

# What to Expect After a Storm



After a disaster, you may be without power and many of the services you rely on, including water, sewer, phone, cell phone, businesses, etc. Immediate response may not be possible, so you must prepare to be self-reliant for at least 7 days after the storm.



## RE-ENTRY AFTER THE STORM

1. **BE PATIENT.** You will not be able to return to your home or business until search and rescue operations are complete and safety hazards, such as downed power lines, are cleared. It may take time for emergency crews to reach your neighborhood.
2. **Residents:** Have valid ID with your current address.
3. **Businesses:** Have a valid picture ID, documents showing proof of ownership/rental, County business tax license, and names of individuals authorized to be given access on a business letterhead.
4. **Avoid driving, especially through water.** Roads may have debris which can puncture your tires! Until power is restored, traffic signals may be inoperable for an extended period of time. Treat any intersection where traffic signals are out as a 4-way stop.
5. Once you arrive back, walk around your home or business from the outside first to **survey damage and enter with caution.**
6. **Be extremely cautious with fire.** Do not light a match without first making sure that there is not a gas leak.
7. If you suspect a gas leak, **leave immediately and call 9-1-1.** Contact your natural gas provider from a safe location.
8. Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home or business.
9. If your home or business has been flooded, have a qualified licensed electrician inspect the electrical system and appliances before turning the power back on.
10. Know what your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy covers and what you will need to submit a claim. Take photographs of all damage before repairs and keep all receipts.



## POST-STORM SAFETY

1. Keep grills and generators outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a frequent killer.
2. Avoid candles. Use battery-operated flashlights and lamps instead to limit the risk of fire.
3. Stay tuned to your local media for up-to-date emergency information.
4. Let your out-of-town contact know you are safe and uninjured.
5. Avoid driving. If you drive, treat any intersection with inoperable traffic signals as a four-way stop.
6. Always supervise children.
7. **DO NOT WADE IN FLOOD WATERS.**
8. Be aware of snakes, insects, alligators, or animals driven to higher ground by floods.
9. Avoid downed or dangling power lines. Be especially careful when clearing fallen trees.
10. Make temporary repairs to correct safety hazards and minimize further damage.
11. Be extremely careful with a chainsaw and follow all safety precautions.
12. Call professionals to remove large, uprooted trees, etc.
13. **Always use proper safety equipment** such as heavy gloves, safety goggles, heavy boots, long-sleeve shirts, and long pants. Tie back long hair. Wear a hat and sunscreen.
14. Drink plenty of fluids, rest and ask for help when you need it.
15. Do not burn trash.



## STORM DEBRIS CLEAN-UP: CITRUS COUNTY REQUIREMENTS

Depending on the severity of the storm, residents should anticipate delays, and possibly suspension in their regular collection services including trash, recycling, and yard waste.

Storm debris must be separated by category for collection, for example:

- o **Vegetative:** tree limbs and trunks.
- o **Garbage:** place spoiled food in containers, or double bag it for pick-up.
- o **Household goods:** furniture, clothes, books, toys.

- o **Construction materials:** drywall, roof shingles, carpet, aluminum, vinyl, wood fencing.
- o **Appliances:** refrigerators, water heaters, televisions, computers.

**TIPS:** Avoid stacking debris by utility poles, under power lines, on top of water meters or other water connections, by fire hydrants, by vehicles, next to mailboxes or fences, or on storm drains. **Do not place any storm debris in the street.**



## GENERATORS

1. Generators can provide power to your home or business in case of a power outage or shortage. Take precautions when using a generator and store fuel safely outside in labeled approved storage containers.
2. Determine the appliance or equipment you want to use and if a portable or stationary generator is required.
3. Stationary (whole house) generators run off of gas utility lines or an LP tank and supply electrical power to pre-selected circuits. They **MUST** be professionally installed by a licensed electrician.
4. Determine if you will need multiple outlets or multiple types of outlets on your generator.
5. **NEVER connect a portable generator to building wiring.** There is an extreme danger of generator back-feed for the general public (downed wires etc.) and utility workers. Plug appliances, etc., directly into the generator.
6. Place generator outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to enter a building. **Exhaust fumes are deadly.**
7. Before refueling your generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Do not forget to check the oil every time you add gas. Keep generators dry.
8. Conserve fuel by limiting use of appliances.



## CONTRACTOR FRAUD

1. Hire only licensed contractors. Be cautious of anyone coming to your home uninvited and offering to do home repairs. You can look up a contractor's license at [myfloridalicense.com](http://myfloridalicense.com).
2. Obtain a written estimate or contract. Insist on start/completion dates and payment terms in the contract. Do not pay in full before work begins and do not pay the final balance until the work is completed to your satisfaction. **NEVER pay with cash.**
3. Permits are always required for any kind of demolition or permanent repairs, reconstruction, roofing, or filling.
4. Do not pull the permits for the contractor. This may be an indication they are not properly licensed. Contact your local building department for information on required building permits.
5. If you suspect a contractor of potential fraud, contact the State of Florida Consumer Fraud hotline: **1-866-966-7226.**



## HAZARD MITIGATION

Hazard mitigation is any sustained actions taken to eliminate or reduce future risk to people and property. Preventing damage in the first place is less expensive than restoring damaged property. The following hurricane-resistant construction practices and mitigation actions help reduce damage during storms:

1. **Raise the building above flood levels.** There are ways to retrofit your home to minimize flood risks, including elevation, flood barriers, and dry and wet flood proofing. An elevated building on stilts, pier foundations, or on a raised platform is a proven way to prevent damage from extreme flooding. Constructing a waterproof wall or sand bagging a home's perimeter can also mitigate damage. Elevate the building's electrical panels and air conditioners above flood levels.
2. **Tie down the building to its foundation.** Anchor manufactured homes, trailers, boats, and any detached items that could cause damage in high winds during a storm.
3. **Increase a building's impact resistance** with reinforced, impact-resistant doors, laminated windows, storm-resistant windows or hurricane shutters, pull-down PVC shutter systems, and high-impact synthetic window shades.
4. **Prevent penetration of moisture.** Sealants, waterproof membranes, house wrap, rainscreen systems, and use of mold and mildew-resistant materials can keep rain and moisture out of the home or reduce resulting damage.
5. **Make sure you are receiving all the eligible benefits from your insurance policy.** Ask your insurance agent if there are any discounts for performing mitigation measures to your home or business.
6. **Rebuild stronger.** If your home was damaged by a hurricane, consider using different building techniques or materials from those you used the first time. Research how to build back stronger to make informed decisions and be prepared for next hurricane season. Additional resources for how to make your home safer:
  - [flash.org](http://flash.org) (Federal Alliance for Safe Homes)
  - Call FLASH toll-free at **877-221-SAFE (7233)**
  - [mysafeflorida.org](http://mysafeflorida.org)
  - [floodsmart.gov](http://floodsmart.gov)
  - [disastersafety.org](http://disastersafety.org)
  - [fema.gov/grants/mitigation](http://fema.gov/grants/mitigation)