



FEMA

*Texas Recovery Office*

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HURRICANE HARVEY

# News Release

## **Don't gamble with your home: Get it ready for hurricane season**

*May 5-11 is National Hurricane Preparedness Week*

**AUSTIN, Texas** — Hurricane season is on its way, and while you can't make your home invincible to high winds and flooding, you can improve your home's resilience.

Taking steps to protect your home now may pay off big in the future. Homeowners who spend money on mitigation measures are estimated to save six times that amount when disaster strikes their home.

**Elevating your home** is a great option to avert flooding, but it is also expensive and time-consuming.

- Funding to help elevate homes may be available through FEMA grant programs.
  - Interested property owners must apply through their local government, which applies to the state. The state will then submit applications to FEMA when funding is available.
- Flood insurance policyholders whose homes sustain substantial damage can receive up to \$30,000 — on top of their normal flood insurance payout — to elevate, relocate or demolish their home, if local floodplain regulations require it.
  - This additional payout, called Increased Cost of Compliance coverage, is included in most standard flood policies.
- To learn more about elevating your home, check out the FEMA Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: <https://go.usa.gov/xEsA3>.

**Raising your electrical system components, appliances and utilities**, instead of your whole house, may be a more convenient option.

- Some appliances, like laundry machines and components of your heating and air-conditioning systems, may be candidates to move to an upper floor or attic.
  - If not, you can place them on concrete blocks to gain elevation.
- Electrical components such as fuse boxes, outlets and switches should be elevated above the potential flood elevation.
  - These modifications must be made by a licensed electrician and may require a permit from the city or county.

**Using temporary barriers** is an alternative to elevation.

- These include sandbags, portable flood gates and inflatable flood walls to protect fuel tanks and utilities.

**Anchoring fuel tanks** so they can't be swept away or punctured protects lives, property and the environment.

- Attach your fuel tank to the floor (if inside) or a large concrete slab outside that weighs enough to resist the force of floodwaters.
- You can also install ground anchors that connect to the tank with metal straps.

**Installing backflow valves and drain plugs** will prevent floodwater and wastewater from backing up into your home through toilets, sinks and drains.

- Backflow valves should be installed by a licensed plumber.

**Maintaining your property** may be your simplest preventive measure.

- Clear debris from gutters, downspouts, drainage ditches and storm drains.
- Secure loose items, including shingles, that could become windborne missiles.
- Modify landscaping, if necessary, to channel stormwater away from your house.
- Keep the distance between your home and your trees greater than the trees' full-grown heights.

**The following items can also prevent** or reduce damage in a storm:

- Hurricane shutters for windows and doors;
- Flood alert system;
- Sump pump, which draws in groundwater and sends it away through drainage pipes;
- Flood vents, which allow water to flow through foundation walls, garages and crawlspaces instead of destroying them;
- Bracings or hurricane straps that fasten your roof to the walls, particularly if you have a gable-end roof;
- Flood-resistant materials like ceramic tile (instead of carpet), decay-resistant wood, and metal window frames;
- Waterproof veneer for your exterior walls; and
- Waterproofing compounds to seal walls in your basement.

**Learn more about defending your home** against hurricanes and other natural disasters at <https://go.usa.gov/xmNxK>.

For additional information on Hurricane Harvey and Texas recovery, visit the Hurricane Harvey disaster web page at [www.fema.gov/disaster/4332](http://www.fema.gov/disaster/4332), Facebook at [www.facebook.com/FEMAHarvey](https://www.facebook.com/FEMAHarvey), the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at [www.twitter.com/FEMARegion6](https://www.twitter.com/FEMARegion6) or the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at [www.dps.texas.gov/dem](http://www.dps.texas.gov/dem).

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*Helping people before, during, and after disasters.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362 (voice, 711/VRS - Video Relay Service) (TTY: 800-462-7585). Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish).*