

# Storm readiness

## Hurricane preparation tips for Eastern North Carolina

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The Atlantic hurricane season officially starts on June 1 and area residents are urged to take steps now to prepare their homes and family for the possibility of a storm.

Pamela Brown, preparedness coordinator for the Onslow County Health Department, said the time to prepare is before a storm hits and she encourages individuals to share information and talk to the children, families and neighbors in their lives about their plans.

“It’s good for people to prepare together,” she said.

Below are seven ways to help prepare for the hurricane season as well as other emergency situations.

### 1. Make a kit

Keep disaster supply kits stocked with essentials to help you in case of power outages, storm damage or the need to evacuate from your home. Basic supplies should include water (one gallon per person for 3-7 days), non-perishable food for at least three days, non-electric can opener and cooking tools, flashlight, batteries, battery-operated and NOAA weather radio, toiletries and hygiene items, weather-appropriate clothing, pillows and blankets, baby items, medicine and special needs items, important documents in water-proof bag, pet items, basic tools and cash.

Be sure to check kits regularly to replace items as needed.

### 2. Gather important

documents

Be aware of where important documents are and keep them in one location so that you do not need to search for them during a storm or in the case of having to leave your home to evacuate or seek shelter. Keep personal information such as social security, identification and health insurance card.

It is also recommended that you keep bank account information and insurance documents such as homeowner, auto and life insurance so that it is accessible if there is damage to your home or you are not able to get to your home.

Now is also a good time check insurance coverage to ensure it is up to date and will adequately cover any loss.

### 3. Prepare your home

As you prepare your family, there are also steps you can take to make preparations around your home. Pick up tree limbs and debris around the yard and bring in any items that could be blown around by the wind. You may also need to close windows and doors and cover with storm shutters or plywood. Inside, turn refrigerator and freezer to the lowest setting possible, turn off propane tanks, unplug small appliances and know where to cutoff water and utilities around the house in case you have to leave.

### 4. Come up with a family plan

Families should have plans for where to go in their home if they need to take immediate shelter and should designate places to meet both in their local area and outside the area if they have to leave their home. Families should also know how best to communicate with each other during a storm and have a person outside the family that they can also contact who will know their plans.

As part of their plans, individuals and families should be aware of the shelter locations and evacuation routes in their area.

### 5. Check medications

and health supplies

Individuals who take medications on a regular basis should be sure in advance of a storm that they have an adequate supply on hand should they not have immediate access to their doctor or pharmacy. For medications that require refrigeration, check with pharmacy or doctor to see what can be done for alternative cooling sources if power goes out.

Those with special health needs or medical equipment should check on alternate arrangements for power sources or shelter if needed during a storm.

#### 6. Prep for all family members

Don't forget your pets when you are packing your family's disaster kit. They will also need food and water and bedding. You may also want to pick up collapsible bowls, bring a leash and toss in a toy or two. You may also need a crate for holding your pet. If you have to head to a shelter, Onslow County does open a pet-friendly shelter location.

And for the young kids in your life, power outages and shelter stays can mean long hours without electricity for powering all those electronic devices. Be sure to pack non-electric games or toys that will help keep them occupied.

#### 7. Stock the car

Be sure your car has a full tank of gas in case you need to leave your home or evacuate to another destination. In the case of areas hit by a storm, access to fueling stations may be limited in the aftermath of a storm.

It is also a good idea to keep a disaster supply kit in the car in case of an emergency on the road or away from home.



Pamela Brown with the Onslow County Public Health Department checks off items in a hurricane survival kit at the Onslow County Senior Services Center in Jacksonville on Friday morning. Brown distributed about 150 of the kits to attendees during a demonstration for seniors there. Photo by John Althouse/The Daily News



Catherine Memelli, second from right, with the Onslow County Public Health Department goes through the items in a hurricane survival kit at the Onslow County Senior Services Center in Jacksonville on Friday morning with Richard Plumb, his wife Elizabeth Plumb and David Hall. Onslow County Public Health Department distributed about 150 of the kits to attendees during a demonstration for seniors there. Photo by John Althouse/The Daily News