

Mecklenburg County ARES[®]

Are You Ready of a Hurricane?

Hurricane Season begins June 1st and ends November 30th.

In Sept. 1989 Hurricane Hugo barreled through Charlotte causing devastation to the entire region. High winds, heavy rain and tornadoes spawned by Hurricane Hugo took a heavy toll in Mecklenburg County. Many of us still remember days of chaos without power or enough supplies to carry on our daily lives.

The national Weather Service issues two different types of Hurricane Advisories

Hurricane Watch: Hurricane conditions are a threat within 48 hours

Hurricane Warning: Hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hours.

Before a Hurricane Strikes:

- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS). NOAA Weather warnings can be heard on all the TV and radio stations and many of the local repeaters if you do not have a weather radio.
- Check your 72 hour Emergency Kit. Replace or restock items as needed.
- Store in a secure place anything that can be picked up by the wind (toys, lawn furniture bicycles, trash cans and recycle bins). Any of these items can become missiles during a storm.
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- Close your windows, doors and hurricane shutters. If you do not have hurricane shutters, close and board up all windows and doors with plywood.
- Fill your bathtub and other large containers with water especially if you have a well.
- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest setting. Keep them closed as much as possible so that food will last longer if the power goes out.
- Park vehicles where falling trees cannot damage them.
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- Turn off your air conditioner or Heat Pump at the breaker box.
- Turn off propane tank.
- Unplug all small appliances.
- Fill your vehicle's gas tank.
- Create a hurricane evacuation plan with members of your household. Planning and practicing your evacuation plan minimizes confusion and fear during the event.
- Obey evacuation orders. Evacuation routes will be announced when evacuation orders are broadcast.
- Avoid flooded roads, washed out bridges and downed power lines when you evacuate.

During a hurricane:

- Shelter in an interior room without windows.
- Keep your emergency supplies in the same room with your family.
- Keep a very close watch on children and pets.
- Use flashlights in the dark. Do NOT use candles.
- Tornadoes are often spawned by hurricanes. Wind conditions during a Hurricane can change drastically within seconds.
- Stay in your shelter!
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- The calm "eye" of the storm may seem like the storm is over, but after the eye passes, the winds will change direction and very quickly return to hurricane force.
- Stay in your shelter!
- Bands of severe weather often precede and follow the main storm.
- Stay in your shelter until the authorities in your area have announced that it is safe to come out.

After the Hurricane

- Stay alert for extended rainfall and subsequent flooding even after the hurricane has ended.
- Avoid flooded areas.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are sure it's not contaminated.
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Avoid driving after the storm has passed due to trees, debris and possible flooding of the roads.

Many of us experienced prolonged power outages after Hurricane Hugo. The roads were blocked, the stores were closed and life was pretty miserable. When a few stores opened, they the goods that they sold were exhausted quickly. Batteries, ice, bottled water, flashlights, oil lamps and gasoline were in very short supply right after the storm, so be prepared.