

# How can I prepare my home?

There are several simple steps to making your home storm ready, and they do not have to be expensive fixes.

## \*Brace Your Gabled 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](http://www.floridadisaster.org/hrg).

## \*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.

## 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, such as furniture, grills and bird baths.
- Do not drain your pool. Super chlorinate the water and turn off the electricity. Note: The bottom of the pool is one storage option for outdoor furniture.

## Check Seals

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

## \*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 inflater, tool kit, jack and spare tire, jumper cable, road flares, flashlight, DC/AC power inverter, mobile device chargers, map with shelter locations.

**\*Protecting windows, gable roofs and garage doors are the most important steps to take.**

## Should I get a generator?

A fuel-powered generator can keep your appliances going after a disaster and would keep you more comfortable. You can buy a small one to run your medical equipment. But keep in mind, generators come with the dangers of carbon monoxide, electrical shock and fire.

### Follow these safety measures:

- Use generators outdoors and away from windows

and doors to avoid carbon monoxide exposure. NEVER operate a generator indoors. NEVER use a generator in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.

- Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty, three-pronged extension cord.
- NEVER plug the generator into a wall outlet—this can cause electrocution.

## How do I secure my boat?

No matter how seaworthy you or your boat is, do not ever consider staying with your boat in a hurricane. Make preparations early and evacuate for your safety. Monitor weather and sea conditions closely. If watches or warnings are issued, do not venture onto the water.



Follow the tips below to minimize damage to your vessel during a hurricane.

## Marina Slip or Private Dock Storage

- Create a hurricane plan for your boat and file a copy with the marina operator.
- Take a photographic inventory of your boat and its contents.
- Purchase and stow mooring line for the storm—the line should be about twice the diameter of normal line.
- When a storm is approaching, remove loose items on the deck—Bimini tops, dinghies, etc.—and store them on land. Shut off fuel lines at the tank.
- Keep batteries charged; make sure bilge pumps are operating properly.
- Keep insurance up-to-date.
- Secure hatches and doors.
- Double up on mooring lines and spring lines to secure the boat in its mooring.
- Use several cleats to distribute the load on the boat.
- Allow extra line for tide and storm surge.
- Where lines will rub, use several feet of chafing gear—such as a reinforced radiator hose—on both sides of where the lines will rub to protect them.
- Disconnect electrical, water and other dock connections.
- Remove valuables.

## Land Storage

- Store boat and trailer in a secure covered building, such as a garage, if possible.
- If left outside, secure using ground hooks and straps.
- Fill boat partially with water for stability. Keep water away from engine/batteries.
- Put wooden blocks between trailer frame and springs for extra support with added weight.

## Anchored Storage

- Remember the boat's position may change drastically during the storm.
- Anchor on the lee side of protective land rather than mooring to a dock.
- Use two anchors and no stern anchor.
- Line length should be six to nine times water depth for storm surge shift.
- Keep batteries charged; make sure bilge pumps are operating properly.
- Batten down the hatches!

## Drawbridges

During the approach of a hurricane, Pinellas County's 10 drawbridges will operate in a modified mode to give preference to evacuating vehicle traffic until the bridges go into lock-down position to ensure barrier islands are evacuated and to protect the bridges from wind damage.

The U.S. Coast Guard will coordinate with local and state agencies to issue a special marine advisory when the bridge operations will be modified.

The 10 drawbridges are located at Pinellas Bayway, Tierra Verde, Corey Causeway, John's Pass, Tom Stuart Causeway, Indian Rocks, Dunedin Causeway, Beckett Bridge, Park Boulevard and Treasure Island.