

Hurricane/Flood Answer Key – Spring 2016

1. Residents and business owners in coastal areas are at risk from storm surge which, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is “an abnormal rise of water generated by a storm, over and above the predicted astronomical tide.” On the other hand, residents living and working adjacent to rivers face a significant risk from river flooding caused by significant rainfall or snowmelt. To determine if your home or business is located in a flood zone, visit: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/>
2. A Hurricane Watch means that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are *possible* within a specified area. A Hurricane Watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds in an area. A Hurricane Warning, on the other hand, means that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are *expected* somewhere within a specified area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph), the hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds to allow for important preparation.
3. Bring outdoors items inside. This may include chairs, tables, plants and other items that may be easily thrown by strong winds. If possible, try to elevate mechanicals (i.e. air conditioners, generators, circuit breakers) to minimize the risk of impact by storm surge. Place sand bags in areas that are most at risk from flooding.
4. A central meeting point should be established *prior* to a Hurricane Watch or Hurricane Warning being issued, so that if the power does go out, people know where to meet up with their loved ones. Another necessity is having a Go-Kit which, at the very minimum, should include water (one gallon per person, per day) and/or water purification tablets, a first-aid kit, a flashlight, batteries, a hand-crank/solar powered radio, non-perishable food, cash (in small denominations), a wrench (to turn off utilities), hand sanitizer, a mylar blanket, ear plugs, and a book and/or deck of cards.
5. Critical documents should be stored in Ziploc bags and kept in a safe place. Another option is to keep critical documents stored on a cloud drive, or on a flash drive kept in an alternate location, or in a safety deposit box.
6. Create a Go-Kit for your pet with essential items, including food, water, medication and favorite toys (if applicable). Include your veterinarian’s contact information and be sure that your pet is microchipped or at least has ID tags displayed. Your local Office of Emergency Management should be able to help you determine which shelters will accommodate pets during an evacuation.
7. This may include having items and services in place *before* a Hurricane Watch or Warning is issued. If a loved one is comforted by a certain item (a blanket, photograph, stuffed animal, etc.), be sure to pack the item when evacuating. If a relative requires regularly scheduled mental health therapy, make sure that his/her mental health provider is aware of the location of the shelter.

8. Many coastal areas have predetermined coastal evacuation routes which are identified by blue signs. If possible, familiarize yourself with the route by actually driving through it and determining the location to which it leads.

Evacuating to a friend or relative's home outside of the expected landfall area allows you to minimize the risks associated with any impending hurricane or flood damage.

9. Communicating via text messaging is a good way to contact one another should phone lines and cellular towers get damaged. Sending the messages, "R-U-OK?" or "I-M-OK," can be invaluable during and immediately following a disaster. Another option to consider should phone lines become inaccessible is to utilize social media, including but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.