



**Disaster Preparedness Manual
Greater Houston Area
2019**

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Before the Storm: Disaster Preparedness



What do you need in a survival kit?

Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. Keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry [emergency preparedness kit](#) that you can use at home or take with you in case you must evacuate.

At a minimum, you should have the basic supplies listed below:

- Water: *one gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)*
- Food: *non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)*
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (*NOAA Weather Radio, if possible*)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (*7-day supply*) and medical items
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items (*toilet paper, feminine products*)
- Copies of personal *documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)*
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Map(s) of the area
- Change of clothes (*shirt, pants, socks, undergarments, shoes*)
- Duct tape
- Mosquito repellent
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes

Consider the needs of all family members and add supplies to your kit:

- Medical supplies (*hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses & solutions, syringes, extra EpiPen and inhaler etc.*)
- Baby supplies (*bottles, formula, baby food, diapers and wipes*)
- Games and activities for children
- Pet supplies (*collar, leash, ID, vaccination records food, carrier, bowl, medications,*)
- Two-way radios
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Manual can opener

Additional supplies to keep at home or in your survival kit based on the types of disasters common to your area:

- Whistle
- N95 or surgical masks
- Matches
- Rain gear
- Towels
- Work gloves
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Extra clothing, hat and sturdy shoes
- Plastic sheeting
- Duct tape
- Scissors
- Household liquid bleach
- Entertainment items
- Blankets or sleeping bags

What should be in a first aid kit?

- 2 absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- 1 adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)
- 5 antibiotic ointment packets (approximately 1 gram)
- 5 antiseptic wipe packets
- 2 packets of aspirin (81 mg each)
- 1 blanket (space blanket)
- 1 breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- 1 instant cold compress
- 2 pair of non-latex gloves
- 2 hydrocortisone ointment packets (approximately 1 gram each)
- Scissors
- 1 roller bandage (3 inches wide)
- 1 roller bandage (4 inches wide)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
- Oral thermometer (non-mercury/non-glass)
- 2 triangular bandages
- Tweezers
- First aid instruction booklet

Action steps to take before a disaster hits:

- Home and car insurance policies up-to-date
- Make "Disaster Preparedness" kit
- Restock First Aid Kit
- Make sure flashlights and radios work
- Check expiration date of food and medications
- Refill all medications
- Know how to turn off gas, water, and electrical power sources.
- Fill all vehicles with gas, including spare tank and/or gas cans
- Reinforce garage doors
 - o Board up your garage doors with wooden planks (like you would windows)
 - Add horizontal and vertical bracing to each panel
 - o Disable any automatic garage doors openers
- Cover windows with wood. (such as ply wood)
- Latch down lawn furniture and large toys or move them indoors
 - o Put your trampoline upside-down
- Fill up tubs with water to serve as an extra water supply.
- Fill propane tanks (*for BBQ grill*)
- Fill ice chests with ice (*regular and dry ice*)

During the Storm

With all disasters, it is better to evacuate than to stay. If you find yourself in the middle of a storm, here are a few helpful tips.

What to do during the storm:

- Keep hurricane box in a central room (see items to have before a storm).
- Stay clear of windows.
- Monitor weather channels, Office of Emergency Management updates, and city government updates.
- Follow weather advisories and emergency instructions.

What to do when water is rising up to the home:

- Keep dangerous floating debris from the home.
 - Example: propane tanks
- Avoid staying in rooms located under large trees once storm has started.
- Start moving as much as you can to the high areas of your home.
- If instructed by local government, turn off water, gas, and electricity sources.
- During a hurricane, stay in your home until the eye has passed. There might be a calm during the storm before another wave hits.

How to build a dike to prevent water from entering into your home:

- Select a spot where water is most likely to enter.
- Put small amounts of sand into the opening of the bag to keep it open when filling.
- Fill the bag halfway full and close the bag.
- Remove slippery leaves and debris from the surface bags. This will allow friction between dikes.

Rules to driving over flooded roads:

- If water reaches over 6 inches above the road then it is not safe to drive over. You are safer in your home. (See below on how to build a raft or wade through water).
- If you can't see the road surface, then take a detour. The road is not safe to drive over.
- If the car takes in water:
 - Get to the roof of the car or make your way to dry ground.
 - Wave down rescuers (see note below).

