

## **Hurricane Preparedness**

Here are a list of a few things ( that have been repeated over and over most of you can do the list by heart)

1. HAVE A PLAN: EVACUATE, NOT TO EVACUATE, STAY AT HOME, STAY WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER, GO TO SHELTER OR WHATEVER BUT HAVE A PLAN. That is the most important thing you can do.

### **STAYING HOME OR WITH A FRIEND**

2. If you are going to stay at home, with a friend or family member make sure you have enough NON-PERISHABLE, REPEAT NON-PERISHABLE food and clean water for each person for up to 5 days. The hurricane guides say 3 days but after reading items regarding Wilma, Andrew and several others 5 days seems to about the time help begins to arrive. Also if you have small children DIAPERS, DIAPERS, DIAPERS, and the items needed to keep these little guys clean and as dry as is reasonable, including a way of as safely as possible disposing of soiled diapers, garbage bags with pull string or tapes work and to make safer yet put each diaper in an old plastic bag ( Wal-Mart., Publix, etc) then put it in the garbage bag, trash won't be picked up for a while. And whatever they eat, drink and need for their general well being and remember 5 days for them is a long time. And this includes clothes, bathroom items, feminine need, and other personal items. And medications up to two weeks worth if possible. If you have special medication needs ( refrigerated , IV, special procedures then you may be a candidate for a Special Needs Shelter)

3. Have cash remember power WILL go out if only short period, but it will go out and ATMs powered by electric, so no electric no ATM and banks may not be open for several days because of power problems and security reasons. And once again 5 days worth is advised.

4. FLASHLIGHTS PLEASE, NO CANDLES, candles tip over and have the problem of catching things on fire and emergency responders rarely come out when the storm is in full force so fires just burn.

5. ALL, ALL, ALL, ALL IMPORTANT PAPERS placed in water tight plastic containers, or bags, and take they with you if you are going to a friend's or family member's home and this includes pictures ( they can't be replaced). Or if you have one place they all in a safety deposit box in the bank. As a side note have updated pictures, or tapes or image media with a newspaper laying open to the front page with DAY AND DATE CLEARLY!!!!!!!!!!!!!! VISIBLE IN EACH PICTURE OR EVERY ROOM.

6. If you are staying at home, in your house, DON'T GO OUTSIDE DURING THE STORM, this is also true if you are at a friend's or family member's home. Also have things like Fix-A-Flat when roofs get blown off nails and staples over everywhere. Have a full tank of gas the pumps at gas stations also use electric no power no gas. Insect repellent, spray, dog and cat food, flea power, extra batteries, games for kids, portable radios and TVs, tarps, tents, sleeping bags, coolers( when arrives it will likely have ice and you need some place to keep it), PUT YOU

NAME, AND ADDRESS ON EVERYTHING OUTSIDE,.

The items are the basics but here are some things that are sometimes forgotten or overlooked.

7. If you personal information on your PC, Apple, laptop etc and you have access to the Internet EMAIL COPIES OF THESE FILES (ALL!!!!!!!!!!!!!! OF THEM) TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST, THEN MAKE COPIES ON CD'S AND / OR DVD'S that way you have multiple backups in the event you system is damaged also check with you bank some of them offer this service for a price.

8. Check with your insurance agent about flood insurance, I forget what the waiting period is but if there is a storm approaching it will not take effect or be worth anything until the storm passes so check with your agent for more details.

9. Have PICTURE ID'S FOR EVERYONE EVEN THE LITTLE ONES so that when you try to get back to your house or what's left of it you won't be arrested for looting or theft.

10. If during the past several weeks you have noticed water standing in drainage ditches, or on roadways, or just around the house and yard, or if there have been or are large runoffs you may think about evacuating because these are signs that during a storm when 5 to 10 inches of rain is short time frame is possible water may make it impossible for you to get out or if needed help to get in and then you are stranded. This also goes for the place you may be staying if they have that problem both or all may need to leave.

11. Remember wild animals don't like storms either and they will seek high and dry ground, that means your house, garage, porch, under the car, attic, wherever else they may find shelter and this includes stray dogs and cats. If you see them, stay away from them because animals that normally are playful and friendly when frightened or even injured become something else so with that in mind if you have pets find a shelter for them for the reasons listed above, they may be okay but if they feel you are in danger from a stray then they will protect you and things quickly get out hand, or put them in a home kennel where they can see you and the family and talk to them because they are going to be unnerved also

12. AND STAY AWAY FROM DOWN POWER LINES, DEEP WATER, DOWN TREES, DOWN BRANCHES and other items that we are told about and repeat every year.

