

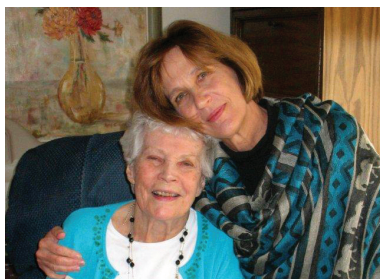


**2015 Hurricane Emergency Preparedness
Manual for Caregivers
of Persons with Dementia**





<http://www.HoustonGEC.org>



2015 Hurricane Emergency Preparedness Manual for Caregivers of Persons with Dementia

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This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant UB4HP19058 and title Houston Geriatric Education Center grant. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

SECTION 1: Introduction

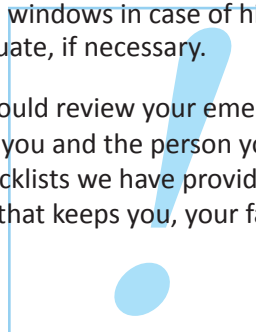
Because you live on the Gulf Coast and also care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or another related dementia, you *must* prepare in advance for the possibility of a hurricane. Unless you are new to the Gulf Coast, you have certainly seen and heard the usual warnings and checklists on TV and from government officials at the beginning of each hurricane season. Caring for someone who is dependent on you, however, adds even more challenges to your preparations. This brochure specifically addresses these different challenges that you may face.

General Safety Reminders

No matter what emergency may occur, you should plan ahead and be prepared. Be sure to:

1. Have smoke detectors, carbon monoxide monitors, and fire extinguishers in your home. Check the batteries in the smoke detectors and monitors at least twice a year and also be sure the extinguishers are properly pressurized and that you know how to use them.
2. Know how to turn off your utilities at the source – water, electricity, and gas.
3. Have a list of emergency phone numbers that you can post by landline phones or find quickly at convenient locations throughout your home.
4. Keep a list of your valuable possessions. Even better, keep a file of photos or videos of those possessions.
5. Have a plan for any kind of emergency. Identify safe areas in your home (for example, away from windows in case of high winds) and know how you will evacuate, if necessary.

REMEMBER - circumstances change. You should review your emergency plan at least every year to be sure it still fits you and the person you care for. We hope that this brochure and the checklists we have provided will be helpful to you in putting together a plan that keeps you, your family, and your property safe during a hurricane.



SECTION 2: *To Do's* for June 1

Mark your calendar for June 1 every year. Hurricane season is June 1 through November 30, and you should not delay your preparations.

Here's what you need to do on June 1:

1. Register or re-register with **STEAR** (State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry) by calling 211. Registration is good for one year only. So even if you registered last year, you must do so again.
2. Review your emergency plan. Think about what has changed in the past year and change the plan to fit the new circumstances.
3. Update emergency phone lists.
4. Update medication lists and pharmacy information.
5. Check the emergency supplies that you'll use at home or in case of evacuation: batteries, water and non-perishable food supplies.

dial 211

Do You Know?

211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE provides information about all kinds of community resources – from child care to food pantries to veterans' assistance to care for aging parents or relatives. The HELPLINE is free and someone will answer your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Care for Elders, in partnership with the United Way of Greater Houston, provides elder care experts who will consult with you and connect you with local services, benefits counselling, and case management. If you have questions or needs, *call 211*.

What is STEAR and why should I register at 211?

The **STEAR** program (State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry) is provided FREE to anyone with access and functional needs who may require transportation assistance or other special assistance during a disaster. When you register with **STEAR**, local emergency responders and providers have the necessary information to be able to assist you.

Registration is voluntary and all the information you provide will be kept confidential. But remember – the registry information is erased each year. **You must register every year.**

To register, call 211 and tell the HELPLINE operator that you wish to register for **STEAR**.

The registration process will take about 7-10 minutes and you will be asked questions about your emergency contacts, caregivers, pets, transportation assistance in case of evacuation from your home, communication barriers, and disability, functional or medical needs.



