

HOME HAZARDS

Interior Hazards

Keeping your house safe helps keep you and your family safe. Minimize the impact of an emergency or disaster by safeguarding your home. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a potential hazard.

1. Check batteries in smoke alarms every six months and make sure they are on each level of your home and outside every bedroom.
2. Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections.
3. Fasten shelves securely.
4. Place heavy objects on lower shelves.
5. Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
6. Brace overhead light fixtures.
7. Strap water heater to wall studs.
8. Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations.
9. Bolt your house frame to the foundation.
10. Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources.
11. Place oily polishing rags or waste in covered metal cans.
12. Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents.

If a storm warning is in effect with high winds...

1. Bring things indoors like lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines, hanging plants and any other objects that may fly around and damage your home and property.
2. Look for fruit, birdfeeders and other objects in trees that could break off in high winds. Cut or take them off and store them indoors.
3. Unless local officials advise otherwise, leave natural gas on because you will need it for heating and cooking when you return home. If you turn gas off, a licensed professional is required to turn it back on, and it may take weeks for a professional to respond.
4. Propane tanks often dislodged in disasters. Turn off propane gas service.
5. If high winds are expected, cover the outside of all windows of your home. Use shutters that are rated to provide significant protection from windblown debris or fit plywood coverings over all windows. Damage happens when wind gets inside a home through a broken window, door or damaged roof. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking and is not recommended.

If flooding is expected...

...consider using sand bags to keep water away from your home. It takes two people about one hour to fill and place 100 sandbags, giving you a wall one foot high and 20 feet long. Make sure you have enough sand, burlap or plastic bags, shovels, strong helpers and time to place them properly.

1. Move electronic equipment and appliances to higher levels of your home and away from windows. Wrap them in sheets, blankets or burlap.
2. Make a visual or written record of all your household possessions. Record model and serial numbers. This list could help you prove the value of what you owned if those possessions are damaged or destroyed, and can assist you to claim deductions on taxes. Store a copy of the record somewhere away from home, such as in a safe deposit box.

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