**13. BRING A MANUAL CAN OPENER NO POWER NO ELECTRIC CAN OPENER**

### **GOING TO A SHELTER**

14 If you are going to a SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER you already have a list to things to bring and where the shelter is and when to expect transportation or have someone take there. If you think you may need to go a SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER

**CONTACT HILLISBOROUGH COUNTRY'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND GET FORMS AND INFORMATION NOW WHILE YOU ARE**

## **READING THIS BECAUSE SPACES ARE LIMITED**

15. All of the items above apply to those going to a shelter with a couple of additions and remember shelters do not allow pets, guns, alcohol, they do not provide clothes and special foods only the very basics. SHELTER, BATHROOMS( WHICH SEEM TO BREAKDOWN ONE DAY ONE) AND FOOD NOTHING ELSE REGARDING CREATURE COMFORTS, AND THEY HAVE YET TO ASK FOR AN ID OR PROOF OF BEING LEGAL, BUT THEY MAY ASK FOR YOUR NAME SO NEXT OF KIN CAN BE INFORMED IF NEEDED. THEY MAY ALSO ASK ABOUT MEDICAL CONDITIONS SO OTHER SHELTER OCCUPANTS CAN BE KEPT AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE..

16. If you are going to a shelter find out where the nearest is located and find out your evacuation level (A,B,C,D,E, which correspond to hurricane categories 1,2,3,4,5 respectively) because if you do not need to go to a shelter don't, and I speak from experience here shelters are not fun.

17. If you are going to a shelter plan to leave early so you can avoid traffic problems when you are on the way to the shelter.

18. If you are going to a shelter and need transportation let someone know well in advance ( like now) so arrangements can be made to help you or to get help for you.

19. If asked to evacuate PLEASE DO SO FOR YOUR GOOD, THE GOOD OF DISASTER COMMITTEE ( who may try to get you and wind up needing help ourselves), the emergency services personal that will be sent to get you before the storm hits, and your family. If you wait until the storm is here and suddenly want to seek shelter the emergency services may still try to get to you, MAY BE if the storm is not to bad or it is still early, but after it is fully here they likely won't be allowed, so if ask to go please go or if you unsafe where are then please seek shelter at a shelter. If you need help contact the church and they will put you on a list for needing transportation, with the exception being the SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTERS those are done normally by emergency service personal of others that have some special training or by special arrangement.

## **IF YOU ARE EVACUATING THE AREA**

20. **LEAVE EARLY** you do not want to be on the road when a storm hits cars get blown around very easily.

21. Let someone know you are going and where. Bit of infor here hotel and motel rooms fill up quickly in Orlando so don't go there they are full. There will lots of traffic so have patience and be prepared to travel a distance and remember leaving Hillsborough country there are only six major routes ( I-4, 60 and 92 going east, I-75, 301 and 41 going north – south) plus other back road which will quickly be locked in traffic. As the storm approaches major bridges will be closed ( only way out north from Hillsborough County I-75, 301, 41, and the east routes of I-4, 60 and 92) and if waters rises because the storm is nearing 41 and parts of 301 will be closed leaving only I-75 and north going back roads and the I-4, 60 and 92. So plan accordingly.

22. All of the items listed above apply to you as well so if you do leave the area drive safely .

### **SOME GENERAL ITEMS ALL GROUPS**

23. The church is not a shelter and may be closed or even blown away.

24. Get a Hurricane guide from the local stores or call the local TV and radio stations.

25. Phones may not be working and that includes cell phones, PDAS etc so wait a couple days until they can be restored.

26. Bridges, roads, overpasses may be closed until inspected for damage so the traffic will be bad so if possible stay where you are.

27. Have your insurance agent's cell number, phone number or the main contact number of your insurance company ready so that when you can call them.

28. Be prepared to be more or less on your own with only the neighbors for help for at least three days but bet on five days.

29. Be careful when you start to clear item for the things listed above and for accidents such as broken bones etc.

30. And last but not least if you have small children consider leaving they do not need to be in the path of a storm, if you have elderly parents or someone elderly living with you consider leaving for the same reason, if you are elderly ( not to be mean) and you can leave do so we will need to wisdom and patience when we put things back together. And in general just apply some common sense **AND BE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE**