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Let's Stay Ready

BY **De-Ann Smith** Posted **June 20, 2023**

They say time waits for no man and we must concur! It's already halfway through 2023 and the hurricane season has crept on us. We are hearing news of tropical depressions and storms and it's only June! Preparation for this season is key.

If you haven't started to get prepared, then now is the time to do so! If you are already prepared, then don't let your guard down! Disaster can strike at any time and therefore we need to get ready and stay ready. We must protect first and foremost our families and one of your most important investments – the home! Protection of the home must come whether you are a homeowner or renting. Safety during this season is fundamental.

Each of us have had different experiences across the Caribbean with hurricanes. Even if we haven't experienced, we have witnessed the damage caused to our neighbors and understand the importance of getting and staying ready for the season. Though each of us may have to prepare differently from country to country, some things remain the same throughout!

Let's look at a few important things to note this season!

Around the home

1. Determine your risk – if your home is not hurricane ready and you believe it's at risk for damage, find a loved one you can stay with until the storm passes. Similarly, if you live in a flood – prone area, move to higher ground.
2. Check roofs, windows and walls for cracks, leaks and weak spots.
3. Clear drains in your immediate area.
4. Trim branches that come into contact with your home and call your utility company for those in contact with power lines.
5. Remove debris or store loose objects from around your home, indoors.
6. Stock up on water and non-perishable food items.
7. Ensure your home is adequately insured.

In the home

1. Create a home inventory - Create a photo documentation of all valuables and keep your important documents together.
2. Secure your valuables - Secure your valuables and documents in a waterproof bag or container for quick access.
3. Develop an evacuation plan - – Find out today where your closest emergency shelter is. Plan where you will go and how you will get there.
4. Plan for pets - Be sure to plan for your pets as most emergency shelters don't allow pets.
5. Lend a helping hand - Be sure to also plan for persons in your family or community who may not be mobile.
6. Pack a "to-go-bag" – In the event you have to leave your home suddenly and head over to a hurricane shelter or by a loved one, pack a bag of necessities.
7. Gather supplies for at least 3 days – Keep in mind each person's needs including medication etc.

Stock up!

Need to do some last-minute shopping? Here are just a few items to stock up on. Look at the checklist below:

HURRICANE KIT CHECKLIST

INCLUDE SPECIALTY ITEMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR OLDER ADULTS AND CHILDREN

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- water – one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- food – at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- battery-powered or hand crank radio
- flashlight and extra batteries
- first aid kit
- whistle to signal for help
- dust masks
- moist towelettes
- toothbrush & toothpaste
- toilet paper
- garbage bags and plastic ties
- wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- manual can opener for food
- local maps
- cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger
- water sterilizing tablets