SECTION 3: Be Informed

When a hurricane is heading for your community, you are going to want the most reliable information.

The best source of accurate information is from radio stations designated as Emergency Alert Systems (EAS) or from official local government websites.

Emergency Alert System (EAS) stations

KTRH 740 AM

KUHF 88.7 FM

Official government website for the City of Houston

houstontx.gov/emergency

You may also want to sign up for emergency notifications from the City of Houston at **alerts.houstonoem.org**.

Not in Houston?

If you do not live in the City of Houston, go to **readyhoustontx.gov/partners.html** to find information for your local Office of Emergency Management.



SECTION 4: Hurricane Facts You Need to Know

You don't have to be a meteorologist but there are certain facts that will help you in putting together your plan. These facts may be especially helpful if you have recently moved to the Gulf Coast and are new to hurricanes.

Hurricanes are categorized by the sustained wind speed (74 mph or higher). Category 3, 4, and 5 storms with wind speeds greater than 111 mph are major storms that are expected to cause extensive damage and possibly loss of life. The winds in Category 1 and 2 storms are not as strong, but these storms must not be underestimated. To read more specific information about hurricane categories, please go to the website of the National Hurricane Center (<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>).

Strong winds are only one of the dangers that come with hurricanes. Areas hit by the storm may also experience torrential rains with flooding, tornadoes, and storm surge. Near the coast, storm surge is one of the greatest concerns. What is storm surge? It's the abnormal rise of the Gulf's water over and above the normal tide. (The term "storm tide" refers to the normal tide level *plus* the storm surge.) This abnormal rise of water is generated by the storm's winds as it moves over the Gulf and pushes water towards the shore. Flooding is a major threat, particularly when the storm surge combines with the normal high tide.

Even though Hurricane Ike, that hit the north end of Galveston in 2008, was only a Category 2 hurricane, the storm surge hit 15-20 feet above normal levels along the Bolivar Peninsula, resulting in numerous deaths and catastrophic property damage.

Don't be Fooled!

The *eye of the storm* is an area of relatively calm weather in the center of the hurricane. Even though it seems as if the storm is over, the high winds will return until the complete hurricane has passed. *Tropical storms*, too, can be dangerous, with winds between 39 and 74 mph, torrential rain, and flooding.

Watch versus Warning

The National Hurricane Center has become very skillful in predicting a hurricane's path and issues hurricane watches and hurricane warnings, but conscientious monitoring of any storms in the Gulf is always a good idea. A HURRICANE WATCH means that a storm may hit your area within the next 48 hours.

What should you do if a **WATCH** is issued?

- Monitor radio stations and websites (listed in Section 3).
- Fuel your vehicles. You should do this if you plan to evacuate and even if you intend to stay at home since pumps may not work in a power outage. If you have a generator, be sure that it is also fueled. (See Section 6 on generator use safety.)
- Check all supplies.
- Start to bring in outdoor furniture and other objects that the wind might carry.

A HURRICANE WARNING means that a storm is likely within the next 36 hours.

What should you do if a **WARNING** is issued?

- Continue to monitor radio stations and websites (listed in Section 3).
- If your plan includes evacuation, get on the road right away. Do not delay.
- If you plan to stay at home, start filling the bathtub, pots and other containers with water.
- Turn off your utilities, if instructed to do so by officials.

SECTION 5: Coming Up with a Plan

Take the time to develop a good plan for you and your loved one. Write it down so that you can share it with others and review it easily.

The biggest question will be whether you should evacuate or shelter in place. You may have to evacuate if you are in a Hurricane Evacuation Zip-zone near the coast and if instructed by officials to do so. You may also want to evacuate if you are in an area prone to severe flooding. Local government officials have developed plans to manage the flow of traffic in case an evacuation is ordered. Be sure to follow directions from law enforcement or on posted signs.

