



Key Facts about Hurricane Readiness

Preparing for a Hurricane

If you are under a hurricane watch or warning, here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the storm:

- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters.
 - Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before the hurricane strikes. Be prepared to turn off electrical power when there is standing water, fallen power lines, or before you evacuate. Turn off gas and water supplies before you evacuate. Secure structurally unstable building materials.
 - Buy a fire extinguisher and make sure your family knows where to find it and how to use it.
 - Locate and secure your important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, licenses, stocks, etc.
 - Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
 - Inform local authorities about any special needs, i.e., elderly or bedridden people, or anyone with a disability.
 - Make plans to ensure your pets' safety (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/petprotect.asp>).
- Emergency Supplies You Will Need You should stock your home with supplies that may be needed during the emergency period. At a minimum, these supplies should include:
- *Several clean containers for water, large enough for a 3-5 day supply of water (about five gallons for each person).*
 - *A 3-5 day supply of non-perishable food.*
 - *A first aid kit and manual.*
 - *A battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra batteries.*
 - *Sleeping bags or extra blankets.*

- *Water-purifying supplies, such as chlorine or iodine tablets or unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach.*
- *Prescription medicines and special medical needs.*
- *Baby food and/or prepared formula, diapers, and other baby supplies.*
- *Disposable cleaning cloths, such as "baby wipes" for the whole family to use in case bathing facilities are not available.*
- *Personal hygiene supplies, such as soap, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, etc.*
- *An emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.*

You can find more information on emergency plans and supply kits at www.ready.gov. Preparing to Evacuate expect the need to evacuate and prepare for it. The National Weather Service will issue a hurricane watch when there is a threat to coastal areas of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.

When a hurricane watch is issued, you should:

- *Fill your automobile's gas tank.*
- *If no vehicle is available, make arrangements with friends or family for transportation.*
- *Fill your clean water containers.*
- *Review your emergency plans and supplies, checking to see if any items are missing.*
- *Tune in the radio or television for weather updates.*
- *Listen for disaster sirens and warning signals.*
- *Prepare an emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.*
- *Secure any items outside which may damage property in a storm, such as bicycles, grills, Propane tanks, etc.*
- *Cover windows and doors with plywood or boards or place large strips of masking tape or adhesive tape on the windows to reduce the risk of breakage and flying glass.*
- *Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters cannot accept animals.*
- *Place vehicles under cover, if at all possible.*
- *Fill sinks and bathtubs with water as an extra supply for washing.*
- *Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.*

If You are Ordered to Evacuate

Because of the destructive power of a hurricane, you should never ignore an evacuation order. Authorities will be most likely to direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the storm. Be aware that most shelters and some hotels do not accept pets. If a hurricane warning is issued for your area or you are directed by authorities to evacuate the area:

- *Take only essential items with you.*
- *If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity, and water.*
- *Disconnect appliances to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.*
- *Make sure your automobile's emergency kit is ready.*
- *Follow the designated evacuation routes—others may be blocked—and expect heavy traffic.*

If You Are Ordered NOT to Evacuate

The great majority of injuries during a hurricane are cuts caused by flying glass or other debris. Other injuries include puncture wounds resulting from exposed nails, metal, or glass, and bone fractures. To get through the storm in the safest possible manner:

- *Monitor the radio or television for weather conditions, if possible.*
- *Stay indoors until the authorities declare the storm is over.*
- *Do not go outside, even if the weather appears to have calmed—the calm "eye" of the storm can pass quickly, leaving you outside when strong winds resume.*
- *Stay away from all windows and exterior doors, seeking shelter in a bathroom or basement. Bathtubs can provide some shelter if you cover yourself with plywood or other materials.*
- *Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or to a neighbor's home if your home is damaged, or if you are instructed to do so by emergency personnel.*

For more information you can either call the Plainfield Health Division at (908) 753-3092 or refer to the following websites

<http://www.state.nj.us/health>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes>

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>

<http://ucnj.org/government/Public-Safety/emergency-management>



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- Buy a fire extinguisher and make sure your family knows where to find it and how to use it.
- Locate and secure your important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, licenses, stocks, etc.
- Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
- Inform local authorities about any special needs, i.e., elderly or bedridden people, or anyone with a disability.
- Make plans to ensure your pets' safety (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/petprotect.asp>).

