

Ultimate Hurricane Tip List from Cat Country Listeners

Prepare Early

1. Prep year-round and don't wait until the last minute.
2. Start buying supplies before hurricane season or a little at a time each paycheck.
3. Build a disaster kit and keep it ready to go.
4. Plan for at least 72 hours on your own; a week is even better.
5. Don't wait for a hurricane warning to start shopping.
6. Watch weather updates and listen to local officials.
7. Sign up for emergency alerts.
8. Know your evacuation zone, flood zone, and route out.
9. Have important paperwork ready in a waterproof/fireproof box or sealed bags.
10. Take photos or video of your home, valuables, drawers, closets, model numbers, and outdoor items for insurance.
11. Review insurance coverage before the season and consider flood insurance.
12. If you own timber, land, or large property, take detailed before-storm photos and inventory.

Water & Food

1. Stock up on water early.
2. Store more than one gallon per person per day if possible.
3. Don't forget water for pets.
4. Fill jugs, containers, and bottles with water.
5. Freeze water bottles and containers to help keep food cold.
6. Fill the bathtub for flushing toilets and washing.
7. Fill extra containers for bathroom use.
8. Have non-perishable food, canned goods, snacks, fruit cups, and easy meals.
9. Keep a manual can opener.
10. Use paper plates, cups, and plastic utensils to save water.
11. Keep baby wipes, Ziploc bags, and trash bags on hand.
12. Have instant coffee, powdered creamer, powdered milk, or caffeine drinks if you need caffeine.
13. Don't eat the hurricane snacks before the hurricane.

Cash, Fuel & Transportation

1. Have cash on hand, preferably small bills.
2. Keep vehicles full of gas.
3. Fill approved gas cans before shortages start.
4. Get ethanol-free or marine gas for generators when possible.
5. Keep fuel for generators, chainsaws, and cleanup tools.
6. If evacuating, leave early before roads, bridges, and gas stations become a problem.
7. Know where you are going before you leave.

8. Drive calmly if evacuating.

Power, Light & Communication

1. Charge phones, portable chargers, tablets, radios, and rechargeable tools.
2. Have flashlights, lanterns, batteries, and battery-powered lights.
3. Avoid real candles when possible because of fire risk.
4. Solar yard lights can charge outside and be used indoors at night.
5. A battery-powered radio may be your only information source.
6. Battery-powered fans can help during hot outages.
7. Tool battery systems can power fans, lights, USB chargers, saws, and cleanup tools.
8. Point a flashlight at the ceiling to light up a room.

Generators & Cooling

1. Service your generator before the season.
2. Have enough fuel to run it for several days.
3. Keep generators at least 20 feet from the house.
4. Never run a generator inside, in a garage, or near windows.
5. Consider a small window AC unit or portable AC that can run off a generator.
6. Cool your house down before the storm and keep doors/windows closed after power goes out.
7. Earplugs may help if generators are running all around you.

Home & Yard Prep

1. Trim trees before hurricane season.
2. Remove loose limbs and debris.
3. Cut your grass before the storm to make cleanup easier.
4. Clean the house before the storm.
5. Do all laundry before the storm.
6. Wash dishes before the storm.
7. Secure outdoor furniture, grills, trash cans, and loose items.
8. Ratchet strap trash cans or fill them with water if needed.
9. If you have a trailered boat in the yard, weigh it down with water.
10. Get plywood early, measure it, cut it, and label it.
11. Do not tape your windows.
12. Put up shutters if you have them.

Food Storage & Cooking

1. Use the washer as a cooler with ice, drinks, and sealed food.
2. Pack ice and frozen water around freezer/fridge items.
3. Use a thick blanket over the freezer to help hold cold air.
4. Have propane or charcoal for the grill.
5. Be ready to cook food from the freezer before it spoils.
6. A cinder block and match light can work as a makeshift cooking setup.
7. Don't leave chicken in the freezer if the power may go out.

Pets & Animals

1. Stock extra pet food, water, and medications.
2. Have one carrier per animal.
3. Keep vaccination records ready.
4. Take pets with you if you evacuate.
5. Don't forget large animals like horses.
6. Change cat litter before the storm.
7. Have dog medications ready, especially for pets afraid of thunder.

Sanitation & Toilets

1. Have toilet paper, toiletries, and hygiene supplies.
2. Keep a bucket, trash bag liner, cat litter, and pool noodle for emergency toilet use.
3. Use stored bathtub water to flush toilets.
4. Don't waste drinking water washing dishes.

Evacuation & Safety

1. If evacuation is recommended, go early.
2. For stronger storms, especially Category 3 or higher, leave.
3. If you live on or near the water, take evacuation seriously.
4. Don't try to "ride it out" if officials say to leave.
5. Take closed-toe shoes if evacuating or cleaning up.
6. Have a helmet or hard hat for post-storm cleanup around falling limbs.
7. Stay close to cover if you go outside during the eye.
8. Don't underestimate any storm.
9. Go with your gut.
10. Stay calm, but don't ignore the danger.

After the Storm

1. Watch for falling limbs and hidden hazards.
2. Have chainsaws, pruning blades, sawzalls, and cleanup tools ready.
3. Be careful what you post online about damage if you may file an insurance claim.
4. Don't expect help immediately; the first 72 hours are on you.
5. Love your neighbor and help where you can.
6. Talk with neighbors before the storm and make a plan.
7. Make friends with the neighbor who has a Generac.

Local Gulf Coast Wisdom

1. If Waffle House closes, pay attention.
2. If Jim Cantore shows up, take it seriously.
3. Water is currency.
4. Gas up no matter what.
5. Hurricane prep is easier than hurricane recovery.

6. Don't panic, but don't procrastinate.

7. If you're new here, listen to people who have lived through Ivan, Sally, and other Gulf Coast storms.

Bottom Line

Water. Fuel. Cash. Medications. A Plan.