



FACT SHEET

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The ‘Double Checklist’: Storm Preparedness for the Environment’s Sake

There are [many things you must do](#) to protect your family and home when a storm looms on the horizon. Similarly, there are other steps you can take to protect your family and neighbors. These will keep toxins at bay when they are swept up by floodwaters, storm surges and wind. The “Double Checklist” below includes such precautions. Please consider these once your home, loved ones and pets are prepared to weather the storm.

In the Home

- ✓ Move hazardous chemicals onto shelves so they are not carried away by floodwater or storm surge.
- ✓ Reset the timer on your irrigation system (sprinklers) so it does not spray before or during a storm.
- ✓ Wait to wash your dishes and laundry, and minimize your use of baths, showers and sinks. If you don’t, your wastewater and its soap could overflow into a nearby waterway.

Outside the Home

- ✓ Avoid using fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide in the days before a storm.
- ✓ Do not paint, pour concrete, stain decks, tar roofs, or reseal driveways in the hours before a storm.
- ✓ Secure outdoor equipment, furniture and toys so they do not wash or blow into nearby waterways.
- ✓ Clean up any dog waste in your yard. This could cause excess algae to grow in your local waterway.
- ✓ Make sure your downspouts empty onto a lawn or, better yet, a garden rather than a paved surface.
- ✓ Empty any rain barrels or cisterns you may have as soon as possible.
- ✓ Check to make sure your nearest storm drain is free of grass, litter, and other debris.
- ✓ Take a walk up and down your block and dispose of any trash that may be lying around.
- ✓ Make sure your dumpster is emptied or, at the very least, securely closed before the storm hits.
- ✓ Make sure your vehicle is not leaking oil, coolant, or any other chemicals that could contaminate water.
- ✓ Move your car and anything else with an engine to high ground, and avoid parking near a storm drain.
- ✓ Bring your outdoor grill’s propane tank indoors. Move the rest of your grill into a garage or shed to prevent it from washing or blowing away.
- ✓ If you own a shed, consider moving its chemicals and yard equipment into your garage. This is important because a stand-alone shed is more vulnerable to damage than your home.
- ✓ Haul your boat onto ground high above storm-surge levels. If you cannot remove your boat from the water, anchor it in a deep, sandy harbor lacking rocks and other boats before siphoning its fuel.
- ✓ If your home has a [septic tank](#) rather than a sewer pipe:
 - Do not have it pumped, or emptied. Doing so may cause it to collapse or heave upward.
 - Temporarily turn the pump off at the circuit box if it relies on electrical power.
 - Seal its manhole, ports, and electrical connections to keep water out.
- ✓ [Plug or cap](#) your [water well](#) to keep pollution out if you are among the 10% in our region that rely on wells.

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary is a nonprofit organization that brings together people, businesses and governments to restore and protect the Delaware River and Bay. From its headquarters in Wilmington, the PDE focuses programs and scientific research on the entire environment affecting the estuary — from Trenton to Cape May, New Jersey and Lewes, Delaware. We encourage collaboration among the estuary’s many stakeholders and seek practical solutions to help restore the natural vitality of the Delaware River and Bay on which plants, wildlife, people and businesses rely.