

PREPARATION IS KEY FOR A SAFE HURRICANE SEASON

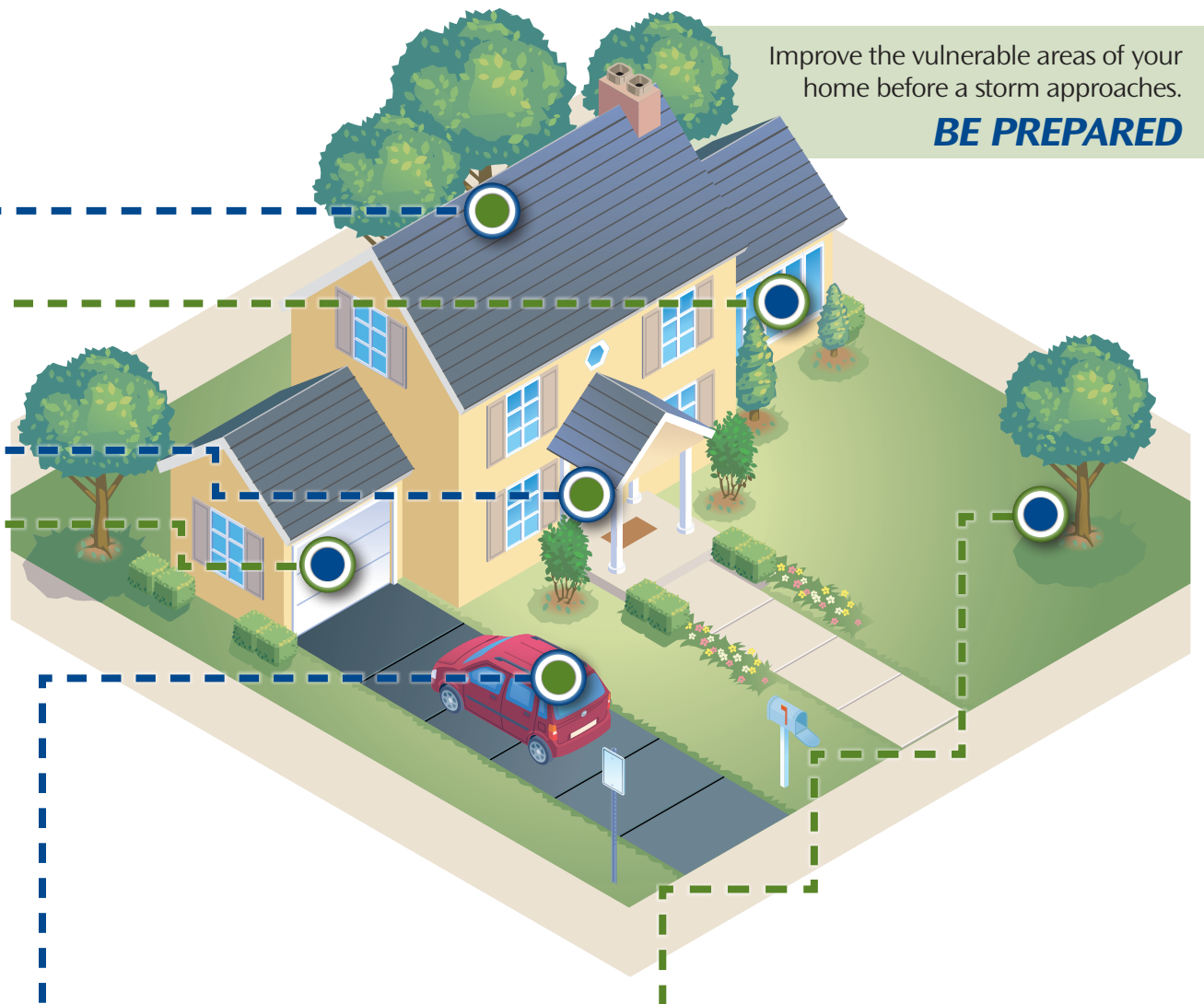
PREPARE YOUR HOME

Preparing your home to withstand high winds can mean the difference between minor and major repairs after a hurricane. That's why it's so important to strengthen your home to resist high winds.

Some key tips:

- If your roof needs replacement, a new one can be installed to meet stronger building codes adopted in 2002.
- Shutter your windows. Glass can be broken by flying debris. Protecting your windows can keep storm winds and rain out and your roof on. Duct tape provides no protection.
- Check weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors, replacing if necessary.
- Check your garage door. If your door needs replacing, look for a reinforced, wind-rated model.
- Think about other improvements. The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes has step-by-step instructions for reinforcing your home's roof, gable ends and other vulnerable areas.
- If you have questions about your home's storm readiness, consider having a home inspector review your home's condition.

