



**pennsylvania**  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## PREPAREDNESS TIP OF THE MONTH

### **Hurricane Safety**

*Mark your calendars!*

Hurricane Preparedness Week

**May 15-21, 2016**



Flooding at Knoebels Amusement Resort (Northumberland County) after Hurricane Irene in 2011.

Hurricanes are one of nature's most powerful storms. A tropical storm system can produce destructive winds, battering waves & ferocious surges, flooding rains, and even tornadoes. While Pennsylvania is not situated along the coastline, some of our most notable weather extremes are tied into hurricanes and their remnants. Names like Agnes, Lee, and Isabel bring back vivid memories for so many Pennsylvanians. While hurricanes pack a variety of threats, most often rain and flooding are responsible for the vast majority of damage and loss of life for our commonwealth. It's important to know your hazards and to have a plan before the storm arrives. Let's review a few important tips.

#### **Know Your Definitions:**

**Watch** - Tropical weather conditions are possible in your area *within 48 hours*.

**Warning** - Tropical weather conditions are possible in your area *within 36 hours*.

These are issued far enough in advance for you to complete your preparations or evacuations. Therefore it's important you do the ground work now so you can quickly enact your plan.

#### **Listen to Evacuation Orders:**

Often, your local emergency management and governments have plans based on ensuring your safety during a tropical storm or hurricane. Carefully listen to their suggestions if told to evacuate. If the storm creates bad enough conditions, the first responders you rely on may not be able to respond to your call for help.

Do you have a plan on where to go if you need to leave? If no, now is the best time to make your plan.

#### **Plan for the Whole Family:**

Make sure your plans includes family members with mobility or special needs. Your pets need a place to go as well. Ensure your kennel provides service during an evacuation. If you plan to evacuate to shelter, inquire if they can accept pets.



***Hurricane season runs June  
through November***

Weather-Ready Ambassadors are agents of change in their communities. By leading by example and helping others become better prepared, you are creating a weather-ready nation starting from the ground up. Ultimately, becoming a WRN Ambassador is about empowering people to make life-saving decisions that prevent economic loss, contribute to a better informed and prepared public, and assist in smarter business and community planning.

**Daily Preparedness Actions**  
**Courtesy of NOAA's Weather Ready Nation**

**Sunday, May 15:**            [Determine Your Risk](#)

Find out today what types of wind and water hazards could happen where you live, and then start preparing now for how to handle them. Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem. Their impacts can be felt hundreds of miles inland. It's easy to forget what a hurricane is capable of doing. The U.S. has not been directly impacted by a major hurricane (Category 3 or higher) in more than a decade. However, hurricanes such as Ike, Sandy and Isaac reminded us that significant impacts can occur without it being a major hurricane.

**Monday, May 16:**            [Develop an Evacuation Plan](#)

The first thing you need to do is find out if you live in a storm surge hurricane evacuation zone or if you're in a home that would be unsafe during a hurricane. If you are, figure out where you'd go and how you'd get there if told to evacuate. Be sure to account for your pets, as most local shelters do not permit them. Put the plan in writing for you and those you care about.

**Tuesday, May 17:**            [Secure an Insurance Check-up](#)

Call your insurance company or agent and ask for an insurance check-up to make sure you have enough homeowners insurance to repair or even replace your home. Don't forget coverage for your car or boat. Remember, standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding. Whether you're a homeowner or renter, you'll need a separate policy for it, and it's available through your company, agent or the National Flood Insurance Program at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov). Act now as flood insurance requires a 30-day waiting period.

**Wednesday, May 18:**            [Assemble Disaster Supplies](#)

You're going to need supplies not just to get through the storm but for the potentially lengthy and unpleasant aftermath. Have enough non-perishable food, water and medicine to last each person in your family a minimum of one week. Electricity and water could be out for at least that long. You'll need extra cash, a battery-powered radio and flashlights. Many of us have cell phones, and they all run on batteries. You're going to need a portable, crank or solar powered USB charger.

**Thursday, May 19:**            [Strengthen Your Home](#)

If you plan to ride out the storm in your home, make sure it is in good repair and up to local hurricane building code specifications. Many of these retrofits do not cost much or take as long to do as you may think. Have the proper plywood, steel or aluminum panels to board up the windows and doors. Remember, the garage door is the most vulnerable part of the home, so it must be able to withstand the winds.

**Friday, May 20:**            [Identify Your Trusted Sources for a Hurricane Event](#)

Organizations such as FLASH make disaster safety recommendations. And the media outlets will broadcast this information to you. Additionally, a list of sources are available at [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov). All work together to be your trusted sources, especially for those less able to take care of themselves.

**Saturday, May 21:**            [Complete Your Written Hurricane Plan](#)

Being prepared, before a hurricane threatens, makes you resilient to the hurricane impacts of wind and water. Put your plan in writing for yourself and your family and share it with those who need to know. Being prepared will mean the difference between you being a hurricane victim and a hurricane survivor.

## Before, During, After a Hurricane

While Pennsylvania does not usually take the full brunt of passing hurricanes, it is often impacted by the effects after landfall is made. Since this is hurricane season, it is important to be aware of the potential hazards and be prepared to deal with the effects of such a storm.

### What to do Before a Hurricane:

- Know where to go if an evacuation order is given, including what routes to take, and where you can stay. Have your family communication plan available and up to date. Your local emergency management agency should have more information available for your reference.
- Have a supply kit ready in case you need to leave your residence.
- And if no evacuation order is given, and you are in your home when a storm hits, ensure you have enough supplies to get you through several days of no power.
- Turn your freezer to it's coldest setting, that way if you lose power your food will stay frozen longer.
- Elevate anything that you do not wish to be affected by any potential flood waters.

### What to do During a Hurricane:

- Stay away from windows as flying glass from broken windows could injure you.
- Turn on your radio or TV at least every 30 minutes to get the latest weather updates or check your county/city website.
- Let your friends and family know where you are and that you are safe by texting as this will help ensure emergency personnel are able to communicate without impediment.
- Charge your cell phone so that it will have a full battery in case power is lost.

### After a Hurricane:

- Listen for updated instructions on the radio/TV and or monitor your county's website.
- Check in with friends and family by texting or using social media.
- Watch out for flooded roadways and avoid any flooded area as the water may be electrically charged from downed power lines.
- Photograph all damage for insurance purposes.
- Do what you can to prevent any future damage to you or your home.

## Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: <http://www.pema.pa.gov>  
ReadyPA: [www.readypa.org](http://www.readypa.org)  
Weather-Ready nation: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/>  
Federal Emergency Management Agency: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)  
American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare>  
Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

