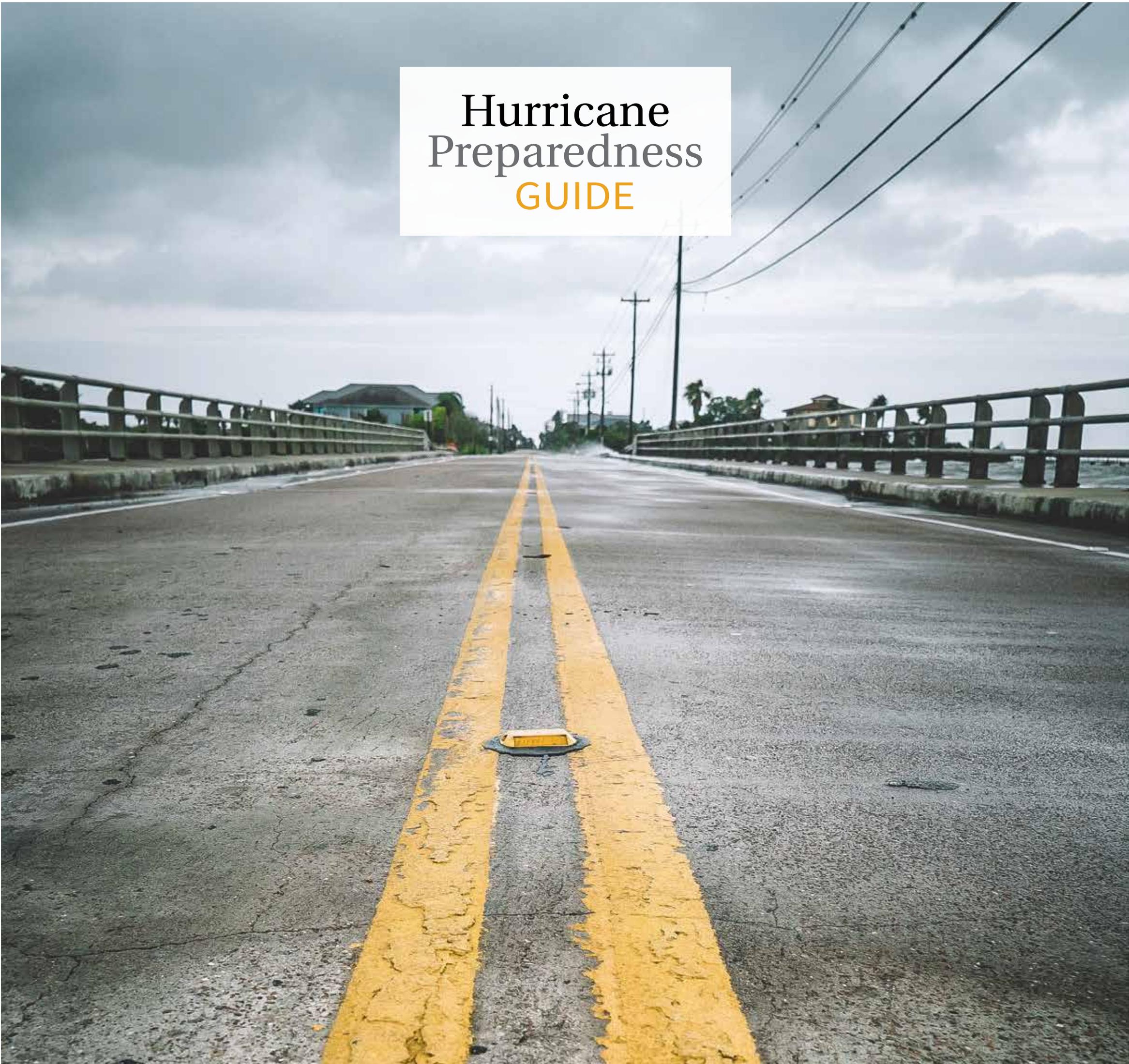


# Hurricane Preparedness GUIDE



# Tips for Evacuating

If and when your municipality calls for a hurricane evacuation, it's in your best interest to heed official advice.