Things to Consider

If you plan to **STAY IN YOUR HOME**:

- o How will the person with dementia react during the fury of the storm? Will the high winds make them more agitated or distressed? If you need emergency personnel, it is unlikely that they will be able to reach your home during the worst part of a storm or immediately afterwards.
- o Is there someone who might stay with you in case an extra person is needed? If you are financially able, perhaps you can arrange for a paid caregiver to ride out the storm with you. If so, you will want to plan for the necessary supplies for that person.
- o Is your home able to withstand high winds?
- o How will you cope if utilities are out during and after the storm? What equipment do you rely on that runs on electricity?

A list of suggested supplies for **Staying at Home** is provided on page 12.

If you plan to **EVACUATE**:

- o Decide now on several routes that you might take depending on the path of the storm. If you can stay with a family member or friend in the area where you decide to go, contact them now to be sure they are able to help you out. They will want to be prepared in advance should you plan to stay with them.
- o Consider the challenges that a road trip may present. Does the person you are caring for ride well in the car? Will they become agitated? Will they be able to cope with traffic and delays? Will you be able to drive *and* care for your passenger?
- o Consider the challenges that staying in a different house may present. Will the person with dementia be more uncomfortable and more agitated in unfamiliar surroundings?
- o If your community opens a shelter, you might want to go there. They will provide safety and basic necessities and there will be others there to help, if necessary. Consider, however, that the environment in a shelter will not be quiet and calming.
- o Have an emergency kit ready to go (see EVACUATION CHECKLIST in Section 7) and know exactly what last minute things you may need to add to that kit.
- o Establish a communication plan. Designate someone outside the hurricane area as a common contact for family members.

A list of suggested supplies for **Evacuating** is provided on page 13.

NOTE: You may want to consult with your physician or nurse practitioner about medical strategies that you can use if you think your loved one may become easily agitated or have behavioral challenges during the storm or evacuation.

If your loved one lives in an assisted living facility or nursing home:

Every facility must have an emergency preparedness plan. You will want to familiarize yourself with that plan and ask questions that will help you with developing your own personal plan for a hurricane. Perhaps the facility will allow you or encourage you to stay there with your loved one during the storm. If you choose to evacuate and leave your loved one in the safety of the facility, be sure to let the facility administration know where you will be and establish a means of communication.

Some questions you may ask:

- What is your hurricane preparedness plan?
- If necessary, what is your evacuation plan?
- May I plan to stay at the facility with my loved one during the storm?
If so, what should I bring with me?
- If I don't stay here, what is the best way for me to contact you after the storm has passed?



Supplies to have if **you plan to stay in your home:**

- Water – one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation. Drinking water in plastic containers should be replaced every 3 months. Keep the old water for sanitation purposes and also remember to fill bathtubs and other containers with fresh water.
- Non-perishable food – a 7-day supply
- Paper plates and plastic utensils
- Manual can opener
- Battery-powered radio or weather radio. Be sure to have extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, soap, disinfectant, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Paper towels
- Waterproof matches or matches kept in a waterproof container
- Tools for turning off the water, gas, or electric
- Plastic sheeting and tarps and duct tape
- Rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, gloves
- Whistle to signal for help
- Adequate supply of medications
- First aid supplies*
- Adequate medical supplies, for example adult incontinence briefs or diapers, bed pads
- Important documents** in a waterproof, fireproof, and portable container
- Cash (ATMs may not be working)
- Fully charged cell phone and car phone charger



Supplies to take with you **if you plan to evacuate:**

Many of these items can be packed ahead of time in a duffle bag so that you are able to begin your trip as soon as possible. You should plan for a week or two of personal items and medical supplies.

