



Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

E. Leon Jacobs, Jr., Commissioner

Hurricane Tips - Are You Prepared?



June 1 marked the beginning of Florida's hurricane season, and it's expected to be a busy one. From June 1 to November 30, you should pay close attention to weather forecasts in your area.

To prepare, the **Florida Public Service Commission (PSC)** recommends you use the following storm checklist as a guide:

Stock up with three or four days worth of food that does not require cooking or refrigeration.

Keep a working radio, flashlights, extra batteries, candles and oil lamps. Check occasionally to ensure that they are in working order.

Listen to the weather forecast for your area and always observe the advisories and warnings.

Keep a list of emergency phone numbers for police, fire, utilities and ambulance. Teach your children how and when to call 9-1-1, the police or fire department, and which radio or television station to tune to for emergency information.

Make prior medical arrangements if you require respirators to other electricity-dependent medical equipment. If you require oxygen, check with your supplier about emergency plans.

Take identification, medications and written instructions regarding your care, special equipment and bedding when you evacuate.

Get cash if you need to. ATMs are often shut down by a storm for a few days.

Learn the evacuation route for your area and keep your car fueled up in case an evacuation is ordered.

Secure outdoor objects that might be blown away -- trash cans, toys, patio furniture, hanging plants, etc.

As a precautionary matter when storms approach, turn your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings. Open them only when absolutely necessary and close them quickly. Return to normal settings when the threat of power outages has passed.

Store your boat or other light craft securely or move it to a designated safe place. Use rope or chain to secure it to its trailer. Use tiedowns to anchor the trailer to the ground or house.

If a storm approaches, store drinking water in clean bottles, jugs, pans and even the bathtub, as needed.

Board up windows or protect them with storm shutters or tape.

Call the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) before a hurricane and request copies of its hurricane program publications. FEMA has several brochures with information and tips to prepare you and your family for the occurrence of a hurricane. You may contact FEMA at **1-800-480-2520**.

Develop an emergency communication plan. In case family members are separated from one another during a disaster, have a plan for getting back together.

Make sure your home is prepared. Walk around the yard and pick up all loose objects such as lawn ornaments and furniture.

Make sure that all family members know how to respond before, during and after a hurricane. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address and phone number of the contact person.

You should know that regulated utilities develop extensive response plans that are implemented during storm emergencies. Repairs and outages are addressed according to these prepared plans, in order to restore services as soon as possible.

Call the PSC if you have any questions at **1-800-342-3552**. You may also contact us by e-mail at **contact@psc.state.fl.us**, or visit our Internet home page at **http://www.floridapsc.com**. Also visit the Disaster Preparation website of the Department of Community Affairs at **www.florida.disaster.org**.

E. Leon Jacobs, Jr. is a Florida Public Service Commissioner. The PSC sets the rates utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately-owned.