

DON'T DESPAIR! ~ PREPARE!

EZ Things to do NOW to Prep for Hurricanes & Put Your Mind at Ease...

- 1. Stock up on supplies!** ~ First aid kit, batteries, flashlights, Purell, land-line water and non-perishable food like canned soups, tuna, Spam, yummy Vienna sausages, peanut butter & jelly, fried fruits, those 100-calorie packs, bread and crackers (& don't forget the pets!). If you wait until a hurricane is approaching, your chances of finding the items you need are not ideal to say the least. Avoid the nuttiness, stress and crowds that come with last-minute, pre-hurricane shopping! Set up your own little "hurricane preparedness center." **Remember to prepare for 72 hours!**
- 2. Cold hard cash!** ATMs don't work during without electricity. Get some now, put it in one of those handy dandy ziploc bags, secure it in a place where you'll remember (NOT your safe), and keep your mitts off of it! That bag o' money has two purposes: to be used during a potential hurricane and/or to be re-deposited back into your account at the end of the season! Or, to use to have an "end-of-season party...!"
- 3. Important papers & prescriptions.** Put your most important docs and meds into another handy dandy big Ziploc bag. Keep the bag filled and updated during hurricane season episodes so all you have to do is grab and go if you have to evacuate. Take the time to make sure that your prescriptions are filled now and keep those meds up-to-date (you should do that anyway...).
- 4. Ice? How about FreezPacs?!** Go ahead and buy some bags of ice and store them in your freezer. Or, (my suggestion) pick up some of those cheap blue FreezPacs and store them in your freezer ~ you can use these all year round anyway for those coolers for the beach! You know, the coolers that don't contain any prohibited beverages!...
- 5. Have at least two coolers.** One for drinks and one for food. You might also want to have a third cooler on hand for the stuff you will use most often. That way you aren't opening all the coolers frequently and letting the ice melt or your FreezPacs thaw. You might also want to have a fourth cooler for beer & white wine... LOL
- 6. Let there be Light!** It gets really dark when there's no electricity. Battery and solar operated light products are much better than candles. Make sure you have at least one per person. Invest in a RayOVac lanterns and Coleman ~ they last forever! If you're thinking about using any candles ~ think twice!
- 7. The Old-Fashioned Land Line!** Your cordless phone won't work without electricity. To be absolutely sure you'll be able to communicate with the outside world, have a phone with a regular cord so you can plug it into that jack. They're very inexpensive and can be your communication lifeline in an emergency. Check out the Home Depot for these ~ they are cheap and come in very handy, especially if the cell phone battery depletes! And, yes, they do work (as long as you have a home phone line, that is...)
- 8. Pets are family too!** Make sure you have a pet carrier or transportation device for each pet in your home along with a plan for your pets should a disaster occur. **Take the time to call your boarding place and make sure they are "hurricane safe!"** Do this just in case you need to take a trip during hurricane season ~ that way, if one approaches and your pets are being boarded, you'll know that they are safe FOR SURE! When scoping out your evacuation route, make sure the pets will be welcomed too! **Also, take your beloved pet family members into account when stocking up ~ don't forget water and food for them too!**
- 9. Forget about that little battery-operated TV, unless you have purchased a converter box for it...** Yes, it seems to be true and I can't believe it either! Take a look question #29 by going to <https://www.dtv2009.gov/FAQ.aspx> and clicking on the [Download FAQs] area (on the right hand side of the page). According to this, we need one of those damn converter boxes for our battery-operated units to work... Go to <https://www.dtv2009.gov/ApplyCoupon.aspx> to apply for a coupon... The site says that one *can* connect this box all by yourself, at least.
- 10. So, How Can You Keep Up With Info? Go out now and either:**
Shell out the dough to buy a new little TV that does work... check out Target & BrandSmart!
And/OR Buy your NOAA Weather Radio! I have seen these all over the place; as I recall they are about \$30... Dr. Christopher Landsea suggests this option!
Converter Boxes MAY work with your portable... Check out <http://www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html> to see. It's either \$45 clams without the coupon or \$5 with it!
- 10. Tree Trimming!** Have you prepared *outside* your home? Don't forget to look UP! Check those trees, tree limbs and your beautiful palm "daggers" (flying tree parts can cause incredible damage; we learned the hard way that, had we trimmed our huge ficas in front before Wilma, it wouldn't have ended up on the car...) Trim those that could damage your house. If you need the number of a trustworthy, reasonably-priced and licensed person to trim those trees, I have a great one ~ give me a shout if you'd like more info.
- 11. Your garage door** is a vulnerable wind entry point during a hurricane. Make sure you have it reinforced to prevent collapse.
- 12. Stock up on Games!** Take time now to have a self-refresher course on the rules of bridge, canasta, poker and the like! Have on hand: Playing Cards, Uno, Scrabble, Chute & Ladders, Connect 4, Go Fish, Yatzee, Old Battleship! Take my advice ~ when deciding to launch a game, remember that you are stranded inside your home with the person(s) you are playing the game with... That being said, **take caution when deciding to pull out the old Monopoly!**... If you have a quibble with your opponent because he or she is just too "crafty" at the game, you must remember that you're stuck with that person [inside your dwelling] "for the duration of what Mother Nature has to deal out!"

13. **Keep Gas Tank on Full during the season!** This isn't the time to "see how close you can get to "E" before running out of gas.... It's the time to keep it on "F" at all times. Just think ~ by doing this you won't be waiting in the long, long gas lines OR going from station to station seeking out the ones who aren't already sold out!

14. **Shutters!** Make sure that, if you use shutters, you have adequately stocked, working shutter panels! Just take an inventory! If you need to re-stock, it's EZ right now ~ Home Depot awaits you with no lines! Think about having someone check to make sure that the "places" on your home that secure the panels are secure themselves. Remember, we've been lucky for the past couple of years ~ take a gander around that place you call home!

15. **When To Start Boarding Up...** According to our Hurricane Guru, Dr. Landsea, *"My family and I board up when the Hurricane Warning is issued. This is issued about 24 hours in advance of the hurricane. We need about 3-4 hours to put our shutters up. If folks need more time than a day to prepare, then starting when the Hurricane Watch (36-48 hours in advance of the hurricane) would be appropriate."*

16. **Insurance!** Take the time to make sure your home and car insurance policies are all set and up to date. Make damn sure you have Hurricane Coverage... Our former insurer, Metropolitan, informed us that they no longer cover this natural disaster ~ we're now with AllState and do feel like "we're in good hands."

17. **Cell Phones!** Go and buy an extra battery and keep both it and your current phone charged at all times. Or, purchase a battery-operated recharger!

18. **Now, Relax & Remember!** By just being prepared you are giving yourself piece of mind! Don't let that pesky procrastination get in your way! In the event that we have no hurricanes, we'll all have supplies to donate to those less fortunate! In the event that we do have a pesky hurricane or 2 being "advertised" on our TV screens and announced on our radios, we can know that WE ARE READY!

Take some time to check out the following websites:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mfl/index.php> for **NOAA's National Weather Service Specifically for Miami/South Florida!**

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/> for NOAA's **National Weather Service's National Hurricane Center**

<http://www.weather.gov/> for NOAA's National Weather Service home page

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/signup.shtml> to sign up for the "experimental email advisory service"

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/> just as an FYI...

Would you like to contact our Dr. Christopher Landsea of NOAA?! During his presentation he welcomed us to do so and has confirmed that we may email him at: Chris.Landsea@noaa.gov He added, *"Sometimes I get a bit behind in correspondence, but always do my best to respond."*