

# Cy-Fair Fire Department Shares Storm Safety Tips for Houston-Area Residents During Hurricane Season

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*Cy-Fair Fire Department's Mike Clements shares what every Houston-area family should do before, during, and after a storm to reduce their risk.*

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, July 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- August is when hurricane season shifts into high gear. It's historically one of the most active months for storm development in the Gulf. With the potential for high winds, flash flooding, power outages, and evacuation orders, Cy-Fair Fire Department is urging residents not to wait for a weather advisory to start preparing. The time to act is now, before a storm is in the forecast.

"Storms can escalate quickly, and once severe weather is imminent, your options narrow fast," says Mike Clements, Assistant Chief-Administration at Cy-Fair Fire Department. "Most people think preparedness means stocking up on flashlights and bottled water. But that's a starting point, not a plan. Know your evacuation route, your flood zone, what to do before the first band of weather arrives, and how to respond after the storm hits."

Here, Clements walks through the most important steps Houston-area residents can take right now, before a storm is named and headed their way.

## BEFORE THE STORM

Trim bushes and trees. "Loose limbs don't need hurricane-force winds to become dangerous," says Clements. "Even a tropical storm can turn an untrimmed tree into a serious hazard for your home or a nearby power line."

Prepare homes to withstand wind and debris. Plywood and tarps can provide a sturdy barrier against wind, debris, and water intrusion if unprotected windows and doors are covered before the storm arrives. "Hardware stores sell out fast once a storm is named," Clements warns. "Buy your plywood and tarps now, while they're still on the shelves."

Stock up on essential supplies. A three-day supply of nonperishable food and water is the baseline. Add flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit, and portable battery chargers. "Think through your family's specific needs: infant formula, pet food, or supplies for anyone with a medical condition," says Clements.

Don't let prescriptions run low. Storm season is a good reason to check your prescription and OTC medication supply. Pharmacies lose power too, and they may not be able to fill prescriptions for days after a storm. If possible, request a 90-day supply or use a mail-order pharmacy that won't be affected by local outages.

Know where to get weather updates, even without power. Phones and Wi-Fi may not be reliable once the storm hits. "A battery-powered weather radio is one of the most underrated items on any prep list," says Clements. "It keeps you connected to emergency alerts, evacuation orders, and shelter information when everything else goes dark. Confirm now where you'll turn for updates if the power is out."

Gather and protect personal documents. Collect and safeguard critical financial, medical, insurance, educational, and legal documents and records. Store all documents in a waterproof bag and back up electronic copies on more than one device.

"Locate insurance policies so they are readily available," suggests Clements. "You need to know what to do if your car, home, or property is damaged, or if you encounter flooding. Also, take a video 'tour' of your home to document all belongings and the home's current condition."

Develop a family evacuation plan. Determine ahead of time where you will meet up if you are separated and where you will stay. Communicate your plans with friends or family outside of your home area.

Pack a "go bag." "If an evacuation order comes, you may have very little time," says Clements. "A go bag that's ready to grab means you're not scrambling to find what matters most. You should be able to walk out the door within 15 minutes." (Download our go bag checklist here: <https://www.cyfairfd.org/DocumentCenter/View/331/GoBag-Checklist>.)

Make a plan for pets. Pack a go bag for each pet with food, water, medications, leashes, and copies of vaccination records. "Pets need their own plan," Clements says. "Identify pet-friendly shelters or hotels before you need them, and never leave animals behind in an evacuation. Make sure they're microchipped and wearing ID tags."

## Anticipate Power Outages

Charge all devices before the storm arrives. "If you MUST charge in your car," says Clements, "make sure the garage door is open and back the car OUT of the garage."

