



Emergency preparedness begins at home. When individuals and families are prepared, there's less chance that they will need scarce community resources when an emergency occurs.

What is a Hurricane?

When clusters of showers and thunderstorms become organized so that a definite rotation develops and winds become strong, the system is called a tropical depression. If winds continue to increase above 63 kilometres per hour the system becomes a tropical storm and is given a name. The storm becomes a hurricane when wind speed reaches 118 kilometres per hour.

Hurricanes are given a rating from 1 to 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Intensity Scale. A category 1 hurricane has the lowest wind speeds, while a Category 5 has the highest. Category 1 hurricanes are likely to cause minimal damage- primarily to shrubs, foliage and unanchored homes or structures. Category 2 hurricanes can cause moderate damage to exposed mobile homes, poorly constructed signs, roofing, windows, and doors. Rising water in roads 2-3 hours before arrival of the center and due to storm surges can be significant. Marinas could be flooded and small craft can be torn from moorings. Evacuation of some shoreline residences and low-lying areas may be required. Hurricane Juan made landfall as a Category 2. Category 3 and above are unlikely in our area, but could cause extensive damage. All hurricanes should be considered major rain and wind events with the potential for flooding.

Prevention

You can prevent some of the damage a hurricane may cause by taking the following actions:

- Secure all gates, doors and windows
- Move lawn furniture, tents, trash cans, hanging plants or anything that can be picked up by wind
- Trim dead or diseased branches from trees to make them more wind resistant or remove dead trees entirely.
- Park your vehicles in a garage or away from trees
- Bring watercraft out of the water and up to high ground
- Move campers and trailers to a garage or storage facility, away from trees or to high ground and secure
- Keep pets indoors

Preparedness

As with any potential hazard or threat, you should create an individual and family emergency plan to help you Be Ready for a hurricane in our area.

Step 1 Get your 72 hour preparedness kit ready.

What supplies might you need to cope with the event? What items would your family require to get through 72 hours or more with a decrease in essential services such as electricity?

For information and checklists on building your kit see the Provincial Emergency Management website at www.emo.gov.ns.ca

Step 2 Stock your supplies

Stock up on the items you might need such as water, and food supplies for your family and pets. Travel may be difficult after the storm and stores and businesses may not be open immediately. Ensure your vehicle gas tanks are full in case you need to leave the area.

Step 3 Build your contact and resource lists

Consider what and who you might need to help if your home or area is damaged and you are without basic services for a period of time.

- Are emergency numbers such as 911 prominently displayed in your home and do all family members know how to use them appropriately?
- Do you have an out of the area family contact number established and are all family members aware who they should call if you get separated?
- Are there work numbers you should have at hand?
- Do you have contacts to help with pet and livestock concerns?
- Do you know what your insurance policy covers? Do you have phone and policy numbers handy?
- Do you have phone numbers for people you might need to check on such as elderly family members and neighbours?
- Do you have charged cell phones and phones that don't require electricity to function?

Step 4 Be Ready to Evacuate

Depending on the strength of the storm, the predicted path, and your proximity to coastal areas you may need to evacuate prior to the storm arrival or once the storm has passed.

REMO will provide instructions on how and where to go for more information, shelter, and basic supplies. Unless otherwise directed, REMO recommends you transport all family members and pets in your private vehicle.

For your personal comfort and safety we recommend you take the following items with you:

- Personal information for all family members (birth certificates; health cards; drivers license)
- Money (cash; cheques; debit cards, credit cards)
- Cell phone(s) and chargers
- Medications & medical aids such as wheelchairs or walkers
- House and personal insurance information
- Personal care items for 3 days
- Toys, games, favourite items, for children
- Change of clothing
- Name and phone numbers of family members and important contacts

Pets

If possible, take your household pets with you in an appropriate carrying case. Take food and any medications your pets will need for 3 days. Leashes or restraining devices should be brought with your pets. Pets should have identifying collars as appropriate. If you are unable to take your pets with you, be prepared to evacuate without them and emergency personnel will make all reasonable efforts to ensure their safety.

Step 5 Talk about your plan

Emergency plans should be shared. Talk to all your family members about what you plan to do, what you might need help with, and how they can help. Make sure everyone knows where your emergency supplies are. Talk to neighbours and relatives and your contacts to ensure they would be able to provide what you are counting on them for!

Step 6 Stay Informed

Being prepared means you don't have to be scared. Once you know how you and your family could cope and you have the supplies you need you can relax in the knowledge that you have done what you can.

It is important to stay informed so you know if your area should be evacuated or if there are other actions REMO would encourage you to do. Listen to local radio station broadcasts.