Any unwillingness to follow evacuation orders can put you and your family in great danger. It's not worth the stress of waiting out potentially damaging storms, especially for hurricanes since warnings usually come days in advance.

When it comes to evacuating your home in a safe, effective manner, it's all about planning ahead. Proper preparation can be the difference in evacuating your family members with plenty of time to spare before the storm hits. Inadequate planning can leave you scrambling and stressed as you try to get everything ready on a limited timeframe.

Here are some quick tips for effectively and safely evacuating your home before a hurricane.

## CREATE A PLAN

The best evacuation plans have been talked through months in advance. Work with your family members on creating a plan to make sure the real thing goes as smoothly as possible.

The Department of Homeland Security gives these evacuation pointers:

- Identify several places you could go in an emergency,

such as a friend's home in another town or a motel.

- Choose destinations in different directions so that you have options during an emergency.

- If needed, identify a place to stay that will accept pets.

- Always follow the instruc-

tions of local officials.

- Assemble supplies ahead of time.

## PREPARING YOUR CAR

Picture thousands of people from your town leaving at once. Where are they likely to go first? The gas station is a

likely guess. But waiting until the last minute for fuel can be dangerous. If you have a feeling that your town may receive a mandatory evacuation order, it's best to fuel up your car ahead of time. This way you can hit the road without having to wait in long lines for gas.

Always be sure to have a portable emergency kit in your car that includes things like water bottles, non-perishable foods, blankets and flashlights. It is better to be prepared before an emergency than having to scramble in the midst of one.



# Staying Safe in a Tropical Storm

A tropical storm warning doesn't always mean you have to evacuate. There may be times a tropical storm doesn't look powerful enough to require evacuation orders from your local officials.

The key to staying safe during storm season is to always trust emergency management officials and follow local instructions. If there are no evacuation requirements, be sure to still treat the storm as a dangerous, serious situation.

Here are some pointers for staying safe at home during a tropical storm event:

- **Say no to windows.** Sitting next to windows, skylights and glass doors during a tropical storm is a recipe for disaster. Broken glass poses a serious risk to your safety, especially during high winds. Find a safe area in the home, preferably an interior room, a closet or bathroom on the lower level to wait out the storm.

- **Power off.** If flooding threatens a home, you could be in danger of electrocution from your appliances and various electrical equipment. Remember to turn off electricity at the main breaker and avoid using anything that is



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plugged in.

- **Stay inside.** Some people like to sit on their back porch and watch storms. Never do this in tropical storm conditions. These storms can be a bit deceiving, especially during calm periods during the storm. Try to resist the

urge to go outside to check out the storm. You risk major injuries from high winds and flying debris.

- **Avoid lightning risks.** Always beware of lightning. It can electrocute you – even if you're inside your home. If the hurricane brings lightning,

remember to stay away from electrical equipment, avoid using the phone and don't take a bath or shower until the storm passes.

- **Keep loved ones posted.** If you're in a safe spot, be sure to keep friends and family members posted as the storm pass-

es, especially ones from out of the area who may not be privy to your local forecasts. Let them know through text or social media that you're safe and sound. That way they can keep tabs on your condition and call authorities if they feel like you're in danger.

# Tips for the Disabled

Certain populations are particularly vulnerable during storm situations. Once such group is disabled people.

Special care and planning must be taken to keep the disabled safe during a hurricane. There are many things to consider when making sure our disabled population has what they need when serious storms threaten the flow of their normal lives.

## THINK ELECTRONIC

For disabled people depending on daily medication, it may be a good strategy to switch to electronic payments. A hurricane and other natural disasters can interrupt mail service for long periods of time. Waiting for mailed payments could cause delays, and delays in medication fulfillment could cause major issues for those struggling with disabilities. Switching to electronic payment plans is a great way to protect yourself financially before disaster strikes.

For those depending on Social Security, the U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safe ways to get federal benefits during times of mail being shut down from serious storms:

- Direct deposit to a checking or savings account. Federal benefit recipients can sign up by calling (800) 333-1795 or



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sign up online.

