concerning season of the year – hurricane season,” said Bryan Koon, Vice President of the National Emergency Management Association and Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. “Unfortunately, quieter-than-usual hurricane seasons like last year have left too many of us complacent. We need to take the threat of hurricanes seriously and take steps to protect our families and homes.”

Americans in hurricane-vulnerable states often make small mistakes that can significantly increase their risk and complicate recovery, experts say. Here are the top 10 most common mistakes – and advice from experts on how to avoid them.

MISTAKE #1: Failing to know the threat.

“I don’t live within a mile of the coast, so I’m not worried about rising water. The biggest threat to me is wind damage.”

What Experts Say: History proves that storm surge is the deadliest part of a hurricane. The National Hurricane Center reports that more than half of the deaths in three recent land-falling hurricanes were caused by storm surge.

MISTAKE #2: Failing to evacuate.

“Evacuation is for other folks. My house is a fortress and I’m here to protect my property. I’m staying and riding out the storm no matter what.”

What Experts Say: When local officials issue an order to evacuate, they are doing so for your benefit. You should respond immediately, remain calm and take your disaster supply kit. Remember to let others know when you leave and where you are going.

MISTAKE #3: Failing to leave in time.

“I can outrun the storm. I’ll just head in the opposite direction.”

What Experts Say: If your area has been asked to evacuate, and if a hurricane is imminent, you’re far better off to leave your home for an officially designated hurricane shelter or stay with local friends inland, out of the evacuation zone.

MISTAKE #4: Failing to protect the home.

“I knew that tree branch was hanging low over the roof but I didn’t get around to trimming it. Or fixing my roof. Or updating my old garage door...”

What Experts Say: If you’re a homeowner, and you haven’t done anything yet to protect your home, start with your largest opening first. And for many homes that have a garage, that usually means the garage door.

MISTAKE #5: Failing to organize important papers.

“Important papers? They’re all over the place. Let’s see, there’s the passports, the insurance policies, the Social Security cards, our will...”

What Experts Say: Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container and a second copy at the home of a trusted relative or a close friend living in a different city.

MISTAKE #6: Failing to inventory valuables.

“I don’t need to make an inventory of our valuables. I’ll remember what we have.”

What Experts Say: Make your preparations easier by downloading checklists included with each category and use them as you shop, store your supplies and take inventory of important household items in your home. You may also want to take photos or videotape each room of your house, showing the valuables you have.

MISTAKE #7: Failing to ensure adequate insurance.

“I don’t have any idea if I have flood insurance or not. I last met with my insurance agent in 1993, or was it ’83?”

What Experts Say: Make sure your possessions are covered and, if you live in or near a flood zone, make absolutely certain you have flood insurance because that is never included in standard homeowner’s policies. If you rent, you need insurance, too.

MISTAKE #8: Failing to make provisions.

“A gallon of water per day for each member of my family? Who has room for that? And anyway, it’s the government’s job to provide food and water in a disaster...”

What Experts Say: By starting early, you’ll avoid the rush at home supply stores, grocery stores and other venues typically crowded and often chaotic when hurricane watches and warnings are issued. You don’t want to find shelves bare when you need the basics.

MISTAKE #9: Failing to know safety protocols.

“If I lose power, I’ll run my generator from the garage, so it stays dry.”

What Experts Say: Portable generators use an engine and will give off carbon monoxide. You don’t want that deadly gas in the house. Tragedy can be completely avoided with the proper placement of the generator outside of the home, away from any vents that lead into the house and not in the garage. Also: It’s safer to use battery-powered lights and flashlights than lighted candles. Never leave a lit candle in an unoccupied room.

MISTAKE #10: Failing to provide for Fido and Fluffy.

“All shelters have to take in pets, don’t they?”

What Experts Say: Knowing where the nearest shelter that accepts pets, if you have pets, is really important. A lot of people leave their pets behind because they simply don’t know. Make sure you have a plan for your pet and get in touch with the right people before a storm hits.

“We do provide shelter, food, counseling and other services during times of disaster,” said Emergency Disaster Services Director for The Salvation Army. “But, in order for us to do the most good, we need people to take responsibility and to be prepared so we can respond to those who need us the most.”

The education effort is part of [Get Ready, America! The National Hurricane Survival Initiative](#), the nation’s most ambitious and comprehensive hurricane safety outreach campaign.

The campaign involves a national partnership between the FIU International Hurricane Research Center, The Salvation Army, and the National Emergency Management Association, with technical support from the National Hurricane Center.

The campaign includes a television special, “*Get Ready, America! The National Hurricane Survival Test*,” that will be broadcast on more than 55 television network affiliate stations from Texas to Maine. It also includes extensive outreach through social media to help prepare residents for the hurricane season.

“Our entire goal is to save lives and minimize as much damage as possible,” said Erik Salna, Associate Director and Project Meteorologist of the FIU International Hurricane Research Center “The key for everyone is to start preparing now.”

Learn more at www.HurricaneSafety.org.

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