

City Beautiful News, Summer Special Hurricane Edition

This Special Hurricane Edition of the *City Beautiful News* offers the Coral Gables community important information on how to prepare for the next storm as well as what you can expect from your local government *before, during* and *after* the storm.

Before The Storm Strikes: Don't Wait Until The Last Minute

June 1st is the beginning of Hurricane Season, a period of high anxiety for many people because of the unpredictable weather and the possible lasting effects on our homes, businesses, and comfort life. Although there's nothing more stressful than learning that a possibly devastating storm is heading our way, the last thing you want to do is to ignore the potential danger and be unprepared, even when the local weather is picture perfect just before the storm's arrival.

Don't wait until the last minute to prepare a plan. The best time to prepare for emergencies is during non-hurricane season. The following is a list of things that you should do *now* to get ready:

- Have A Family/Business Plan
- Have A Disaster Supply Kit Ready
- Have A Place to Go – Evacuate
- Secure Your Home Or Business
- Don't Forget About Your Pet

Disaster Supply Kit: What You Must Have

- Water - 1 gallon per person per day
- Food - at least enough for 3 to 7 days
 - non-perishable food
 - foods for infants or the elderly
 - snacks
 - manual can opener
 - cooking tools/fuel
- Blankets, pillows, clothing, toiletries
- First aid kit, medicines, prescription drugs
- Cash in small bills
- Vehicles fuel tanks filled
- Flashlight, batteries
- Battery operated radio
- Important documents
- Games for children
- Tire plug kit

FYI: Fill up your car's gas, propane tanks and generators to avoid long lines at the pump.

Smart idea: Battery-operated fans can help you cool down when the power is out.

Who You're Gonna Call?

If you're out of power, the City of Coral Gables cannot restore the electricity to your home or business. You must report any power outages to Florida Power & Light at 1-800-4-OUTAGE.



Do's & Don'ts To Prepare Your Home And Yard

Do's:

- Put up shutters to protect your home and business where wind and water may enter.
- If your house does not have shutters, plywood can be used to cover windows and glass doors.
- A supply of sandbags placed in low lying sections of your house or building may be helpful to prevent the intrusion of water.
- Keep the trees and shrubbery on your property trimmed all year round.
- Bring in all outside objects that can become projectiles during high winds. Strongly anchor all items that must remain outside.
- Have renters or homeowners insurance for all your personal property.

Don'ts:

- Don't start tree trimming after a Hurricane Watch or Warning has been issued. City workers may not have time to collect them prior to the storm.
- Don't leave garbage trash cans or recycling bins outside prior to the storm. Instead place them in the garage or an enclosed place.

Smart idea: Bring your portable solar-powered outdoor lights indoors and place them at night in the bathrooms and kitchen. They are much safer than candles.

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If your insured dwelling was damaged by any tree due to hurricane force winds, you must contact your homeowners' insurance company immediately. Most homeowners' policies will cover for the damage to the insured structure and for the removal of the tree that caused the damage. For any questions regarding hurricane related insurance matters, you may contact the Florida Department of Financial Services, Insurance Related Consumer Services Department at 850-413-3111 or 1-800-342-2762 or visit www.fldfs.com.

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Taking Shelter: Where To Go, What To Take

Coral Gables residents who live in Zone B of Miami-Dade's Hurricane Storm Surge Evacuation Map, which are homes located mostly east of Old Cutler Road, may be asked to evacuate in the most dangerous hurricanes. By now, everyone should have an evacuation plan as a worst case scenario. That means taking shelter in an area outside of the announced evacuation zones where you can stay with friends, family or hotels and out of harms way. To check if you are in a flood zone, visit

www.prepare.miamidade.gov. Residents without Internet access can call 3-1-1 or 305-468-5900.

Residents who are home-bound, need assistance with daily living, are electrically dependent or require specialized transportation and will need help evacuating for a hurricane, should register with the County's Emergency Evacuation Assistance program by calling for an application at 305-468-5900 or TDB 305-468-5402. This must be done in advance of the storm season.

Once an evacuation order is given, available shelters will be announced by the local media. Shelters provide just the basic needs so it is important to bring special or comfort items such as pillows, blankets, clothes, toiletries, a two-week supply of prescribed medications, diapers, baby food, and other necessary items. Remember that pets are not allowed in most shelters.

FYI: The last recourse should be to go to a shelter in your area. Your first choice should be to make arrangements to stay with a friend or relative who resides closest to your home and who will not have to evacuate. If you're planning on traveling, be prepared to wait in traffic.

Smart idea: If you live in a flood zone, place the legs of your furniture in empty cans or plastic bowls to minimize water damage.