- The Direct Express prepaid debit card is designed as a safe and easy alternative to paper checks. Call toll-free at (877) 212-9991 or sign up online.

## DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED

Using a weather radio with text display and a flashing alert can help the hearing impaired

from missing important weather notifications. Ready.gov also recommends keeping pens and paper in your emergency kit in case you have to communicate with an emergency worker who does not know sign language.

## BLIND OR VISION IMPAIRED

Be sure to mark your emergency supplies with Braille

labels or large print so you can easily access them in high-stress situations.

Another key part of your emergency kit should be a Braille, or deaf-blind communications device. This can help enhance communications in high-stress situations.

## LIMITED IN MOBILITY

Ready.gov recommends that

if you use a powered wheelchair, you have a lightweight manual chair available as a backup.

Remember to purchase an extra battery for a powered wheelchair or other battery-operated medical device or assistive technology device to make sure you don't run out of juice during a critical emergency such as a hurricane.

# Generator Safety Tips

A generator can be your best friend during and after a powerful hurricane.

It can power your appliances during power outages and give your family peace of mind during a stressful situation. It can also provide you with adequate power for refrigeration, lighting and the powering of your critical devices, including mobile phones and weather radios.

But with generators comes great responsibility to properly use, maintain and service them. People can become seriously injured or sickened if something goes wrong with their generator.

Always remember to follow your user's manual and keep up on minor repairs, if necessary.

## **AVOID DANGEROUS SITUATIONS**

One of the major risks of using a generator is carbon monoxide poisoning, something that may be difficult to detect initially. You must use proper ventilation to reduce this dangerous situation from occurring. Also, equip your home with a carbon monoxide detector to warn your family of rising levels.

Exposure to the engine exhaust can cause death if generators are used improperly. If you think you've been exposed to generator exhaust, get fresh air immediately and visit a medical professional for any



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dizziness or lightheadedness.

There are some simple rules to remember when getting your generator ready:

- Never use them indoors;
- Never use them outside near windows, vents or air intakes; and
- Keep other items clear to allow plenty of air flow space around the generator.

## **KEEP KIDS AWAY**

Always teach your children proper actions around your generator. Simple rules like, 'don't touch, it's hot' are easy to remember and understand. The exterior portions of a generator can become hot to the touch and cause burns. Your children should avoid touching the generator without pro-

tective gear. Teaching your kids a healthy respect for the power of a generator can keep them safe around it.

## **FUELING YOUR GENERATOR**

Always store your generator fuel outdoors in an approved container or holding tank in line with the requirements in

your owners' manual. Never keep fuel near the generator while it's in use because of the potential fire hazards. Another important safety tip is to never refuel the generator while it is running. Keep these safety tips in mind so you can enjoy the perks of a generator without the health and safety hazards.

# Protecting your Pets

Once your children and other family members are properly protected during dangerous hurricane conditions, it's time to turn your attention to your pets.

Pets are especially vulnerable during storms given their size and dependency on us.

If you plan on evacuating with your pet, you'll want to consider what that process looks like months in advance of the event. The more time you spend on putting together a solid plan, the smoother your experience will be.

## EVACUATING

If your area requires a mandatory evacuation, be sure to leave as early as possible with your pets. If the hurricane intensifies quickly and you need to be rescued by emergency officials, having to coordinate the rescue of your pet can make things more difficult for emergency personnel. Many coastal states now have laws mandating that shelters accept pets and most hotels waive restrictions during evacuation. Still to be sure as you map out your evacuation route, you'll want to first check with any hotels along the way to see whether or not they allow pets. This can impact where you'll stop to stay on your evacuation journey.



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## WHAT TO BRING

When gathering your evacuation materials, be sure to collect what your pets will need. This includes:

- A week's worth of food and bottled water.
- A sturdy carrier.
- Leash, harness and identification tags.

- Toys or familiar items to keep nerves under control.
- Also include any of your pet's medication and vaccination records with your other important documents. This can be critical if your pet is injured during the storm and requires a trip to an out-of-town vet.

## STAYING PUT

Leaving your pets home alone should be the absolute last option for your family, and is actually illegal in many states during hurricane conditions.

