

Protecting Yourself and Your Animals in a Hurricane

All efforts should be made not to be in an area when a hurricane passes through. If the storm center passes directly overhead, the wind will calm down for a period lasting from a few minutes to half an hour or more, but this does not mean that the hurricane has passed. Many people lose their lives by mistakenly thinking that the hurricane is over when the eye is overhead. When the winds begin again, however, they rapidly grow to hurricane force and come from the opposite direction.

After the storm perishable or water-contaminated foods, including any water or food unfit for animals, should be disposed of where animals cannot eat it. If there is a “boil water” order in effect, neither animals nor persons should drink tap water until officials say it is safe to do so.

Paying special attention to health care is important. People in hurricane areas, including those who visit the areas, should make sure their immunizations are current. The appropriate diseases to be vaccinated against should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Insects, especially mosquitoes, can become a significant nuisance with bites and a hazard for transmission of disease after a hurricane. Mosquitoes are repelled effectively by the use of repellents that have DEET as their active ingredient.

Disaster-affected homes and workplaces should have safety inspections. Special attention should be paid to flood damage (see Chapter 7), structural damage, gas leaks, electrical faults, and downed power lines. Hurricane debris is dangerous to work in and can contain hazardous chemicals. Care should be taken not to be injured or exposed to hazardous materials.

SUPPLIES

Supplies that are helpful during the response phase after a hurricane include potable water, medications, gloves and protective clothing, canned foods, radios, flashlights, sleeping bags, candles, matches, extra cash, insect repellent, rubber boots and gloves, and sanitary supplies.