

Hurricane Preparedness for Apartment Dwellers

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – Living in an apartment community poses some unique considerations for hurricane preparedness. Sharing your walls and communal areas mean some actions are your responsibilities, while others depend on your neighbors and management.

The following tips will help apartment dwellers be prepared in case of a storm.

Protect your Home

Make sure the apartment is in good repair and safe for you to shelter-in-place.

- Bring inside any outdoor furniture, planters and other items from patios and balconies.
- Get shutters or panels for your sliding glass doors and windows. Ask the building's management or landlord if a specific style is required. If you're a renter, ask if your landlord provides them and who will put them up before the storm.
- Identify your safest room, probably an interior bedroom, bath or hall, and stay there when windy conditions become threatening.
- Consider sheltering in an apartment on the lower level if you live on a higher floor.

Store your 10 days' worth of supplies

Storage space in apartments is often limited so storing your supplies may be challenging. If your kitchen is small, find space in a closet, under the bed or even behind the couch. Fill bathtubs and the washer with water that can be used to



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flush toilets and for sanitation needs.

Steer clear of windows

Don't stand near windows during a storm, and keep your curtains drawn. The National Hurricane Center advises against using tape since it can cause a false sense of security and also lead to larger, more dangerous shards of glass blowing through your apartment.

Check your insurance coverage

Confirm with your apartment's administration what is covered by its insurance. Contact your agent to insure your personal property and to buy flood insurance, if it is not included.

Get to Know Your Neighbors

It's important to know who may need or can lend a helping hand in an emergency. Residents will likely gather in communal areas, and working together helps everyone get through the emergency.

Suggest an emergency fund

Establishing an emergency fund or redirecting monies for maintenance fees may help cover items like generators and other emergency repairs in common areas.

Park your vehicle in a safe area

Assess your assigned parking spot and, if necessary, take your car to another location away from possible flooding and falling debris.

Contact your building administration or residents' association



Whether you live in a condominium, co-op or walk-up complex, the manager or condo board administers the by-laws, information and funds to manage the building. Check to make sure the preparedness plan includes:

- Assigning captains to help share information and check on residents with special needs.
- Gathering residents' emergency contacts.
- Providing administration and management contacts for residents.
- Informing residents how access gates will operate in case of a power outage.
- Making a communications plan for residents in case phones are down.
- Ensuring the generator maintenance is up-to-date with extra supplies available (filter, oil, fuel).
- Scheduling waste pickups and sewer cleanups.

For more information on hurricane season preparedness, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness.

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