



New York State Office of Emergency Management

HURRICANE SANDY: SAFETY TIPS

When the Storm Strikes

- **If you are traveling, find safe shelter immediately.**
- **Have a plan for those with special needs, children, the elderly and pets.**
- **Monitor local media reports and follow emergency instructions and orders from authorities.**

If you are at home or at work:

- If you have been ordered to evacuate, do so. If not, stay put in a well-constructed building.
- Continue to listen to local radio, television reports or NOAA Weather Radio for latest information on the storm's progress and for bulletins from emergency officials.
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Fill large containers with water.

If winds become strong:

- Stay away from windows and doors even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway.
- Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.
- If you are in a two-story house, go to an interior first-floor room, such as a bathroom or closet.
- If you are in a multiple-story building and away from the water, go to the first or second floors and take refuge in the halls or other interior rooms away from the windows.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.
- Remain indoors during a hurricane or coastal storm. Don't be fooled by the "eye" or the lull that occurs as the storm center moves overhead. The other side of the hurricane "eye" has winds that will rapidly increase and will come from the opposite direction.

If You Are Ordered To Evacuate

- Follow the instructions and advice of local government officials. If you are advised to evacuate, do so promptly.
- If you are advised to go to a certain location, go there. Don't go anywhere else.
- If certain travel routes are advised, use those routes rather than trying to find short cuts.
- If you are told to shut off water, gas or electrical service to your home before leaving, do so.
- Before you leave, secure your home. Bring inside or secure loose items. Shutter windows and doors securely. Turn off electricity at main switch and the gas at each appliance.
- Leave as soon as officials instruct that you do to avoid being marooned on flooded highways.
- Make certain you have enough fuel for your car.
- As you travel, keep listening to the radio for additional instructions.
- Watch for washed-out roads, earth slides, broken water or sewer mains, loose or downed electrical wires and falling or fallen objects.
- Don't try to cross a stream or pool of water unless you are certain that the water will not be over your knees, or above the middle of your car's wheels, all the way across. If you do decide it is safe to cross, put your car in low gear and drive very slowly to avoid splashing water into your engine and causing it to stop. Also, remember that your brakes may not work well after the car has been in deep water. Try them out a few times when you reach the other side.

If High Wind Occurs

- Garage doors are frequently the first feature in a home to fail. Reinforce all garage doors so that they are able to withstand high winds.
- If you do not live in an evacuation zone or a mobile home, designate an interior room with no windows or external doors as a "Safe Room."
- Most mobile / manufactured homes are not built to withstand hurricane force winds. Residents of homes not meeting that level of safety should relocate to a nearby safer structure once local officials issue a hurricane evacuation order for their community.
- Once a hurricane warning is issued, install your window shutters or plywood panels.
- When a hurricane warning is issued for your community, secure or bring inside all lawn furniture and other outside objects that could become a projectile in high winds.
- Listen to local radio and television broadcasts for safety instructions from local officials, and go to your designated "Safe Room" when directed to do so.
- Do not leave your "Safe Room" until directed to do so by local officials, even if it appears that the winds calmed. Remember that there is little to no wind in the eye of a hurricane.

If Inland Flooding Occurs

- In high flood-prone areas, keep materials on hand like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, plastic garbage bags, lumber, shovels, work boots and gloves.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels and areas known to flood, so you or your evacuation routes are not cut off. If you choose or are told to evacuate, move to a safe area before access is cut off by flood water.
- Monitor local radio / television broadcasts or NOAA Weather Radio to learn of the storm's progress and for information from emergency officials.

- Avoid driving into water of unknown depth. Moving water can quickly sweep your vehicle away.
- Restrict children from playing in flooded areas.
- After a flood, you should test drinking water for potability and wells should be pumped out and the water tested before drinking.
- Do not use fresh food that has come in contact with floodwaters. Wash canned goods that come in contact with floodwaters with soap and hot water.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

In Case of Power Outage

- Turn off major appliances to prevent damage from a possible surge when the power comes back on - keep one light turned on so you know when power returns.
- Call your utility provider to notify them of the outage.
- Check to see if your neighbors have power.
- Use only flashlights for emergency lighting -- candles pose the risk of fire.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors shut to keep food from spoiling. When in doubt, throw it out!
- Do not use a charcoal grill indoors and do not use a gas stove for heat - they could give off harmful levels of carbon monoxide.
- In cold weather, stay warm by dressing in layers and minimizing time spent outdoors. Be aware of cold stress symptoms (i.e., hypothermia) and seek proper medical attention if symptoms appear.
- If you are in a tall building, take the stairs and move to the lowest level of the building.
- If trapped in an elevator, wait for assistance. Do not attempt to force the doors open. Remain patient - there is plenty of air and the interior of the elevator is designed for passenger safety.
- Remember to provide fresh, cool water for your pets.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic signals will stop working during an outage, creating traffic congestion and dangerous driving conditions. If you must drive during a blackout, remember to obey the 4-way stop rule at intersections with non-functioning traffic signals.
- Remember that equipment such as automated teller machines (ATMs) and elevators may not be working.