

Get a Head Start on Preparedness Before Hurricane Season Starts

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U.S. Virgin Islands — Now is the time for you and your household to get ready for Atlantic hurricane season. National Hurricane Preparedness Week is a perfect opportunity to assess your risk from storms, update your family's emergency communications plan, replenish your emergency supplies, and review your personal and financial documents.

Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30, but the best time to prepare is before hurricane season begins. If you wait until a storm is approaching, the odds are that you will be under stress, forget things, or not able to get supplies as they are no longer available. Get your disaster supplies while the shelves at stores are still stocked and get an insurance checkup before winds and rains start to swirl in the Atlantic.

FEMA and our partners in the U.S. Virgin Islands will conduct a series of response exercises in the coming months to make sure FEMA is ready to support a response to a storm, at the territory's request. The best way to help the U.S. Virgin Islands respond to and recover from a disaster is to act today to prepare yourself and your household before a disaster. Each of us can take steps to make sure we are prepared for any disaster.

"FEMA continues to work with our partners in the U.S. Virgin Islands to strengthen our collective ability to respond and recover from a disaster," said Aaron VanDoren, Acting Coordinator for FEMA's Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office. "We conduct regular workshops and exercises to ensure we are ready for the upcoming Atlantic hurricane season that starts June 1. We are asking Virgin Islanders to review and update their preparedness plans before the start of hurricane season to make sure they are also ready. It only takes one hurricane or even a tropical storm to cause a disaster," said VanDoren.

"VITEMA is committed to preparing the territory to respond to all disasters, both natural and man-made, with the focus on saving lives and preserving property.



Everyone who lives within our territory knows how devastating hurricanes can be, so we always want to remind our community that individual and home preparation is key,” said Daryl Jaschen, Director of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA).

“Together with our FEMA partners, VITEMA, lead territory agencies, the National Guard and volunteers participate year-round in preparation activities, drills, and assessments so that during the months of June to November we are as prepared as we can be to respond in the event of a hurricane headed our way,” said Jaschen. “While we’re familiar with hurricane preparedness during the peak season of August through October, VITEMA strongly urges the community to Be Prepared, Stay Informed, and Be Vigilant throughout the entire season as weather patterns are unpredictable. There are online resources on [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and ours as well at vitema.vi.gov.”

As you prepare, tailor your plans and supplies to your specific daily living needs and responsibilities. Discuss how people in your network can assist each other with communication, care of children, business, pets or specific needs such as operating medical equipment.

- Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands your hurricane plan.
- Identify any additional help needed in an emergency if you or anybody in your home is a baby, senior or has a disability, access, or functional requirement.
- Have several ways to receive alerts. Sign up for [Alert VI](#) to receive emergency notifications in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Download the [FEMA app](#) on your smartphone and receive real-time alerts from the [National Weather Service](#) for up to five locations nationwide. Check the settings on your mobile devices to ensure you can receive [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#), which require no sign-up.
 - Have an emergency charging option(s) for your phone and other devices.
- Protect your home against storms. Declutter drains and gutters, consider hurricane shutters and leave room in your home to bring in outside furniture during a storm.
 - Inspect and maintain your generator regularly. Consider a maintenance contract that provides at least one service visit per year. Keep fresh fuel in the tank, and periodically run the generator to test performance. Visit flash.org for tips on how to use a generator safely.



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- Identify where you would stay during a hurricane. Follow the instructions from territorial agencies who will provide the latest recommendations based on the threat to your community and appropriate safety measures.
- Make sure your insurance policies and personal documents are up to date. Make and keep physical copies in a safe dry place and digital copies in a secure password protected digital space. You might need your documents to apply for and receive assistance after a disaster.
- Have enough supplies for your household, include medication, disinfectant supplies, masks, pet supplies in your go bag or car trunk. After a hurricane, you may not have access to these supplies for days or even weeks.
 - Replenish supplies in your emergency kit and replace expired items as needed.

Visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes for more information on how to prepare for, stay safe during and return home after a hurricane. Review National Hurricane Preparedness Week's themes, such as understand forecast information and use caution after storms at www.noaa.gov/hurricane-prep-social-media-english and follow vitema.vi.gov for information on local events and community readiness.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.



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