

Your Guide to Hurricane Evacuation in South Florida

Whether you are asked (or ordered) to evacuate your home or office, there are steps you can take before, during and after to reduce your chance of injury.

01. Pack an Emergency Kit

Never be caught unprepared for evacuation. Pack extra cash in a waterproof bag, prescription medication and food and water. Pack at least three days' worth of everything, and don't forget to pack for your pets.

02. Have a Meeting Place

There is no guarantee that you and your family won't get separated in an evacuation. Have a meeting place decided on before you evacuate. One of the reasons people tend to get separated is that they wait too long to evacuate. Do not wait until the last minute.

03. Protect Your Important Documents

Invest in a fireproof, watertight container and store your important documents inside. You can take the documents with you in the event of an evacuation. At the very least, take a picture of your birth certificates, Social Security cards and driver's licenses and upload them online.

04. Protect Your Food

Days before the potential storm hits, turn your freezer and refrigerator to the coldest settings. When the storm is imminent, move your cold items into the freezer. A tightly packed freezer will keep items cold for about 48 hours.

05. Move It Up

Flood waters start at ground level and rise. If you have anything valuable that you can't take with you and don't want ruined, move the items to the highest floor in your home. It may not save everything, but you'll have a better chance of coming home to your precious items intact.

06. Chemical Safety

Chemicals mixing with floodwaters can be dangerous. Look for all of your household cleaners, make sure the lids are on tight and move them to a higher level of your home. Chemicals mixing with water can be hazardous to people's health and create a risk of fire or explosion.

07. Move Electronics

Don't forget the electronics while you are moving things to the upper level of your home. Anything with a wire that uses electricity for power should be moved up. Anything that requires electricity should be unplugged in the wake of a severe storm and the eventuality of evacuation.

08. Clean Your Yard

Heavy winds and rain can cause tree limbs to fall and outdoor furniture to fly. Take a day to clear your yard of any debris, trim your trees and other landscaping and secure outdoor furniture. Board your windows to protect them from breakage should things begin to fly through the air.

09. Prep Your Workplace

Valuable items should be taken with you or stored, and electronics should be unplugged and placed somewhere higher than the ground. Any important documents stored on your office computer should be downloaded to a thumb drive or uploaded to the cloud.

10. After the Hurricane

When you are given the all-clear to return to your home or office, be sure to stay safe. Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters. Six inches of water can sweep a person off their feet and just a foot is enough to cause a vehicle to lose contact with the road.

Before going into your home, turn off the power at the main fuse box or ask an electrician to do it for you. Do not turn any switches on and use a flashlight instead of a candle as the fire can pose a risk. If you have any doubt that something came into contact with flood waters, don't try to save it; throw it out.

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