Seniors And Special Needs

Seniors and people with special needs are extremely vulnerable during emergency situations and depend on the assistance of others to ensure their wellbeing. To be ready to weather a storm, seniors must have an emergency plan which includes letting loved ones and friends know where they will ride out a storm. Arrangements must be made in advance to take care of their special needs. For assistance during evacuations, special needs residents must contact the Emergency Evacuation Assistance program at 305-468-5900 or TDB 305-468-5402 ahead of time. Kidney dialysis patients may be without their normal scheduled dialysis until hospitals or renal centers have been restored. Therefore, dialysis patients will have to extend the life of their last treatment by watching their diets. Contact your local hospital or the Florida End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network at 813-251-8686 or 1-800-826-3773.

The City of Coral Gables Senior Services Division can also assist the elderly in many ways. If you are an elderly resident in need of assistance after a storm, or know of someone in your neighborhood that could use the help, please contact the City of Coral Gables at 305-460-5401 or 305-460-5608.

FYI: Establish a single point of contact for all your family members.

Pets Are People Too!

Don't forget about your pets when preparing a family disaster plan. Make sure that your pets are current on their vaccinations, have a collar with identification and have a current photograph in case the pet is separated from you. Know what to do with your favorite pet in case you need to evacuate.



Last year, Miami-Dade County opened its first ever Pet-Friendly Hurricane Evacuation Center at the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition, Sunshine Pavilion, 10901 S.W. Coral Way. To participate, domestic household pet owners residing in a hurricane evacuation zone must pre-register and must stay with their pets. To find out more on this, call 3-1-1 or 305-468-5900.

FYI: Bring your pets indoor well in advance of a storm to keep them calm.

The Dirt On Garbage, Debris And Trash

Before A Storm...

- Check storm drains in your neighborhood for accumulation of leaves, debris and trash. Clear them out before a storm to prevent debris from clogging the drainage system which can eventually lead to flooding.
- If a storm is approaching, do not leave any garbage, debris or trash outside. Place it instead in a garage or an enclosed space where it will not become a harmful projectile. City collection schedules will change when a storm is coming.
- Don't wait until the last minute to properly trim branches and trees before a storm strikes our area. There is no guarantee that City crews will have the time to collect the yard waste.

After A Storm...

- Depending on the accessibility of roads and extent of the damage, it may take days before the City can reinstate garbage, trash and recycling pickup routes. Patience during this time is of the essence.
- Organize piles of debris on your property's designated trash area. Make separate piles for yard waste, home debris and discarded home appliances.
- The City of Coral Gables will keep you informed of any special pickup dates and when garbage and trash services will resume normal schedule.

Stay Tune To Coral Gables News

When a Hurricane Warning is issued in the area, the City of Coral Gables activates its Emergency Operations Center (EOC). There are a number of ways that you can stay informed about what your local government is doing to prepare for an emergency, such as:

- Watch Coral Gables Television for important announcements about garbage pickup, hotline numbers, elderly assistance, curfews, and more.
- Subscribe to the City's Code Red Emergency Notification System at www.coralgables.com to receive telephone messages directly from the City of Coral Gables with important pre- and post-storm information.

FYI: Subscribe to e-News@coralgables.com to receive City announcements before and after the storm.

During The Hurricane: Survival Tips

When the storm arrives, be sure to:

- Retreat to the most protected area of your home, usually interior rooms and corridors. In multi-story buildings, shelter people on the lower floors and avoid corner rooms. Stay away from doors and windows, even if they are shuttered.
- Turn off interior electricity or gas and disconnect appliances to reduce electrical shock when power is restored.
- Remain indoors until the all clear notice is given by your local government.

FYI: When the "eye" of the hurricane passes over, continue to stay indoors.

Smart idea: Use 16-ounce water bottles instead of bags of ice. Put the bottles in the freezer as soon as the storm is coming. If you don't have a generator, use the frozen bottles in your cooler and it will keep the cooler frozen for a longer period of time.

For Your Information

FYI: Locate the safest room in your home to weather the storm and stay away from doors and windows.

FYI: Treat an intersection with a broken traffic signal as a four-way stop.

FYI: Obey all curfews and emergency orders if issued.

FYI: Keep your important documents in a watertight plastic bag.

FYI: Make sure your boat is tied up properly and don't think about riding the storm inside the boat.

FYI: Do not empty the pool. Just add extra chlorine and turn off the pump.

On Your Own For The First 72 Hours

It is important to remember that you, your family and business must be prepared to be on your own for at least 72 hours. That is three full days without electricity, telephone, cable, water, gas, ice, medicines or any other modern convenience.



The City of Coral Gables will be working non-stop to clear roads, assessing damages, and removing debris. However, it may take several days before vital services are restored.

FYI: Have plenty of cash since banks and ATMs may not be open for a while.

Smart idea: Get a cell-phone charger adaptor cord for the car's cigarette lighter.