- Bottled water – at least 4 to 5 bottles per person for the trip
- Snacks such as granola bars, fruit, crackers, peanut butter
- Battery-powered radio or weather radio. Have extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, soap, disinfectant, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Personal items – toiletries, clothing
- Rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots, long pants
- Cash
- First aid supplies*
- Medications (at least a two-week supply), a list of the prescriptions you take, and the telephone number of your pharmacy at home
- Adequate medical supplies: adult incontinence briefs or diapers, bed pads, etc.
- Mobility devices: walkers, canes, wheelchair, wheelchair battery charger and extra wheelchair battery (if appropriate)
- Things that comfort your loved one (blanket, pillow, stuffed toy, etc.)
- Important documents** in a waterproof, fireproof, and portable container.
- List of important phone numbers and contact information
- Fully charged cell phone and charger. Take your car charger too.
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Identification bracelet for your loved one if you should be separated. If you don't already have an ID bracelet, you can obtain one from www.alz.org/care/dementia-medical-alert-safe-return.asp.



Don't forget to prepare for your pets

If you are unable to take your pets when you evacuate, consider arranging ahead of time to have your pet stay in a facility that will shelter them while you are away or ask a neighbor or friend to watch after your pets during and after the storm if you are unable to get back home.

If you plan to evacuate and take pets with you, put together an emergency kit for them as well. Think about taking:

- Medications
- Important documents, such as records of vaccinations
- Identification tag with contact information in case you get separated and a photo
- Manual can opener and plastic utensils
- Pet carrier
- Leashes, collar, muzzle
- Food, water, and bowl
- Litter and pan
- Toys or favorite blanket
- Towels



**The American Red Cross Store (www.redcrossstore.org) has first aid kits for sale. You will be able to see the types of supplies that you should put in your personal kit, or you may decide to purchase one of their kits, for example, the Deluxe Family First Aid Kit that provides instructions as well as necessary supplies for specific circumstances.*

****Important documents may include:**

- Medicare cards and other medical insurance cards
- Car and home deeds and insurance papers
- Birth certificates, Social Security cards, and passports
- Prescription information
- Advance directives and wills

SECTION 6: After the Hurricane

Once the storm has passed, you may have other challenges to deal with.

Call 911:

- If you have a medical emergency.
- If you see power lines that are down or smell gas. Be sure to leave the area before you make the 911 call.

Avoid flooded areas and areas that are unsafe because of property damage and fallen trees. **Monitor** the EAS radio stations for post-storm instructions. Take pictures of property and vehicle damage and call your insurance agent.

If you have evacuated the area, try to contact a neighbor or friend for a report on your neighborhood and house. If your house has serious damage or if the power is down, you may want to stay away for a while longer.

If you need housing assistance or other community services, **dial 211** to reach the United Way HELPLINE.

Two additional precautions:

- Be sure to throw out any food that has thawed or been above 40° for longer than 2 hours.
- Have plenty of insect repellent on hand for the onslaught of mosquitoes that will appear after the storm.

Generator Safety

If your power is off, and you use a generator, make sure that you follow the **safety instructions**.

- Never use a generator inside the house, in a garage, or in a carport. Always use outdoors away from open windows, doors, and vents.
- Do not store gasoline for the generator in your home or near a water heater.
- Make sure your carbon monoxide monitor is working.
- Use extension cords that are properly rated to connect your appliances to the generator. Do not connect your generator directly to the electrical system of your house.

SECTION 7: Resources, Important Phone Numbers, and Checklists

The following pages can be used to record important contact information and a list of your medications. We have also provided checklists that you can use to prepare - if you shelter at home or evacuate.

