

Preparing for Hurricanes

You should prepare for a hurricane like any other emergency. Begin with [your personal emergency preparedness checklist](#).

Choose a shelter area for you and your family. A basement, storm cellar or closet beneath the stairs can provide good shelter in a severe storm. If none of these areas are available, sit underneath a sturdy piece of furniture on the ground floor and away from outside walls and windows.

Reduce unnecessary worry by choosing a meeting place for you and your family so you can find one another. Another alternative is to set up some form of communication to notify each other of whereabouts and safety. Do not rely on the telephone. Phones should be reserved for emergency calls during such times.

Evacuations caused by hurricanes are uncommon in Nova Scotia, but they do happen. Know [what to do when an evacuation is needed](#).

Maintain an emergency supply kit:

- First aid kit, complete with a week's supply of essential medication
- Canned food and manual can opener
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries (avoid candles, which can be a fire hazard)
- Cash (ATM machines may be down)
- Potable water (two litres per person per day)

Secure your home and property:

- Pull your boats out of water and up to high ground
- Park your vehicles in a garage or away from trees
- Fill car's gas tank
- Secure all gates, doors and windows
- Move lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything that can be picked up by wind
- Trim dead or diseased branches from trees to help make them more wind resistant, or remove dead trees entirely. Safety should always be your first priority when trimming trees. Ensure that you are not working near a power line.
- Make sure your home is protected as much as possible from heavy rain and flooding
- Keep pets indoors

In the event of an evacuation:

- If instructed to do so, turn off your gas and water and ensure that your home is securely locked
- Choose a motel or a friend's or family's home in another area, or go to a specified evacuation centre
- Register at the evacuation centre to maintain contact with local family or loved ones
- Contact your out-of-town relatives to let them know your whereabouts
- Plan for alternative travel routes in the event of flooding or blocked roads
- For the safety of all involved, be sure to follow evacuation instructions closely
- Take all critical documents, prescriptions, maps, clothing, bottled water and food and sleeping bags
- Stay away from downed power lines

During a Hurricane:

- Follow the instructions of emergency officials
- Close and lock all windows and doors

- If you smell gas, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and evacuate the premises
- Don't use the telephone unless absolutely necessary. Emergency crews will need all available lines

After a hurricane:

- Check for damage to your home
- Clean up any flammable or corrosive materials
- If you turned off the gas during the hurricane, it should only be turned back on by a professional from the gas company
- Check on your neighbours, particularly the elderly or people with disabilities

Hurricane Aftermath:

A hurricane may create a significant impact that could last for an extended period. Be prepared for some of the following circumstances:

- Structural damage in buildings and damaged trees can create unsafe conditions
- Hospitals and health service resources may be severely strained
- Workplaces and schools may be closed for a period of time
- There may be restrictions on travel