

HURRICANE SEASON TIPS – courtesy of ODPEM

BEFORE THE HURRICANE

MONITOR

- Have a radio and spare batteries.
- Keep radio on and listen for the latest warnings and bulletins which will be given via radio and television.
- After the first bulletin has been issued listen carefully for the summary of the most up to date bulletin.

CHECK EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

- Emergency cooking facilities (e.g. oil and coal stoves) may be necessary
- Procure supply of kerosene oil and charcoal
- Procure extra food – especially kinds which can be eaten without being cooked or with very little preparation (canned foods or perishable items).

REMEMBER: Electricity may be off and you may be without refrigeration for some time.

- Have a flashlight in good working order, keep it handy.
- Matches, storm lantern, a complete First-Aid Kit and candles are useful.
- If you have a car, fill it with petrol as it might be needed in an emergency
- Store drinking water in clean containers. Have boiled water on hand.

BATTEN DOWN

- Have board or lumber to batten up windows and doors. Also have masking tape to tape glass windows and doors. Use masking tape to form an 'X' on glass windows.
- Be sure that a window or windows can be opened on the lee side of the house; that is the side opposite the one facing the wind.
- Put up storm shutters or batten up windows with good boards if you have no shutters.
- Take down television antennae, canvas awnings, satellite dishes and move furniture away from exposed windows and doors.
- Remove all pictures, clocks and other hanging articles from the wall and store them in a safe place.
- Remove all items such as books, figurines etc. from shelves and store in a safe room.
- Put away all objects that can be blown away by the wind and wrap important papers in plastic.
- Branches of trees near to buildings should be cut since they may cause further damage from either being blown down. Fruits should be removed from trees as these can be carried by the wind and also cause damage.

- Wrap all documents and important papers in plastic and store all fluorescent tubes, light bulbs and lamp shades in safe areas as broken glass can be dangerous during a hurricane.
- Check on everything that can be blown away or be torn loose. Garbage cans, garden tools, signs, porch furniture, awnings and other loose objects become weapons of destruction in hurricane winds. Store them all inside if possible.

DURING THE HURRICANE

- Do not go outside unless it is absolutely necessary as when the winds get very strong you are in danger of being hit by flying objects.
- Continue to listen to the radio for information on what is happening.
- Be calm. Do not panic. Your ability to act logically is important.
- If roofs are made of tiles, look out for falling tiles and ceiling materials.
- If the house or building show signs of breaking up, stay under a table or a door frame.
- Keep your hurricane lamp burning as it might make the night more tolerable.
- Do not open doors or windows facing the full force of the wind. Doors or windows away from the wind **may** be opened if this is essential.
- During the passage of the hurricane, there may be a brief interruption and signs of calm. This is the eye of the hurricane. It lasts only for a short while and the winds will return from the opposite direction. Use this to effect necessary repairs for your personal safety and return inside as soon as possible.
- Children should not be taken outside since they might be in danger of being blown away even when they are being held by an adult.

AFTER THE HURRICANE

- Clear up debris and effect emergency repairs to your premises.
- Do not touch loose or dangling electric wires.
- Report damage to the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited or the nearest police station.
- Report broken water mains to the National Water Commission.
- Take down shutters and store the lumber in a handy place for future use.
- Watch out for fallen trees. Collect fallen branches and other debris and pile them where they can be easily collected.
- Do not empty water stored in bath tubs or other receptacles until safe drinking water is restored. Boil all drinking water until you are advised that safe water supply has been restored.
- Water which has been stored should not be immediately used for washing cars, watering gardens etc. until normal water services have been fully restored.
- Water for drinking and food preparation should be boiled vigorously for at least ten minutes.
- Do not go outside barefooted. Avoid wearing open shoes. Watch out for broken glass.

- Be alert to prevent fires. Lowered pressure after damage to the water system makes fire-fighting very difficult.
- Drive motor vehicles cautiously. Debris filled streets and roads are dangerous, so keep your eyes on the road. Where a road passes near the edge of a cliff or river bank, the soil may be washed away and the road may collapse under the weight of the vehicle.
- Offer help to other members of your community who might have been affected.