

# Hurricane Preparedness: Managing Your Utilities

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – Hurricanes Irma and María stressed how important it is to prepare for power outages, water service interruptions or communications failures.

Here are some actions you can take to plan ahead during this hurricane season.

- **Install surge protectors.** They help avoid overloading your electronic equipment and protect it from power fluctuations.
- **Learn where and how to shut off your house's electricity.** Don't wait until the last minute to figure this out. Shutting the power off can prevent dangerous situations.
- **Develop a plan for medical equipment.** If medical equipment is provided by a hospital or health provider, ask them about an emergency plan or alternative.
- **Plan for rain water collection.** You might need it for non-drinking purposes like flushing toilets, washing clothes or cleaning.
- **Make a Family Communications Plan.** Decide on a meeting place and choose an out-of-town friend or relative as a point of contact. Neighbors can get in touch to identify potential needs.
- **Download the FEMA app and other weather or emergency apps.**
- **Write down important phone numbers.** Have a written list with personal contacts and emergency phone numbers in case your phone is not working.
- **Consider installing a landline phone.** Traditional phones might be the only ones working in case of emergency, but make sure they don't rely on electric power to operate.
- **Back-up your computer.** Scan important documents and pictures and make a



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back-up in a jump drive or in the cloud to avoid loss.

Here are some things you might need.

### **Power**

- **Have enough flashlights and extra batteries.** Store them in an easy-to-find place.
- **Have one or more beach coolers.** They can help keep food fresh.
- **Get a small gas stove and buy extra propane gas.** You can heat food and cook small meals.
- **Consider non-electric technology.** Solar lamps and chargers can be useful.
- **Safely use portable generators.** Use them only outdoors and observe the manufacturer's instructions and take proper precautions. Stock up on oil and filters for a few days.

### **Water**

- **Have enough water for at least 10 days.** Estimate the consumption of water for your family, including pets. At least one gallon per person per day.
- **Store water properly. Keep water in glass, plastic or fiberglass containers to avoid corrosion.** Keep containers and water tanks clean, disinfected and sealed.
- **Understand your options to purify drinking water.** For more information go online to [www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/make-water-safe-sp.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/make-water-safe-sp.pdf) for Spanish or [www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/make-water-safe-H.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/make-water-safe-H.pdf) for English.

### **Communications**

- **Have a crank or battery-powered radio or portable television.** Some solar-powered or hand-cranked radios may also be used to charge cell phones.
- **Store extra batteries for devices and keep a portable phone charger in your vehicle.**
- **Waterproof devices.** If your phone is not waterproof, consider a waterproof case or a thick, sealable plastic bag to place your phone into.



In the event of an announced storm:

- **Turn the refrigerator to its coldest setting before a storm.** Use a cooler to avoid opening the refrigerator or freezer doors.
- **Know about oasis locations.** Stay tuned to the media and follow instructions from your municipality.

For additional emergency-planning resources, visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov). For more on hurricane preparedness, visit [www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness).

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*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll- free at **800-621-FEMA (3362) 711/VRS** - Video Relay Service). Multilingual operators are available. (Press **2** for Spanish). TTY call **800-462-7585**.*

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