

As you know, the City of Worcester is a great place to live, work and play. While our location in the center of the commonwealth protects us from coastal related damage, we are still at risk for major storms such as hurricanes.

That is why the City of Worcester has put together a comprehensive guide for our citizens to make sure that they are as prepared as possible in the event that a major hurricane makes landfall.

By reading the information provided here, you will learn about how to prepare yourself, your home and your business for a hurricane or any disaster.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale			
<i>Category</i>	<i>Winds (MPH)</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Storm Surge</i>
1	74 - 95	Minimal: Damage to unanchored mobile homes, vegetation & signs. Coastal road flooding. Some shallow flooding of susceptible homes.	4 - 5 feet
2	96 - 110	Moderate: Significant damage to mobile homes & trees. Significant flooding of roads near the coast & bay.	6 - 8 feet
3	111 - 130	Extensive: Structural damage to small buildings. Large trees down. Mobile homes largely destroyed. Widespread flooding near the coast & bay.	9 - 12 feet
4	131 - 155	Extreme: Most trees blown down. Structural damage to many buildings. Roof failure on small structures. Flooding extends far inland. Major damage to structures near shore.	13 - 18 feet
5	More than 155	Catastrophic: All trees blown down. Some complete building failures. Widespread roof failures. Flood damage to lower floors less than 15 feet above sea level.	Greater than 18 feet

What to Do During a Hurricane WATCH

- **Continue listening regularly to a NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or television stations for updated information.** Hurricanes can change direction, intensity, and speed very suddenly. What was a minor threat several hours ago can quickly escalate to a major threat.

- **Listen to the advice of local officials, and evacuate if they tell you to do so.** Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges. Leaving an area that may be affected will help keep your family safe. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community. Following the advice of local authorities is your safest protection. Local officials may close down certain roads, especially near the coast, when the outer effects of increasing wind and rain from a hurricane reach the coast.
- **Prepare your property for high winds.** Hurricane winds can blow large, heavy objects and send them crashing into homes. Anything not secured may become a deadly or damaging projectile.
 - Bring lawn furniture inside, as well as outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, or anything else that can be picked up by the wind.
 - Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs, then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through.
 - Secure building by closing and boarding up each window of your home. Remove outside antennas.
- **Stock up on prescription medications.** Stores and pharmacies may be closed after the storm.
- **Check your [Disaster Supplies Kit](#).** Some supplies may need to be replaced or restocked.
- **Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest setting. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly.** Keeping the coldest air in will help perishables last much longer in the event of a power failure.
- **Store valuables and personal papers in a safety deposit box in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home.** Hurricanes may leave water damage inside homes. Historically, it is shown that protecting valuables in this manner will provide the best security.
- **Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.** Authorities may ask you to turn off water or electric utilities to prevent damage to your home or within the community. Most of the time they will tell you to leave the gas on because a professional is required to turn your gas back on, and it may be several weeks before you receive service.
- **Turn off propane tanks.** Propane tanks may be damaged or dislodged by strong winds or water. Turning them off reduces the fire potential if they are damaged by the storm.
- **Unplug small appliances.** Small appliances may be affected by electrical power surges that may occur as the storm approaches. Unplugging them reduces potential damage.
- **Stay away from flood waters.** If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. When you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, if you can do so safely, get out of your vehicle and climb to higher ground. Most hurricane-related deaths are caused by floods, and most flood fatalities are caused by people attempting to drive through water. The depth of water is not always obvious. The roadbed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. Rapidly rising water may stall the engine, engulf the vehicle and its occupants, and sweep them away. Two feet of water will carry away most automobiles.

What to Do During a Hurricane WARNING

- **Listen to a [NOAA Weather Radio](#), or portable, battery- powered radio or television for updated information and official instructions.** Hurricanes can change direction, intensity, and speed very suddenly. Continue listening for local information.
- **If officials announce a hurricane warning, they may ask you to leave your home as soon as possible to be safe. Take your Disaster Supplies Kit and go to a shelter or your family contact's home. Call your check-in contact so someone will know where you are going.** Local officials advise leaving only if they truly believe your location is in danger. It is important to follow their instructions as soon as possible. Roads may become blocked and the storm can worsen, preventing safe escape. Having your disaster supplies will make you more comfortable while you are away from home.
- **If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, on the first floor away from windows, skylights and glass doors, even if they are covered.** Stay on the floor least likely to be affected by strong winds and flood waters. A small interior room without windows on the first floor is usually the safest place. Have as many walls between you and the outside winds as possible. Sometimes strong winds and projectiles may tear hurricane shutters off, so stay away from windows even if they are covered. Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object. Being under a sturdy object will offer greater protection from falling objects.
- **Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.** Closed doors will help prevent damaging hurricane winds from entering additional rooms.
- **Have a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy.** Avoid using open flames (candles and kerosene lamps) as a source of light. Flashlights provide the safest emergency lighting source. **Between 1984 and 1998, candle-related deaths from home fires following hurricanes were three times greater than the number of deaths related to the direct impact of the hurricane.** Kerosene lamps require a great deal of ventilation and are not designed for indoor use.
- **If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce the power "surge" when electricity is restored.** When electricity is restored, the surge from many major appliances starting at the same time may cause damage or destroy the appliances. Turning off or unplugging major appliances will allow you to decide when it is best to turn them back on.
- **Be aware that the calm "eye" is deceptive; the storm is not over.** The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds. The opposing winds begin suddenly, and have surprised and injured many people who ventured out during the eye.
- **Watch out for flooding.** Hurricanes and tropical storms often drop large amounts of rainfall and cause severe flooding, even when they are weakening or are no longer a named storm. "Weak" tropical storms are just as capable of producing heavy rainfall and flooding as major hurricanes.
- **Be alert for tornadoes.** Tornadoes can happen during and after a hurricane passes over. Remain indoors on a lower level, in the center of your home, in a closet or bathroom without windows. Going below ground, such as to a basement or storm cellar, increases your risk from flood.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- [Water](#), one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- [Food](#), at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- [First aid kit](#)
- Whistle to signal for help
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container. You can use the [EFFAK](#) Emergency Financial First Aid Kit developed by Operation Hope, FEMA and Citizen Corps to help you organize your information
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Find out how to keep food safe during and after an emergency by visiting:
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/>