

Prepare Your Home Now for Hurricane Season

By _____

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The Atlantic hurricane season begins June 1 — making this a good time to get a jump on things and prepare your home for any extreme weather that may come. Regardless of the weather, if you follow these tips you'll head into summer having finished some home maintenance that you'd want to have done anyway. And in case there is a storm, you'll have what you need to batten down your house and be ready for contingencies.

First, inspect your rain gutters and downspouts. Make sure they are well secured to the house and clear of leaves and other obstructions.

Check that trees are trimmed. Remove damaged limbs and trees to prevent them being blown off and causing damage during a storm.

Protect your windows and any glass in doors. Reinforcing exterior glass against a hurricane isn't primarily to prevent shards of broken glass from spewing into the home. The far more serious danger is that once wind or flying debris breaks a window or takes off a door, the sudden change in pressure inside the house could blow the roof off or cause other major damage.

Commercial storm shutters or 5/8-inch plywood properly secured over all exterior glass is your best bet to keep out the wind. Storm shutters come in a variety of materials and looks, including transparent ones that protect windows while leaving a view. If you choose plywood, secure it using long screws and the proper anchors for your wall material. Or, better yet, if your windows are inset a couple of inches, install the plywood inside the frame — the inset makes it harder for wind to get under the wood and blow it off — and secure it with barrel bolts that slide into holes drilled into the side of the inset.

Keep a battery-operated radio and extra batteries — or even a hand-crank radio so that you can follow weather reports and alerts. A battery-operated charger for your cell phone can also keep you in communication if you lose electric power.

Learn about your area’s evacuation routes and have a plan for a place to stay if you need to evacuate. Make a plan for what you’ll do with your pets. Create a “go bag” with necessary medications, a first-aid kit, maps, and copies of important papers.

For more information on hurricane safety in [\[insert local area\]](#), contact [\[insert local HBA contact here\]](#).