

- Steps before you leave
- Long-term maintenance
- Protect your property from floods
- Tips to save your home



Bracing your home for high winds can make the difference between minor damage and a devastating loss in a hurricane. Homeowners should consider upgrading an old roof, windows or garage door to a higher standard of wind resistance when making improvements.

STEPS BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- Turn off the water and gas utilities.
- Lock windows and doors.
- Tell friends and neighbors where you're going.

LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

Not sure if your home is storm ready? Roofs and windows on older homes, especially, may not be up to current code for wind resistance. Consider hiring a home inspector to review your home's condition.

The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes has step-by-step instructions for reinforcing your home's roof, gable ends and other areas: www.flash.org.

If you hire a contractor, make sure they're fully licensed. Pinellas County Consumer Protection can verify this. Call (727) 464-6200 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/consumer.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM FLOODS

Depending on your property's elevation, it may only take a few inches of rising water to infiltrate your home. Here are a few steps you can take to mitigate the impact of flooding:



- Protect natural floodplains by keeping lawn clippings, leaves and other debris out of streets and storm drains. Flood plains provide storage for floodwaters and buffer coastal areas from storm surge. Only rain down the drain!

- Elevate your utilities, such as water heaters, AC units, etc.
- Evaluate your property's drainage and implement floodproofing measures.

For detailed information about flood risks, insurance and flood mitigation techniques, visit www.pinellascounty.org/flooding or call Pinellas County Flood Information Services at (727) 464-7700.

MORE RESOURCES

Visit www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/prepareahead.htm for more detailed steps and links to other resources to prepare your home.

TIPS TO SAVE YOUR HOME

PROTECT YOUR WINDOWS – Your best option is to install impact resistant windows or hurricane shutters. Otherwise, be ready to cover your windows with commercial exterior plywood – 7/16" minimum – when a storm is approaching. Duct tape provides NO protection.

BRACE YOUR GABLE ROOF – Gabled roofs – two slopes that come together to a peak at the top – are prone to failure if not properly braced in construction. High winds could cause your end wall to collapse. See the Florida Division of Emergency Management's Hurricane Retrofit Guide for advice: www.floridadisaster.org/hrg.

PREPARE YOUR YARD – Rock mulch, sagging tree limbs and yard furniture are among the objects that could become deadly missiles in high winds. Keep your trees pruned, clean out your gutters on a regular basis, and when a storm is coming...

- Dispose of any piles of loose tree limbs or debris.
- Bring in all large yard items; e.g. furniture, grills, bird baths.
- Do not drain your pool. Super chlorinate the water and turn off the electricity.

BRACE YOUR GARAGE DOOR – Old garage doors in good condition can be braced with retrofit kits while new doors must meet stringent wind requirements. After Hurricane Andrew, engineers determined four out of five homes that suffered major structural damage lost their garage door first.

PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE

- Keep up with your car's maintenance.
- Keep gas tank half full – fill tank during a Hurricane Watch.
- Build a survival kit for your car: first aid, non-perishable food/water, tire inflator, tool kit, jack and spare tire, jumper cable, road flares, flashlight, DC/AC power inverter, mobile device chargers, map with shelter locations.

CHECK SEALS – Replace any worn out weather stripping or caulk around windows and doors.