

Staying Home? Prepare in Advance for Storms



By Mary Ellen Welch, UConn Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Educator

“Sheltering in place” means staying indoors at a safe location during an emergency/storm. It may be home, work, school, or somewhere else. For your own safety, evacuate (leave) if directed to by a public official. Try to be in a safe location, if possible, before a storm starts.

First Steps

- Become familiar with the storms that typically occur where you live. Learn how to stay safe.
- Frequently check the weather on TV, radio, cellular phone, computer and social media.
- Make a list of items you will need to collect and tasks to complete.
- Make a shopping list and start shopping early.
- Contact your town for evacuation routes and local shelter address(es).
- If needed, determine the location of a pet shelter. Ask when and what you will need to bring.

Make a Communication Plan

- Let family, friends, and neighbors know where you will be staying during the storm.
- List their contact information – names, telephone numbers, and email addresses on paper.
- Have a family member or friend be the out-of-town contact for your family in case you get separated.
- People with functional needs or disabilities can ask the local fire department in advance for transportation to a shelter or hospital.
- Sign up for emergency alerts.



Gathering Items

- Get/check flashlights and make sure the batteries are working.
- Battery operated candles are recommended. Wax candles can cause fires.
- Keep whistles for safety.
- Fully charge your cell phone and extra mobile chargers.
- Get a NOAA Weather Radio if possible – charge it if solar; get extra batteries.
- Pack a “go kit” or backpack in case you may need to evacuate.
- Gather food and water – at least one gallon of water per person and per pet a day.
- Put together three days or more of non-perishable foods, which are easy to reach.
- Make sure you have medications, personal supplies, and clothing for three days or more.
- Additional food, water and supplies may be needed during an extended power outage.

For Your Convenience

- Portable generators can provide limited electricity if the power goes out. Read the manual and use as directed. Only use generators outside, at least 20 feet away from your home.
- If on well water, have extra containers of drinkable water on hand and buckets of water to flush toilets.
- Keep making ice; turn refrigerator/freezer on "high" before the storm. Place refrigerator and freezer thermometers inside towards the front of the unit.
- Disposable paper goods and utensils are easier to manage if you lose power for several days. Hot water may not be available for washing dishes.
- Disposable cleaning products, such as disinfecting hand, counter and floor wipes, make it easier if you lose power. Keep paper towels, toilet paper and garbage bags on hand.
- Pets should have at least a three day or more supply of water, food and bowls. Place collars and identification tags on your pets, with their names and your cell phone numbers, in case you become separated. Collect leashes, carriers, medications if needed, toys, and kitty litter. Carry copies of their current vaccination records.
- Consider having a professionally installed and grounded lightning protection system.
- Three days of supplies is the standard - additional days of supplies can be beneficial.

Organize and Clean Your Home Before the Storm

- Discard old refrigerated food; dispose of all trash.
- Clean counters and surfaces you will use to prepare or eat food.
- Pick up and put items away. Clear pathways to prevent tripping in the dark.
- Wash and dry laundry; put it away.
- Have blankets and jackets handy to keep you warm.
- Have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup throughout your home.
- Keep supplies for gas or charcoal grills on hand. Never use grills indoors.
- Remove things outside your home that could float or blow away, or tie them down.
- Keep your home/apartment in good repair. Report problems to maintenance if renting.



Sources:

Pets and Animals <https://www.ready.gov/animals>

Family Communication Plan https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/0e3ef555f66e22ab832e284f826c2e9e/FEMA_plan_parent_508_071513.pdf

Build a Kit <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit#>

Visit <https://eden.uconn.edu/> for more information about storm preparedness.

2018