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- *A battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra batteries.*
- *Sleeping bags or extra blankets.*
- *Water-purifying supplies, such as chlorine or iodine tablets or unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach.*
- *Prescription medicines and special medical needs.*
- *Baby food and/or prepared formula, diapers, and other baby supplies.*
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- *Listen for disaster sirens and warning signals.*
- *Prepare an emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.*
- *Secure any items outside which may damage property in a storm, such as bicycles, grills, propane tanks, etc.*
- *Cover windows and doors with plywood or boards or place large strips of masking tape or adhesive tape on the windows to reduce the risk of breakage and flying glass.*
- *Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters cannot accept animals.*
- *Place vehicles under cover, if at all possible.*
- *Fill sinks and bathtubs with water as an extra supply for washing.*
- *Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.*

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- *Take only essential items with you.*
- *If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity, and water.*
- *Disconnect appliances to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.*
- *Make sure your automobile's emergency kit is ready.*
- *Follow the designated evacuation routes—others may be blocked—and expect heavy traffic.*

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- *Stay away from all windows and exterior doors, seeking shelter in a bathroom or basement. Bathtubs can provide some shelter if you cover yourself with plywood or other materials.*
- *Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or to a neighbor's home if your home is damaged, or if you are instructed to do so by emergency personnel.*

For more information you can either call the Plainfield Health Division at (908) 753-3092 or refer to the following websites

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Prepare and Maintain an Emergency Kit

Emergency Kit Contents

- *At least three days worth of water, including one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation purposes*
- *At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food*
- *Food and water for pets*
- *Manual can opener and eating utensils*
- *Prescription medications, a first aid kit and a first aid manual*
- *Paper towels, moist towelettes, diapers, toilet paper and garbage bags*
- *Personal hygiene items*
- *Disinfectant*
- *One blanket, change of clothing and footwear per person*
- *Extra pairs of glasses and/or contact lenses*
- *Extra set of keys, a credit card, cash or traveler's checks*
- *Flashlight and extra batteries*
- *Battery-powered radio and extra batteries*
- *Matches in a waterproof container*
- *Important documents like birth certificates placed in waterproof packaging*

Important Phone Numbers

It's important to have a telephone directory that includes work and personal cell phone numbers of people you may need to contact. Directories should include numbers for: relatives (including those who are out-of-state), neighbors, physicians, pharmacists, schools and day care facilities.

Additional Resources

<http://ucnj.org/hurricane-preparedness>

<http://www.state.nj.us/health>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/flood.html>

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>

<http://ucnj.org/government/Public-Safety/emergency-management>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/flood.html>



Evacuation

Preparing to Evacuate

Expect the need to evacuate and prepare for it. When a flood watch is issued, you should:

- Fill your vehicle's gas tank and make sure the emergency kit for your car is ready.
- If no vehicle is available, make arrangements with friends or family for transportation.
- Identify essential documents such as medical records, insurance card along with ID cards and put in water prove material to carry with you during evacuation.
- Fill your clean water containers.
- If you have pet, identify a shelter designated for pets.
- Review your emergency plans and supplies, checking to see if any items are missing.
- Tune in the radio or television for weather updates.
- Listen for disaster sirens and warning signals.
- Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters cannot accept animals.
- Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.

If You Are Ordered to Evacuate

You should never ignore an evacuation order. Authorities will direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the rising waters. If a flood warning is issued for your area or you are directed by authorities to evacuate the area:

- Take only essential items with you.
- If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity, and water.
- Disconnect appliances to prevent electrical shock when power is restored.
- Follow the designated evacuation routes and expect heavy traffic.
- Do not attempt to drive or walk across creeks or flooded roads.