If you are considering hiring help, be sure to use a licensed, reputable contractor. Before signing a contract, call Pinellas County Justice and Consumer Services at (727) 464-6200 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/consumer.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes
www.FLASH.org

State of Florida
www.mysafefloridahome.com

To create a personal family plan
www.floridadisaster.org

Institute for Business and Home Safety
www.disastersafety.org

Hurricane Retrofit Guide for Homes
www.floridadisaster.org/mitigation/rcmp/hrg/index.asp



MOBILE HOMES ARE NOT SAFE HAVENS

While mobile and manufactured homes are great places to call home, they must never be used as a shelter. Mobile and manufactured homes can be severely damaged from the hurricane-force winds and flying debris. This was proved true during the storms of 2004 and 2005 when even homes built after 1994 to the tougher standards after Hurricane Andrew sustained damage when they were flipped off their foundations or damaged by flying debris.

No matter the category of storm, whenever an evacuation order is given, **all mobile- and manufactured-home residents must evacuate.** Mobile- and manufactured-home residents need to have an evacuation plan in case a hurricane threatens. One word of caution – most mobile home park recreation centers are not rated to withstand high winds either. Ask your park's management what plans – if any – are in place for sheltering options and for evacuation notification.

Annually check your tie down and anchoring system:

- Look for possible rusting of anchors and connections.
- Tighten the straps if necessary.
- Add anchors and straps where possible.

Check for wood rot and termite damage at connections, joists and trusses:

- Investigators have found that failures at these points allows air to penetrate the home's air-tight envelope and leads to structure failure.

PREPARE YOUR VEHICLES

Personal vehicles can be an important tool to help you to prepare, to evacuate and to get supplies after a storm. **To prepare your vehicle:**

1. Get any basic maintenance (tune-ups, repairs) done before a storm threatens. Have your mechanic check belts, hoses, filters and vital fluid levels.
2. Keep your gas tank at least half full with gas. When a Hurricane Watch is issued, fill your tank.
3. Build a survival kit for your car, including:
 - A first aid kit
 - Nonperishable food and bottled water
 - A can of tire inflator
 - A basic tool kit
 - Jumper cables and road flares
 - A working jack and spare tire
 - A flashlight
 - DC to AC car power inverter
 - Chargers for cell phones and other devices
 - A map with shelter locations

PREPARE YOUR YARD

Getting your yard ready to weather the storm can keep you and your home safe. High winds can turn even the heaviest items into deadly projectiles that can break through your windows, doors and even walls. **To prepare your yard:**

- Properly prune trees and shrubs before any storms threaten. Do not leave piles of branches that can become missiles in high winds.
- Keep your gutters and down spouts clear and in good repair.
- Replace rock mulch with shredded bark.
- Bring in all yard items such as furniture, toys, bird baths, bird feeders and barbecue grills when a Hurricane Warning is issued.
- Do not drain your pool. Super chlorinate the water and turn off all electricity to the pool for the duration of the storm.

If you are doing any home renovations that require digging, call 8-1-1 before you start. This free service will help you locate underground utilities before you damage them. Not only will it keep you safe, it's the law!

Top Three Tips to Save Your Home

While a thorough renovation of your home's structure will provide the best protection against the high winds a hurricane can bring, these three improvements can really make a difference:

1. BRACE YOUR GARAGE DOOR

After Hurricane Andrew, engineers looked at how the homes in South Florida failed during the high winds. Four out of five homes that had major structural damage lost their garage doors first. Older garage doors in good condition can be braced with retrofit kits available at most home centers. New garage doors must meet stringent wind load requirements.

2. PROTECT YOUR WINDOWS

By shuttering your windows with plywood or another commercially available product, you can increase your home's ability to withstand wind by one category of storm strength. In other words, a home that could survive a Category 2 storm can now handle a Category 3. If the wind gets into your home, it can force the roof upward, possibly allowing high winds to tear it off.

3. BRACE YOUR GABLE END ROOF

A gabled roof has two slopes that come together to form a ridge or a peak at the top. Homes with gabled roofs are more likely to suffer collapse of the end wall from high winds because they are often not braced properly during construction.

To learn about bracing and other techniques, go to: www.floridadisaster.org/hrg/index.asp.