Not all tropical storms require evacuation. If you plan on riding out a storm with your pets, it's up to you to keep

them safe.

It's important to keep pets in a room away from windows. If they become stressed during storms, spend time with them to keep them calm and under control. Make sure there is plenty of water and food in containers that are self-feeding.

# Local Pros Can Help

Do you know where to turn when it comes to finding help before, during and after a hurricane?

Here's a hint: Think local! Some of your best resources will be those in your area helping you remain safe, educated and prepared for serious storms.

From emergency management professionals to local representatives — and many other people in between — you have a great collection of local advocates devoted to protecting you and your family during storm situations.

Read on for tips related to finding help from these great local resources during hurricane season.

## INSURANCE AGENTS

Find a local insurance agent to help you find the best policy for your family's needs. You may need a mixture of policies across home, wind and flood to be fully covered. Be sure to keep good track of your policy materials and agent contact information before the storm. Immediately notify your insurance company of any losses caused by the storm so you don't end up at the bottom of your insurance company's list of claims.

## NEWS AND MEDIA

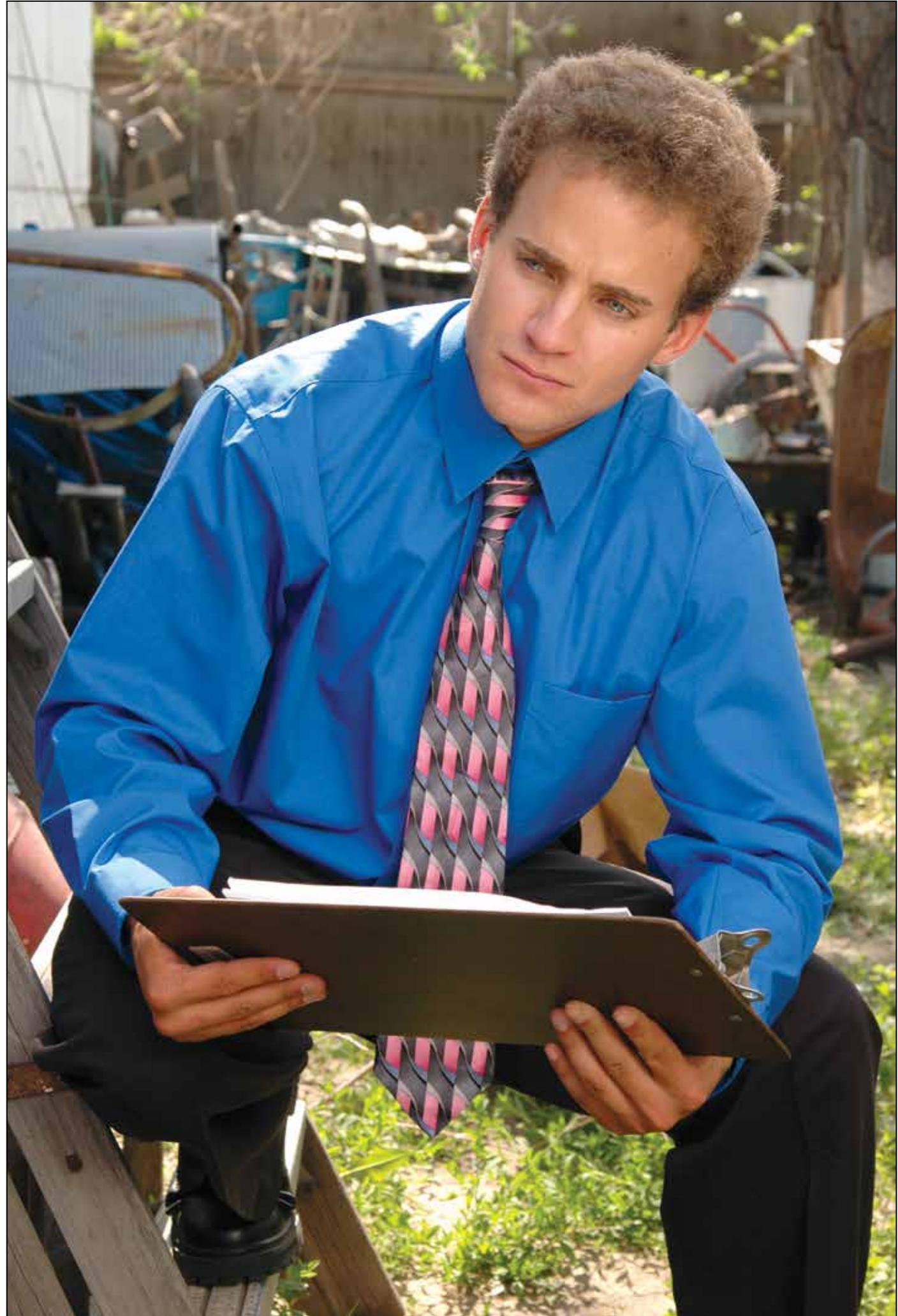
Your local news crews are focused on keeping you safe