Things to use as a raft from your home:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blow-up mattress | <input type="checkbox"/> Large plastic tube |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air compression tank | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice chest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dining table | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic trash bags |

How to wade through moving water:

- Remove as much clothing as possible
- Put clothes in a trash bag and use as a flotation device.
- Use your hands to paddle and guide through the water
- Go with the flow of the water at a 45-degree angle till you reach dry land.
- If possible, use a large stick to stabilize yourself and probe the land ahead for solid footing.

How to signal rescuers:

- Shine a flashlight
- Wave a flag
- This can be made out of sheets
- Blow a whistle (should be in your hurricane box)

How to mentally walk through a disaster:

Work on not getting overwhelmed or lose your faith in God if a disaster hits your city. Realize that He is greater than any disaster and will work it out for good. Stand strong in faith in God.

Read the following verses for peace:Psalm 57: 1-2

1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me (KJV).

Psalm 46

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah (KJV).

After the Storm

Natural disasters can be devastating. Pre-planning your actions for after the storm brings clarity and recovery quicker for the whole family. Please see tips and actions steps to be prepared.

Where to get assistance after a disaster:

- FEMA 1-800-621-3362.
- SBA 1-800-827-5722
- Insurance claims
 - o Home
 - o Flood
 - o Wind
 - o Vehicles
- Disaster Response Organizations, Call United Way Texas at 2-1-1
 - o Red Cross
 - o AttackPoverty.org
- Local Churches

The earlier the better!

Check News and Social Media postings for updates.

- [The Weather Channel](#)
- [KHOU Channel 11 Houston, TX](#)
- [Houston Chronicle](#)
- <https://www.facebook.com/APDisasterRecovery>
- [Global Disaster Alert & Coordination Systems](#)
- [KUHF 88.7 FM](#)
- [KTRH 740 AM Houston, TX](#)
- Sign up for emergency alerts with the City of Houston: [AlertHouston](#)

Connect with your community, family, and first responders. Whether you were personally affected by the storm or helping others who were, each person has felt the sting of the disaster.

Entering the home:

Wildlife and insects were looking for refuge from the storm. Keep snake and insects are commonly found in homes after a storm. Avoid injury by moving furniture and debris with a long stick first.

- Take pictures of the home and what is damaged.
- Check the roof and foundation for damages.
 - o Look at roof (ridge line) of house. Make sure nothing is sagging.

Vehicle flooded?

- If the waterline is below the door then the car might be undamaged.
- Insurance companies normally consider the car totaled (damaged beyond repair) if the water reaches the bottom of the dashboard
- Air out the vehicle immediately. Check for water in the oil. If found, do not start the vehicle.
- Call your insurance company and get claim started. Flooded vehicles can show signs of problems months after a flood.

Repairing the home:

1. Start by mucking and gutting the damages from the storm.
2. Get quotes from vendors or/and contractors for all repairs. Even if you have not received disaster funds, you will have a full scope of work including:
 - Materials needed for your entire repair include the cost of such materials and cost of labor.
3. Keep documentation of all. See additional information to follow about mucking and gutting and helpful tips to kind in mind when beginning repairs.

Continue reading for guidelines and tips to begin demolition, finding a contractor, obtain quotes, and getting started with repairs.

Protocol & Safety Guidelines for Muck & Gut

Safety Guidelines:

- Prior to entering any home after a flooding event ensure the following is off:
 - Electric service
 - Fuel line and gas service
- Look at roof (ridge line) of house. Make sure nothing is sagging.
 - Never use gasoline-powered devices such as generators and pressure washers indoors
- Do not use gasoline-powered pumps or generators indoors or in a confined space. Gasoline engines emit deadly carbon monoxide exhaust fumes
- No one under the age of 18 should be inside the home being gutted. Youth under the age of 18 could be used for serving food to volunteers, bringing water, and doing landscaping. Gutting is dangerous work. There is fiberglass, sharp tools, power tools, electric issues, mold. It is not uncommon to uncover firearms and other items.
- All participants should be up to date on their tetanus shot (every ten years).
- Wash hands regularly, especially before eating—use of additional bacterial wipes is advisable.
- Ensure water breaks are available every hour for all participants.
- Never enter a flooded basement unless you are absolutely sure the electricity has been turned off.
- Ensure all participants have discussed safety hazards (especially if working with mold or asbestos) and review site work plan.

Protection Needed

- Wear the following when working in a flooded home:
 - Non-vented goggles or other adequate eye protection
 - N-95 or greater particulate respirator
 - Nose & mouth shields
 - Long pants and long sleeves shirts.
 - Sturdy work boots with puncture-proof soles.
 - Heavy work gloves to protect hands
 - Tyvek suits (hooded suits) are recommended if working with mold.

