

## Prepare Your Home

Use the tips below to get your home ready before disaster strikes.

### Hurricanes, Floods and Tornadoes

#### Fix-it yourself:

- Fasten exterior items securely to your home to prevent them from becoming flying debris. Move loose items indoors.
- Caulk/install weather stripping to all doors and windows to prevent wind from entering.
- Install impact-resistant shutters OR have cut-to-fit boards and mountings ready for all windows and doors.
- Make all entry doors impact-resistant by installing head and foot bolts with a minimum one-inch bolt length into solid material to guard against wind pressure and to improve security.

#### Fix-it with some help:

- Properly brace garage doors and tracks to meet impact-resistant criteria. (Approximately 80% of residential hurricane damage starts with wind entry through garage doors.)
- Brace the roof gable end framing with interior horizontal and vertical beams to strengthen the gable against strong winds.
- If you have a fuel tank, it needs to be anchored to resist the force of floodwaters and flotation.

#### Fix-it when building or remodeling:

- Install tie-downs on any porch and carport columns. (A tie-down can be a rod or a strap that better connects the porch/column and roof to the foundation.)
- Secure wall-to-foundation and wall-to-roof connections with anchor bolts/rebar or other tie down devices to ensure wind uplift resistance.
- Install impact-resistant windows & sliding glass doors.
- Anchor door frames to wall framing.
- If replacing your roof, your contractor should:
  - Confirm rafters and trusses are securely connected (tied down) to the walls.
  - Replace damaged sheathing and properly refasten existing sheathing. This should include a certified wood adhesive between the sheathing and structure members.
  - Install a roof covering designed to resist high winds and meet Class A fire-resistance specifications.
  - Consider a double-layer of heavier felt roofing paper secured, with sufficient tin-tabs, to keep it fastened to the roof sheathing.
  - Consider taping the roof sheathing joints with self-adhering roofing underlayment. This tape will prevent water damage if your roof covering is blown off.
- If your house is more than one story, firmly connect upper story wall framing with lower framing.

- Elevate your utilities (e.g. electrical service panel and disconnect(s), air conditioner, water heater, etc.) above the base flood elevation (100-year flood) or higher.
- Install sewer backflow valves to prevent sewage entry into your home during flooding.
- Construct or reinforce an interior room or reinforced shelter from high winds or tornadoes.

## Wildfires and Lightning

### Fix-it yourself:

- Clear a 30-foot "defensible space" between your home and surrounding wooded areas, removing all dry grass, leaves, brush and firewood.
- Prune all lower branches within six feet of the ground, for trees taller than 18 feet, to prevent ground fires from spreading to treetops.
- Install surge protection devices on all electrical appliances in your home.
- Have at least one dry chemical fire extinguisher on hand.
- Install smoke detectors. Test the detectors monthly. Change batteries at least once a year.
- Enclose the undersides of balconies and above-ground decks with non-combustible materials.
- Cover fireplace chimney outlet, attic vents and sub-floor vents with non-combustible screening of 1/4-inch size or less to prevent spread of fire.

### Fix-it with some help:

- Install a whole house surge protection system to protect against lightning damage.
- Fix-it when building or remodeling:
- Consider installing a residential fire sprinkler system.
- Install ground fault indicators within electrical outlets.