National Hurricane Center	www.nhc.noaa.gov
Accurate information on storm and in aftermath of storm	KTRH 740 AM or KUHF 88.7 FM www.houstontx.gov/emergency
To register for STEAR (State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry)	211
City of Houston Office of Emergency Management	www.Houstonoem.org 713 884-4500
To find contact information for Offices of Emergency Management outside the City of Houston	readyhoustontx.gov/
Emergency – medical, fire, police	911
Non-emergency requiring police officer in the City of Houston	713-884-3131
Non-emergency requiring police officer in your city or area	
Non-emergency requiring fire department in the City of Houston	832-394-6700
Non-emergency requiring fire department in your city or area	
Gas outage – CenterPoint Energy	800-752-8036
Power outage – CenterPoint Energy	800-332-7143
Non-emergency requiring city assistance (such as flooding, traffic signal outage)	311

* readyhouston.gov/partners.html

Other important numbers:

Family	Cell: Other:
Family	Cell: Other:
Family	Cell: Other:
Neighbor	Cell: Other:
Neighbor	Cell: Other:
Physician	
Pharmacy	
Home health agency	
Insurance agent	
Assisted living facility or nursing home	
Electrician	
Plumber	
Roofer	
Tree service	
Clergy/church assistance	
American Red Cross	www.redcross.org/find-help or (713) 526-8300 in Houston
Other:	

STAY AT HOME - CHECKLIST

Have you:

- Taken in anything that can be carried by the wind: outdoor furniture, plants, bird feeders, etc.?
- Notified family and neighbors that you will be staying at home?
- Filled large pots and bathtubs with water?
- Filled your car's gas tank? Fueled your generator?
- Gotten cash?

Do you have these supplies?

- Water – one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation. Drinking water in plastic containers should be replaced every 3 months. Keep the old water for sanitation purposes.
- Non-perishable food – a 7-day supply
- Paper plates and plastic utensils
- Manual can opener
- Battery-powered radio or weather radio. Be sure to have extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, soap, disinfectant, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Paper towels
- Waterproof matches or matches kept in a waterproof container
- Tools for turning off the water, gas, or electric
- Plastic sheeting and tarps and duct tape
- Rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, gloves
- Whistle to signal for help
- Adequate supply of medications
- First aid supplies*
- Adequate medical supplies: adult incontinence briefs or diapers, bed pads, etc.
- Important documents** in a waterproof, fireproof, and portable container
- Cash (ATMs may not be working)
- Fully charged cell phone and car phone charger

EVACUATION - CHECKLIST

Have you:

- Taken in objects that could be carried by the wind?
- Turned off utilities?
- Unplugged TVs, computers, and appliances (not refrigerator)?
- Fueled your vehicle?
- Notified neighbors, friends and family of your plans?

Be sure to have the following items with you in your vehicle. You should plan for a week or two of personal items and medical supplies.

- Bottled water – at least 4 to 5 bottles per person for the trip
- Snacks such as granola bars, fruit, crackers, peanut butter
- Battery-powered radio or weather radio. Be sure to have extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, soap, disinfectant, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Personal items – toiletries, clothing
- Rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots, long pants
- Medications (at least a two-week supply), a list of the prescriptions you take, and the telephone number of your pharmacy at home
- First aid supplies*
- Adequate medical supplies: adult incontinence briefs or diapers, bed pads, etc
- Mobility devices: walker, cane, wheelchair, wheelchair battery charger, and extra wheelchair battery (if appropriate)
- Things that comfort your loved one (for example, blanket, pillow, stuffed toy)
- Important documents** in a waterproof, fireproof, and portable container

- List of important phone numbers and contact information
- Cash
- Fully charged cell phone and your charger. Be sure to have your car charger or an extra charger.
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Identification bracelet for your loved one. If you don't already have an ID bracelet, you can obtain one from www.alz.org/care/dementia-medical-alert-safe-return.asp



PETS - CHECKLIST

If you plan to take your pets with you when you evacuate, think about taking:

- Their medications
- Important documents, such as records of vaccinations
- Leashes, collar, muzzle
- Identification tag with contact information in case you get separated and a photo
- Pet carrier
- Food, water, and bowl
- Manual can opener and plastic utensils
- Litter and pan
- Toys or favorite blanket
- Towels

PHARMACY and MEDICATION Information

Pharmacy: _____

Telephone number: _____

*Be sure to list **your** medications as well as those of your loved ones.*

Medication	Dosage	Schedule (when to take)

Notes:

