

# NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Wells Insurance

## Are You Prepared for the 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season?

The 2021 Atlantic hurricane season is already underway. Tropical Storm Elsa made landfall along the Florida Gulf Coast on July 7, 2021. Elsa, which was downgraded from a Category 1 hurricane before landfall, is the first major named storm to hit the United States this hurricane season.

Hurricanes and tropical storms pose significant safety risks, and it's important that you're properly prepared throughout hurricane season. As the tropics heat up, here are a few tips to help you stay safe before, during and after tropical storms, depressions and hurricanes.

### Before a Storm Hits

As storms develop, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and state and local authorities will provide updates, keeping you aware of a storm's path and issuing evacuation orders when necessary.

If a storm is projected to hit your area, consider these tips:

- Have a family communication plan in place. Keep your devices charged and keep battery packs on hand.
- Cover all of your home's doors and windows with storm shutters or 5/8-inch plywood.
- Move furniture and valuables to a higher elevation, if possible, if your home lies in a flood zone.
- Move all outdoor items inside.

- Store important documents (e.g., birth certificates or Social Security cards) in watertight containers.
- Make sure your generator, if you have one, is serviceable before the storm.
- Follow local evacuation orders and consider evacuating even if you are not required to.
- Prepare an emergency kit with dry goods, an NOAA radio, flashlights, clean water and first-aid supplies.

*The Atlantic hurricane season lasts from June to November, peaking from mid-August to late October. The eastern Pacific hurricane season begins May 15 and ends Nov. 30.*

### During the Storm

When riding out a storm, do all you can to stay safe:

- Make sure your home is completely secure and do not go outside during the storm.



- Turn off all gas lines and consider turning off all utilities.
- Monitor the TV and radio for ongoing weather developments.
- Shelter away from doors and windows. Stay on the lowest level of your home, away from high winds, as long as it is safe to do so. If your home is flooding, move to higher ground in your home.

## After the Storm Passes

Do not leave your home until local authorities deem it safe to do so. Even if it seems calm outside, it may not be safe to leave yet, as you may be in the eye of the storm. Continue to shelter until you hear otherwise.

Following a storm, you can expect delays in emergency services in your community. Roads may also be flooded, power may be out and debris may be in the roads.

As cleanup begins, remember the following:

- Be cautious of residual rain and flooding, even after the main storm has passed.
- Be very careful when exiting your home. Debris, fallen trees and exposed wiring can make it hazardous to move around.
- Document damage to the outside of your home. Call your home insurer to file a claim as soon as you can. Insurers are often inundated with calls following natural disasters.
- Do not try to make repairs to your home by yourself without professional assistance.
- Seek medical attention or shelter from the local emergency services if necessary.

- Do not turn on your gas, HVAC, electricity or plumbing until you can confirm there is no damage to the lines.
- Keep your pets and children inside. It is not safe for them to wander.

If you have become separated from your family, use your family communication plan, contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit the American Red Cross Safe and Well [site](#). You can also contact your local Red Cross office for more information.

## Stay Safe During Storms

The 2021 Atlantic hurricane season has only just begun, and it follows the record-breaking 2020 season, which had 30 named storms and 11 storms that made landfall. 2020 was also the fifth consecutive year of above-normal Atlantic hurricane season, and the NOAA [predicts](#) another above-normal season this year.

Use the tips provided here, as well as any federal, state and local guidance, to keep yourself and your family safe throughout the 2021 Atlantic hurricane season.