Steps to Mucking Out & Gutting Flooded Houses:

Step 1: Interior Debris Removal

- Ensure debris separation is in accordance with the city/county guidelines.
- Remove all flood affected items, separating out those that can be cleaned or restored.

Step 2: Mucking Out (Mud Removal)

- Equipment needed:
 - Flat shovels
 - Wheelbarrows
 - 5 gal. plastic buckets
 - Protective goggles
 - Work gloves
 - Drywall cutter/knife
 - Ear plugs
 - Face masks
 - Mold Disinfectant (Shockwave)
 - Industrial type push brooms
 - Dust pans
 - Garden hose
 - Mops
 - Power washer
 - Towels
 - Hand Sanitizer.
 - Large trash bags
- Remove mud, muck and silt that was deposited in the house by flood waters.
- Hose out and separate debris in compliance with local standards.

Step 3: Gutting of Flooded Structures

- Equipment needed (may not be fully comprehensive):
 - Pry bars
 - Wheelbarrows
 - Trash bags
 - Protective goggles
 - Work gloves
 - Dust masks
 - Mold Disinfectant (Shockwave)
 - Claw hammers
 - Screw drivers
 - Industrial type brooms (push and sweep type)
 - Dust pans
 - Sledge hammers
 - Heavy-duty outdoor extension cords (if using a generator)
 - Gas cans
 - Ladders,
 - First aid kit
 - Bottled waters

- Walls/flooring
 - Remove damaged trim and molding.
 - Remove damaged sheetrock 4 inches above the water line is recommended by FEMA but cutting at a 4-foot level allows for replacement of full sheets.
 - Remove damaged wall paneling.
 - Remove damaged insulation.
 - Remove nails from studs.
 - Place all removed material at curb according to city/county debris management guidelines.
 - All electrical outlets that were underwater are no good. There is no amount of cleaning that can make them safe.
 - Remove all carpet and padding.
 - Remove all flooring
 - Ceramic tile directly installed on concrete slab does not need to be removed. Spray directly on tile to remediate mold.
 - Remove all nails.
 - Removed electric materials.
 - Bathtub- tub tiles will trap moisture between tile and sheetrock so it needs to be removed.

- Cabinetry
 - Cabinets installed on top of sheetrock need to be removed; also remove sheetrock and sanitize studs.
 - Wainscoting also needs to be removed.

- Final Step: Cleaning and Sanitizing
 - Use a high-pressure washer with detergent to wash off remaining dirt, mud, muck and contaminants.
 - Scrub surfaces as needed.
 - Hose out home after mucking has been completed.
 - Use mold killer as needed. Bleach is not adequate. Shockwave is EPA recommended to kill mold.
 - Remove any remaining standing water with a wet/dry vacuum (ShopVac) or pump.
 - Sweep out gutting debris and bag.
 - Using box fans place in windows facing outside the home can help dry it out and prevent mold from growing.

Selecting a Contractor & Preventing Contractor Fraud

Where to search for contractors:

- [HomeAdvisor.com](https://www.homeadvisor.com)
- [AngiesList.com](https://www.angieslist.com)
- [Houzz.com](https://www.houzz.com)
- Get recommendations from friends, family members, coworkers, community members or through online communities and groups.
- Facebook community groups
- [Nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com) (also in app store).

Obtain several quotes.

- Try to get written quotes from at least two or three different contractors.

Check out the contractor.

- Get the contractor's full name, address, and phone number.
- Ask for references and call them.
- Ask what work will be done by the contractor's employees and what work will be done by subcontractors
- Check with the Better Business Bureau and the courthouse for criminal & civil cases filed against the contractor.
- Get a copy of the contractor's general liability insurance certificate.
- Be careful when dealing with contractors who have out of state license plates.

Get it in writing.

- Have the contractor create a written contract specifying the work to be done and the price.
- Don't sign anything you don't understand.

Control the money.

- Pay for the job in installments, pay as little as possible upfront, and insist on paying the final amount only after all work is completed and you have inspected the work.
- Do not pay in cash.
- Before work begins, have the contractor agree to provide a lien waiver upon final payment and let this be stated in the written contract.
- Be aware: It is against the law for contractors in disaster areas to take any money upfront unless they have had a local office in your county or a neighboring county for at least one year.

Report bad contractors to the Better Business Bureau (BBB), the Texas Attorney General, your local District Attorney, and Lone Star Legal Aid.