



Wallace Wealth Management

What to Do After a Hurricane

- Continue listening to local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio for information and instructions. Access may be limited to some parts of the community, or roads may be blocked.
- If you evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe. Local officials on the scene are your best source of information on accessible areas and passable roads.
- Stay alert for extended rainfall and subsequent flooding, even after the hurricane or tropical storm has weakened. Hurricanes may stall or change direction when they make landfall, or they may bring a lot of rain upriver, causing additional flood hazards for hours or days after the storm.
- Stay away from flood waters. Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges. Continue to follow all flood safety messages. Flood waters may last for days following a hurricane. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. When you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, if you can safely get out of the car, do so immediately and climb to higher ground. Never try to walk, swim, or drive through such swift water. Most flood fatalities are caused by people attempting to drive through water or people playing in high water. If it is moving swiftly, even water six inches deep can sweep you off your feet, and two feet can carry away most automobiles.
- If you come upon a barricade, follow detour signs or turn around and go another way. Barricades are put up by local officials to

protect people from unsafe roads. Driving around them can be a serious risk.

- Stay on firm ground. Moving water only six inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Help injured or trapped persons. Give first aid where appropriate. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- Help a neighbor who may require special assistance - infants, elderly people and people with disabilities. Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance. People who care for them or who have large families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.
- Avoid disaster areas. Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and put you at further risk from the residual effects of floods, such as contaminated waters, crumbled roads, landslides, mudflows, and other hazards.
- Avoid loose or dangling power lines; immediately report them to the power company, police, or fire department. Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service. Call an electrician for advice before using electricity, which may have received water damage.
- Stay out of the building if water remains around the building. Flood waters often undermine foundations, causing buildings to sink, floors to crack, or walls to collapse.
- When entering buildings, use extreme caution. Hurricane- driven flood waters may have damaged buildings where you least expect it. Carefully watch every step you take.
 - Wear sturdy shoes. The most common injury following a disaster is cut feet.

- Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings. Battery-powered lighting is the safest and easiest, preventing fire hazard for the user, occupants, and building.
- Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
- Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage. Cracks and damage to a foundation can render a building uninhabitable.
- Look for fire hazards. There may be broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, or submerged furnaces or electrical appliances. Flammable or explosive materials may come from upstream. Fire is the most frequent hazard following floods.
- Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
- Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company, and avoid using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water from undamaged water heaters or by melting ice cubes.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes, that may have come into buildings with the flood waters. Use a stick to

poke through debris. Flood waters flush many animals and snakes out of their homes.

- Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.
- Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage. If power was lost, some foods may be spoiled.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated. Hurricane-driven flood waters may have contaminated public water supplies or wells. Local officials should advise you on the safety of the drinking water. Undamaged water heaters or melted ice cubes can provide good sources of fresh drinking water.
- Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage. If the water is pumped out completely in a short period of time, pressure from water on the outside could cause basement walls to collapse.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls. Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disaster situations. They need to be clear for emergency calls to get through.