If You Are Ordered NOT to Evacuate

To get through the storm in the safest possible manner:

- Monitor the radio or television for weather updates.
- Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or to a neighbor's home if your home is damaged, or if you are instructed to do so by emergency personnel.

Hurricanes and Public Health Concerns



Answers to Commonly Asked Questions about Water Supply

Is my tap water safe to drink?

Flooding due to a hurricane may compromise or contaminate some water supplies, including the water coming from several large public water companies. During hurricanes or flooding, state and local officials are monitoring water quality very carefully to ensure that any potential contaminants are identified quickly and everyone is informed appropriately. If it is determined that a water supply is or is likely to be contaminated, official advisories will be issued stating that consumers should boil or treat their water, use bottled water or other alternatives until water quality returns to a safe level.

What is the proper way to disinfect my water so that it is safe to drink?

The preferred method of treatment is boiling. Boiling water kills harmful bacteria and parasites. Bring water to a full ROLLING boil for at least 1 minute to kill most infectious organisms. If boiling water is not possible (power outages) potentially contaminated water may be treated with chlorine or iodine tablets. However, this treatment will not kill parasitic organisms. To disinfect with chlorine mix six drops (1/8 teaspoon) of unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach (5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) per gallon of water. Mix the solution thoroughly, and let stand for about thirty minutes. To disinfect using iodine put eight drops of 2% tincture of iodine in one quart of water.

Allow the water to stand at least 30 minutes before it is used.

What infectious organisms might be present in contaminated water?

Disease transmission from contaminated water occurs principally by ingesting water. The major organisms of concern are parasites, such as [Giardia](#) and [Cryptosporidium](#), and bacteria, such as [Shigella](#) and [E. coli](#). These organisms primarily affect the gastrointestinal system, causing diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, and vomiting with or without fever. Most of these illnesses are not usually serious or life-threatening, except in the elderly or those with compromised immune systems.

What if I have already consumed potentially contaminated water?

Even if someone has consumed potentially contaminated water from either a public water system or a private well before they were aware of the boil water advisory, the likelihood of becoming ill is usually low. Anyone experiencing symptoms of gastroenteritis, such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, with or without fever, should seek medical attention.

What other activities should I avoid using potentially contaminated water?

Contaminated water should NOT be used for drinking, making prepared drinks, ice making, brushing teeth, washing food or preparing food, or drinking water for pets. Water may be added to foods that will undergo a rolling boil for at least 1 minute.

Is potentially contaminated water safe for washing dishes or clothes?

Yes, if you rinse hand-washed dishes for a minute in dilute bleach (1 tablespoon per gallon of water), or clean your dishes in a dishwasher using the hot wash and dry cycles. It is also safe to wash clothes in tap water.

Is potentially contaminated water safe for bathing and shaving?

The water may be used for showering, baths, shaving and washing, so long as care is taken not to swallow water. Children and disabled individuals should have their bathing supervised to ensure water is not ingested. Though the risk of illness is minimal, individuals who have recent surgical wounds or are gave compromised immune systems because of HIV/AIDS, cancer treatment or transplant treatment should consider using bottled or boiled water for cleansing until the advisory is lifted. [Note: it said chronic disease, too, but that's a huge category and mostly not really at risk.]

How should I wash my hands during a boil water advisory?

Based on the current conditions of the affected public water supplies, vigorous hand washing with soap and your tap water is safe for basic personal hygiene. The use of boiled, treated, or bottled water for hand washing is usually only necessary when the water supply is seriously contaminated - which was not the case during Hurricane Floyd.

Can I visit my dentist during boil water advisory?

If your dentist's office is under the boil water advisory, they will need to use boiled or disinfected water for all procedures. If they cannot do this, they will reschedule your appointment to after the advisory has been lifted.

What if I get my water from a well?

Well water, like water from public water companies, may have become contaminated as a result of flooding. Residents should check with their local health officers to determine if their wells may have been affected and what disinfection procedures to use. Excellent information is also available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on the web at:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/>

Do I need any vaccinations if I have been exposed to flood water?