What Can You Expect From City Government?

Immediately after the storm, when the winds and rain subside, you can expect the following from the City of Coral Gables:



- Rescue Recon teams will begin operations to clear primary then secondary roadways for emergency vehicle access, attend to medical emergencies and assess infrastructural damages.
- Rescue Recon teams from the City of Coral Gables will work in tandem with the utility company to remove dangerous power lines from streets and homes.



- City personnel will begin damage assessment to City facilities, infrastructure as well as sanitary sewer and storm systems. A list of priority services will be established beginning with removal of trees that have caused structural damage on homes.
- The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) ham radio volunteer operators will begin to broadcast and receive initial damage assessment information.



- Contracted debris removal companies will begin operations when roads are passable. City administrators will meet with FEMA representatives to ensure the costs of debris removal are fair, reasonable, and properly documented. The City of Coral Gables will deploy police units to initiate patrol operations throughout the City to secure business districts and residential areas to prevent civil disturbances and ensure overall public safety.



- The Fire Department will coordinate evacuations of residents from severely damaged buildings and flooded areas. Fire personnel will provide limited emergency response services, based on the conditions of roads and the damage to the City's infrastructure.

- The Neighborhood Information Center (NICE) volunteer teams may visit neighborhoods with information on the City's efforts for post-storm recovery and will communicate via ham radios any urgent issues to public safety personnel.



- Initial traffic control operations will commence with placement of barricades and stop signs at major intersections without operational traffic signals. The City will issue communications to residents via “Code Red,” or Reverse 911 computerized telephone system with pertinent information about the status of the emergency situation and the recovery process. Those messages will be duplicated on the City’s Web site, e-News, and Coral Gables TV.



- The emergency hot line number 305-460-5401 (en español 305-460-5491) will be activated for residents to call for updated information.

FYI: The City of Coral Gables has pre-identified 20 Neighborhood Information Centers (NICE) throughout the City that would be staffed with officers in the event of total loss of communications, including the 9-1-1 system. In the case of a major catastrophe, residents could seek assistance at these centers.

What About My Business?

The Coral Gables business community can also be severely affected by natural disasters like hurricanes. Loss of power and the inability to come to work for days can affect business profits, and the employee’s pocketbook. How fast you can reopen for business depends on the restoration of power, access to roads, and the condition of your commercial facility.



A business plan must be in place to ensure that your company and your employees are protected from unpredictable emergencies. Talk to your employer to familiarize yourself with your company’s disaster preparedness plan, what is expected of you and your employees and learn how to protect your business for at least the first 72 hours.

As part of the disaster preparedness plan, the City of Coral Gables works not only to protect the residential areas, but also the important business districts. Prior to the arrival of a storm, the City of Coral Gables protects areas, especially in the downtown district, from potentially dangerous construction site debris. Code Enforcement Officers are immediately dispatched to close down construction zones when a hurricane is coming to protect other merchants. In the aftermath of a storm, the City of Coral Gables will deploy police units to patrol the business districts to ensure public safety and prevent disturbances.

Staying Safe After A Storm

The majority of injuries and deaths associated with a hurricane happen *after* the storm hits. All are tragic accidents that in most cases can be prevented. Be aware of your surroundings as the potential for danger is everywhere. The following are important and potentially life-saving pointers to keep in mind:

- **Generators** must only be used outdoors and away from windows, doors, garages and sheds. Make sure your generator has cooled off before refueling. Fumes from the gasoline could easily ignite the tank.
- Use extreme care when operating a gas powered or electric **chainsaw** and always protect yourself by wearing safety glasses and gloves.
- Do not walk or drive through **flooded areas**. As little as six inches of water can take control of your car. Also, broken glass, nails, downed power lines and other debris could be submerged.



FYI: Avoid using candles around children. Use flashlights instead.

Smart idea: Buy noise-canceling headphones and use them at night when your neighbors are running those loud generators.

Your Role, Your Community

From City leaders and employees to residents, business owners and visitors, everyone has a role to play in this community especially when it comes to disaster preparedness. All are vital to the recovery process.

The City of Coral Gables has a successful emergency preparedness program that goes into effect at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when a Hurricane Watch is issued. Essential City employees know what to do to prepare this community for the event of a potential hurricane as well as their role in the recovery process.

Do you know your role? Just a few hours of planning on your part, leaves City employees free to focus on getting vital services up and running as soon as possible. Take the time *now* to prepare your family and protect your home or business. You can also offer a helping hand to the elderly in your neighborhood. These simple steps can make a world of difference in how this community can prepare for -and recover from- the wrath of Mother Nature.

FYI: City workers will be extremely busy restoring basic services. Do not expect Emergency Response Service to be in full operations. 9-1-1 calls for life threatening situations will be dispatched on a priority basis.