# The District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency

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| What is Hurricane Season? Hurricane Season officially begins on June 1 and extends through November 30. The season can involve any, or all, of the following storms:   * *Tropical Depression*: A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less. * Tropical Storm: A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph. * Hurricane: A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 74 mph or higher. * Major Hurricane: A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 111 mph or higher, meaning a Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. |
| What to Do During a Storm:  * Listen to the radio or television for information. * Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move. * Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor. * Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water. * Do not walk or drive through flood waters. You could easily be swept away and you cannot see dangers that may be in the water. “Don’t drown, turn around!” * Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway on the bottom floor. * Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.  Making Sure You Are Prepared *Before* Disaster Hits  * Around the dinner table, talk to your family about where you would meet in the event of an emergency. * If you have pets, identify some pet-friendly hotels in case you have to evacuate. * Trim back trees and shrubbery so they don’t become flying debris. * Clear out your rain gutters so water doesn’t back up and end up in your house. * Teach friends and family members to text on their cell-phones, text messages can often get through when phone calls can’t. * Make copies of important documents for your emergency kit (medication list, medical info, proof of address, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies, etc.) Consider putting them on a flash drive, as well. * If it has been six months since you got fresh water for your kit, it’s time to rotate to a new supply. * Write the date you bought items for your kit on them; it will help keep everything fresh. * Get an extra set of house and car keys made for your emergency kit. * Teach everyone how to turn off the utilities in your house (electricity, gas, water, etc.) so they can do it in case of an evacuation. * Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home. * Consider installing "check valves" to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home. * If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.  Do You Have Your Emergency Kit? An emergency supply kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Visit www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit for a complete list of suggested items.  Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency. Remember, you may have to evacuate at a moment’s notice and take essentials with you, and once a disaster hits you will not have time to shop or search for supplies. |

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