There is not usually a need to give vaccines during flood-related events. In some cases (see below) a tetanus booster may be indicated. **Tetanus:** Individuals exposed to flood waters with an open wound (not minor cuts and abrasions) who have not had a tetanus booster shot in 10 years should receive a tetanus booster. Mass vaccination of the general public and Emergency Responders are not recommended. **Hepatitis A, typhoid and cholera:** Since these diseases are unlikely to be transmitted under these circumstances, vaccination against them is not indicated.

Is it safe for me to participate in the cleanup (basements, offices, etc.)?

It is recommended that individuals participating in the cleanup of contaminated water sites protect themselves with protective clothing, including boots and gloves that are water proof, and guard against injury by sharp objects and electrical shock.

How can I get additional, up-to-date information?

Consult the Plainfield Division of health at (908) 753-3092, or the following web sites:

www.plainfield.com

<http://www.state.nj.us/health>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/flood.html>

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Drinking Water Safety During a Power Outage

Safe Drinking Water

When power goes out, water purification systems may not be functioning fully. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Your state or local health department can make specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area. Here are some general rules concerning water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene. Remember:

- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula. If possible, use baby formula that does not need to have water added. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to wash your hands.
- If you use bottled water, be sure it came from a safe source. If you do not know that the water came from a safe source, you should boil or treat it before you use it. Use only bottled, boiled, or treated water until your supply is tested and found safe.
- Boiling water, when practical, is the preferred way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites.
- Bringing water to a rolling boil for 1 minute will kill most organisms. When boiling water is not practical, you can treat water with chlorine tablets, iodine tablets, or unscented household chlorine bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite):
- If you use chlorine tablets or iodine tablets, follow the directions that come with the tablets.
- If you use household chlorine bleach, add 1/8 teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water if the water is clear. For cloudy water, add 1/4 teaspoon of bleach per gallon. Mix the solution thoroughly and let it stand for about 30 minutes before using it.
- Use a bleach solution to rinse water containers before reusing them. Use water storage tanks and other types of containers with caution

"SHELTER IN PLACE"



If You Are Ordered NOT to Evacuate

"Shelter-in-place" means to take immediate shelter where you are—at home, work, school, or in between. It may also mean "seal the room;" in other words, take steps to prevent outside air from coming in. This is because local authorities may instruct you to "shelter-in-place" if chemical or radiological contaminants are released into the environment. It is important to listen to TV or radio to understand whether the authorities wish you to merely remain indoors or to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family.

How will I know when I need to "shelter-in-place"?

Office of Emergency Management, Fire or Police department warning procedures could include:

- "All-Call" telephoning - an automated system for sending recorded messages, sometimes called "reverse 9-1-1".
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcasts on the radio or television.
- Outdoor warning sirens or horns.
- News media sources - radio, television and cable.
- NOAA Weather Radio alerts.
- Residential route alerting - messages announced to neighborhoods from vehicles equipped with public address systems.

How do I prepare?

At home

- Choose a room in advance for your shelter. The best room is one with as few windows and doors as possible. A large room, preferably with a water supply, is desirable—something like a master bedroom that is connected to a bathroom.
- Contact your workplaces, your children's schools, nursing homes where you may have family and your local town or city officials to find out what their plans are for "shelter-in-place."
- Find out when warning systems will be tested. When tested in your area, determine whether you can hear or see sirens and/or warning lights from your home.
- Develop your own family emergency plan so that every family member knows what to do. Practice it regularly.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit that includes emergency water and food supplies.

At work

- Help ensure that the emergency plan and checklist involves all employees. Volunteers or recruits should be assigned specific duties during an emergency. Alternates should be assigned to each duty.
- The shelter kit should be checked on a regular basis. Duct tape and first aid supplies can sometimes disappear when all employees know where the shelter kit is stored. Batteries for the radio and flashlight should be replaced regularly.

Facilities that handle potentially dangerous materials, like nuclear power plants, are required to install sirens and other warning systems (flash warning lights) to cover a 10-mile area around the plant.