

## A STORM HAS BEEN NAMED...5 DAYS OR SO BEFORE

Here are actions you can take to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your property:

1. Call your insurance agent before the storm to review your renter's/homeowner's insurance to be sure it is up to date and sufficient. Understand any exclusions and know how you might fill in any gaps left. Consider how you would access funds you might need after the storm if you were directly affected. Ask for an insurance inventory checklist. Video your property both inside and out to have a record for any claims you might have later.
2. Review our local authority's plan to prepare and respond to hurricanes, so you can be aware of how the plan impacts you and your family.
3. Create a plan of your own, just in case, that includes how you will receive emergency alerts and warnings, know where the closest shelter is to you (Blair Elementary School), your evacuation route (choose more than one possibility), and your own family/household communication plan. You might need to evacuate quickly. If you need a pet friendly shelter, know where the closest is.
4. Sign up for your local emergency management alert system using apps like HURRICANE AMERICAN RED CROSS, FEMA, NOAA, MY RADAR, READY.GOV, [www.em.nhc.gov.com](http://www.em.nhc.gov.com), and especially one of the local television stations. Also [www.weather.gov/media/ilm/LatestBriefing.pdf](http://www.weather.gov/media/ilm/LatestBriefing.pdf) is a good source of information.
5. Stock up on emergency supplies to support you, your family, and pets for a minimum of 3-7 days should you have to shelter in place. (Refer to previous list.) Prepare your vehicle by filling up with gas in case of a need to evacuate quickly. Park your vehicles on high ground, if possible, in case of flooding.
6. Prepare an "Evac Bag", in case you need to evacuate with short notice. Your bag should have items found on the previous list. Be sure to include all important documents that you might need to receive assistance after the storm. Be particularly diligent about these as any assistance you might need after the storm could be hampered without them. **PLACE ALL IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS IN WATER TIGHT BAGS/BINS TO PREVENT WATER DAMAGE.**
7. Prepare and protect your property by clearing drains and gutters, trimming or removing trees close enough to fall on your home, consider hurricane shutters, installing check valves in plumbing to prevent backups, and know how to shut off electricity and water to your home. Before the last garbage pickup before the storm, clean out your fridge and freezer to remove old items and leftovers that you might not want to deal with after an extended loss of power. Secure anything outside that could become a projectile.
8. Freeze containers of water before the storm. When power goes out put one or more of the bowls in the refrigerator to extend the life of food contained. Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest possible setting and keep doors closed.
9. Close the tub drain and tape with duct tape to prevent leaking. Then fill with water for flushing commodes.
10. Unplug small appliances and turn off fans...anything not in use.
11. If you are evacuating, be sure to turn off utilities...gas, electric (ensure stove is off first), and water. Leave as quickly as you can. GRAB YOUR HURRICANE SUPPLY KIT. If you need to evacuate and can't take your pet, New Hanover County Animal Services will shelter pets for free during an emergency. Located at 180 Division Drive near the airport. Space is limited to first come first serve. 910-798-7500. If evacuating to a shelter and you have pets, be sure they will accept pets. NHC usually has one pet-friendly shelter, but at this printing it was not listed.
12. Listen for instructions and updates from local emergency officials.

## THE STORM HAS ARRIVED

Here are actions you can take to protect yourself and your family when you face a direct threat from a hurricane:

1. Stay aware and connected, frequently checking storm updates and local evacuation orders.
2. Charge all cell phones in your home in case you lose power. This would be a good time to replace batteries in lanterns and other items you might need if power goes out.
3. Double check the emergency supplies in your “evac bag” and ensure your important documents are together and in water tight containers/bags.
4. Protect your valuable/irreplaceable possessions by moving them to closets or to water tight bins safe from wind or flooding damage. Do the same with family photos and albums, electronics and documents. Losing some of these items can be very painful.
5. Practice continuous risk assessment during the storm. Constantly monitor storm warnings and the situation in our area and identify potential hazards and threats, putting controls in place to protect yourself and your family. This could include decisions such as moving to a secure location, like the basement, closet, or hallway. Stay away from windows and outside doors.
6. If power goes off, turn off/unplug electrical items until power comes back on to prevent surges. Be sure stove is off so when power comes back on, the stove will not generate a fire.
7. Head to a safe location in your home...interior room, on the lowest level, and gather pillows, blankets, and anything else that might protect you from falling debris.
8. If you should run out of water, in an emergency you can use the water in your hot water heater to drink. TURN OFF THE POWER TO THE HOT WATER HEATER FIRST. Draw water from the bottom of the tank. There may be some debris in the water if the heater is older, but once it settles it is okay to drink. AFTER YOU HAVE USED AS MUCH WATER AS NEEDED, REFILL THE TANK BEFORE TURNING THE POWER BACK ON TO THE HOT WATER TANK. Be SURE to do this before the power comes back on.
9. STAY INSIDE UNTIL YOU ARE CERTAIN THAT THE STORM HAS COMPLETELY PASSED.
10. If your power goes out, notify your power company immediately. Duke text OUT to 57801 or call 1-800-769-3766.

## THE STORM HAS PASSED

Here are actions you can take or tips for after the storm in case you cannot get immediate professional help if your home has been impacted:

1. Return to your home only once you have been instructed by local authorities, and you are confident it is safe to do so. Call 511 to find out the condition of roads for your return.
2. Disconnect any services such as electricity and gas until they are identified as safe if not done before evacuating.
3. Inspect your property for structural damage from wind and flooding. Inspect the outside entirely before venturing inside for inspection. If you are not sure if your home has had structural damage, wait for a professional or an inspector to certify your home is safe.
4. If you choose to enter your home, wear appropriate respiratory protection masks (N-95), rubber gloves and boots. Flood waters contain pathogens and could carry rodents, snakes, and spiders. In our area, especially, there may also be airborne threats such as mold.
5. If your home has been impacted, clearly document any damage with a series of photos/video including flood water level, the house exterior, and any damage to personal belongings BEFORE you start cleaning up. These photos could be used for insurance or federal assistance claims. Do only minimal repairs to protect your home from further damage (short-term repairs) around your home until a claims adjuster has seen your property.
6. Reducing mold growth is a priority. You can do that by:
  - a. Controlling moisture in your house with a dehumidifier, air conditioning if it still runs unit, or products like Damp Rid. If your electrics were not damaged and you have power, keep your AC fan running constantly at a low setting.
  - b. Removing any water damaged or damp materials and belongings such as drywall, carpets, rugs, bedding, furniture, etc.
  - c. Checking for any active roof leaks. Inspect the attic or check the ceiling for any visible water stains. Active leaks bring moisture into your home, which further contributes to mold growth. They should be repaired as soon as possible.
7. If you evacuated and did not unplug appliances for leaving, unplug any appliances upon returning to your home. If the power was off for an extended period, clean out the fridge as soon as possible. Food rots quickly and the smell lingers. The smell can be removed using any one of many techniques found online. Before moving it out of your house, tape the door shut.
8. If you have been evacuated for an extended time, all dishware and cookware should be washed with a bleach solution to disinfect before using. Walls and floors should be washed using a disinfecting solution. Mold and mildew can form quickly in our warm, damp environment.