Learn how to safely operate a generator before you need it. "Every year, people are seriously injured or killed by generator-related carbon monoxide poisoning, and it's completely preventable," says Clements. "Generators must be used outdoors, at least 20 feet from windows, doors, and attached garages. Never run one in a garage, even with the door open." (Learn more

about how to safely use generators here:

<https://www.cyfairfd.org/DocumentCenter/View/334/Generator-Safety.>)

Have a backup plan for powered medical equipment. “First, we recommend you immediately get out of the impact area,” advises Clements. “But if you stay, you need a plan for an outage. Think about O2 concentrators, ventilators, and CPAP machines. How will you keep these running in a power outage? If you do not have a backup generator, plan on having three days of power supply for your equipment. If you are on O2, have several portable O2 cylinders in reserve.”

## Prepare for Floods

Know your flood zone and understand that everyone is at risk. Houston is a low-lying coastal town that’s susceptible to tropical storms, which differ from many other storm types because of their severity, size, and duration. Residents can identify the flood zone they are in by entering their address into the FEMA flood portal.

“In Houston, flooding can happen anywhere, not just in areas with a high-risk flood designation,” says Clements. “If you’ve moved to this area from another part of the country, you may not realize how quickly water rises here. And even if you’ve lived here your whole life, don’t let familiarity make you complacent.”

Take steps to flood-proof your home. Here are some steps that can be taken to minimize flood damage:

- Shut off the main circuit breaker to prevent appliances from short-circuiting and eliminate the threat of electrocution.
- Keep gutters and drains free of debris.
- Install “check valves” in sewer lines to prevent floodwater from backing up into your drains.
- Stockpile emergency protective materials such as plywood, plastic sheeting, and sandbags.
- Elevate the heating system (furnace), water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.

## DURING THE STORM

Stay safe in a protected area. The safest place in the home is an interior room away from windows and anything made of glass. This could be a center hallway, bathroom, or closet. “For added protection, get under something sturdy such as a heavy table or workbench,” Clements advises.

Call 911, if necessary, but know response times might be affected. If there is a medical emergency, call 911. “However, during a weather event, be aware that non-life-threatening calls may be triaged, and it could take longer than usual for help to arrive,” says Clements. “Sometimes there are situations where it is not safe for any of our vehicles to be on the road,

and our units are asked to stay at the stations.”

## AFTER THE STORM

Assess the damage with caution. After the severe weather threat has ended, check your property for damage.

“When walking through storm damage, wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes,” advises Clements. “Stay out of damaged buildings and watch for limbs or trees that may fall.”

Be vigilant in flooded areas. Assume that underwater debris is in the roadways and in unexpected areas. Unless it’s absolutely necessary, don’t walk through moving water; stay in a safe location.

“Also, never drive through a flooded roadway,” says Clements. “Turn around; don’t drown!”

Stay away from downed power lines. Assume all downed power lines are energized and dangerous. Stay at least 30 feet away and call 911 immediately.

“NEVER approach, touch, or drive over a downed line,” says Clements. “Warn others to stay away as well.”

Prevent fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. Avoid using candles due to the risk of fire. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead. Use generators, grills, and camp stoves only outdoors and in well-ventilated areas.

When in doubt, throw it out. Don’t risk eating spoiled food; it can make you very sick. “Throw out food that got wet or warm,” advises Clements.

“Preparation is the single most effective thing Houston-area residents can do to protect their families and homes when a major storm threatens,” Clements concludes. “The more you do now, the more options you’ll have when it matters most.”

For additional resources, visit [readyharris.org](http://readyharris.org).

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## About CFFD:

The Cy-Fair Fire Department (CFFD) provides professional fire and emergency medical services to the citizens of Northwest Harris County, Texas. From its beginnings in the late 1950s, the Cy-Fair FD is now one of the largest, busiest combination fire departments in the United States, with over 40,000 emergency responses each year. CFFD covers the 164-square-mile area of Harris

County Emergency Services District #9 (HCESD9) in the unincorporated part of Northwest Harris County. Responding from 13 stations strategically located throughout the territory, the 550-plus men and women of the fire department are among the best trained and equipped firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and dispatchers in the nation.

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