



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Norwalk Health Department**

**Stay Safe Before, During, and After Hurricanes and Storms**  
Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for more information

### **BEFORE THE STORM**

- Check/replace emergency supplies, such as:
  - bottled drinking water
  - ready-to-eat foods, baby food, and/or pet food
  - prescription medicine
  - flashlights
  - battery-operated radio
  - extra batteries
  - first aid kit
  - toilet paper and other toiletries
- Check/replace batteries in your home's smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detector.
- Keep important phone numbers nearby, including the electric company, gas company, and water department.
- Have at least one phone that doesn't need electricity, and make sure it's charged.
- Fill your gas tank and withdraw cash, in case a power outage disables gas pumps and/or ATM machines.
- Review evacuation plans.
- Bring in outdoor objects like lawn furniture, toys, garden tools, and construction or home improvement materials. Tie down items that can be blown away, or bring them inside.
- If anyone in your home uses life-sustaining equipment, such as a kidney dialysis machine or a respirator, contact your utility company. They can help you prepare for power outages.

## DURING THE STORM

- Check radio, television, and online for progress reports.
- Stay inside, away from windows, skylights, glass doors, and downed power lines.
- If officials order an evacuation, leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads, and secure your home before you leave by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity, gas, and the main water valve. Contact your local utility companies for guidance on shutting off utilities.

### Flood Safety

If our area floods, follow these tips to stay safe.

- Do not Walk Through Flowing Water: Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. If you come to flowing water above your ankles, stop, turn around, and go another way. Just 6 inches of swiftly moving water can sweep you off your feet.
- Do Not Drive Through a Flooded Area: Many people drown in their cars in a flood. If you come upon a flooded road while driving, turn around, and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising around you, get out of the car and move to higher ground. Most cars can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water.
- Avoid Power Lines and Electrical Wires: Electrocutation is a major killer in floods. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your utility company or local emergency manager.
- Turn Off Your Electricity When You Return Home: Some appliances, such as television sets, can shock you even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.
- Be Alert for Gas Leaks: Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you are sure that the gas has been turned off and the area has been aired out.
- Avoid Carbon Monoxide Exhaust: Only use a generator, other gasoline-powered machines, and camping stoves outside, as far away as possible but at least 10 feet from your home. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly – only cook with charcoal outside. For more information about staying safe from carbon monoxide during a power outage, see this [Tip Sheet from the CT Department of Public Health](#).

## **AFTER THE STORM**

- Do not return home until authorities say it is safe.
- Avoid loose or dangling power lines, and report them immediately to the power company, police, fire, or building department.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Take pictures of any damage to the house and its contents for insurance claims.
- Drive only if necessary, and avoid all flooded roads.
- Be careful when using portable generators and propane appliances to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock, and fire.

### **Food Safety: *When in doubt, throw it out!***

- If you lose power, keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain cold temperatures.
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours.
- A freezer fully packed will keep food properly cooled for 2 days. If your freezer is only half full freezers will keep food properly cooled for 1 day. Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 45 degrees F or below.
- Throw out any raw or cooked meat, poultry, seafood, milk and dairy products, cooked vegetables, eggs, cooked pasta and pasta salads that remain above 45 degrees F for 2 hours or more.
- Foods that you may be able to keep at room temperature for a few days include butter and margarine, dried fruits, open jars of salad dressings, peanut butter, jelly, taco sauce, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, hard and processed cheese, bread, rolls, cakes, and muffins.
- If power is out for a long time, obtain dry or block ice. Fifty pounds of dry ice can hold an 18 cubic foot full freezer for 2 days.

### **Drinking Water Safety**

- Listen to the news or your water company to know if your water is safe to use or drink. Do not use water that is dark, has an odor, or has floating pieces.
- Private wells that are flooded or may be contaminated should be disinfected before use. For more information on how to disinfect your private well, go to [www.ct.gov/dph/privatewells](http://www.ct.gov/dph/privatewells).