during natural disasters like hurricanes by bringing your up-to-date information. Heed their warnings and stay updated on their news, as they are employed to be protectors of their communities.

With the onset of digital technology, it's now easier than ever to follow your favorite local journalists on social media. This access helps you keep tabs on the latest weather and news you can use to keep safe and ensure the proper protection of your family.

## CLEANUP CREWS

Hurricanes leave behind massive destruction to homes, businesses and trees. They also attract a flurry of storm cleanup organizations, some of which may not offer legitimate services. When using a local cleaning crew, remember to ask for professional licenses or referrals. A little bit of research can go a long way in protecting yourself. If you think that you have been contacted by a fraudster, report it to the National Center for Disaster Fraud at 866-720-5721. Emails can be sent to [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov) and information can be faxed to 225-334-4707.



# Most Intense Atlantic Hurricanes

Many strong hurricanes have ripped through the southern and eastern portions of the United States in recent years.

Unfortunately, there has been tremendous loss of life and property damage to go along with them.

Here is a list of some of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes based on atmospheric pressure, according to The Weather Channel. Find their article with the full list and details at <https://wxch.nl/2GVjRwX>.

## **HURRICANE MICHAEL, 2018**

Just last fall, Hurricane Michael devastated a portion of the Florida panhandle. Originally thought to be a category 4 storm, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently upgraded it to a category 5. This makes the hurricane the first one to make landfall in the U.S. as a category 5 since Andrew in 1992.

## **HURRICANE MARIA, 2017**

Maria's high winds and extreme flooding led to the destruction of infrastructure on Puerto Rico and St. Croix. It also resulted in an estimated \$90 billion in damage, making it the third-costliest hurricane in U.S. history.

## **HURRICANE DEAN, 2007**

This category 5 hurricane hit various sparsely populated regions in Mexico. It killed 14 people in Haiti and 12 in Mexico.

## **HURRICANE MITCH, 1998**

In Central America, it unleashed up to 50 inches of rain in some locations, killed more than 10,000 people, and did \$3.8 billion of damage.

## **HURRICANE KATRINA, 2005**

Katrina ravaged the Mississippi Gulf Coast with 27-plus-foot storm surges and breached multiple levees in New Orleans. At least 1,833 died in the hurricane and subsequent floods. It was one of the costliest storms in U.S. history, causing an estimated \$161 billion in damage.

## **HURRICANE CAMILLE, 1969**

Hurricane Camille made landfall on the night of Aug. 17-18 with winds estimated at 175 mph. The Mississippi Gulf Coast was devastated by a storm surge of up to 24.6 feet, contributing to a death toll of 143 along the Gulf Coast. Another 113 died in Virginia due to flash flooding and mudslides.

## **HURRICANE ALLEN 1980**

Hurricane Allen achieved category 5 strength three separate times during its trek across the eastern Caribbean Sea, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Mexico before finally making landfall near Brownsville, Texas. Allen caused \$300 million in damage and two direct deaths in south Texas.

## **HURRICANE WILMA, 2005**

Wilma quickly transitioned from a tropical storm into a 175-mph category 5 hurricane.

After moving through the Caribbean, Wilma hit South Florida to cause an estimated \$21 billion in damage.