

I Can Sleep When the Big Wind Blows

I remember a story I heard many years ago about a farmer who lived along the Atlantic seacoast, which is famous for their tremendous “nor’easter” storms. The farmer needed a farm hand and one day an applicant came and said, “I can sleep when the big wind blows”. The farmer was intrigued and had heard he was a good worker and so he hired him. One night a terrible storm ripped through the countryside. The farmer jumped out of bed and ran to his farm hand and yelled, “Get up! A great storm is coming and my farm will be ruined!” The farm hand was in bed and rolled over and said “I told you, I can sleep when the big wind blows”. The farmer was outraged and went outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement he discovered that all of the hay stacks had been covered and tied down. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the big wind blew.

The next few months has the potential to bring some big winds our way. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting an above normal hurricane season <http://www.weather.gov/cphc>

Hurricanes can bring lots of wind, lots of rain, loss of electricity, loss of communication and limited mobility.

Here are a few simple steps we can take to prepare for when the big wind blows:

Prepare for lots of wind:

- Reinforce and anchor roofs or buildings
- Put away anything that could be blown away and made into projectiles by high winds
- Take down tarps and carport covers
- Cut down trees that could fall on your house
- Shut off propane tanks and protect tanks from falling objects
- Consider window shutters or plywood over the windows
- Have a “safe room” where you can wait out the storm
- Consider any downed power lines as “live”

Prepare for lots of rain:

- Elevate electrical and gas connections so they are above the ground
- Keep gutters, drains and ditches free of debris
- Have copies of important documents (insurance policies, financial papers, family records, etc) in a water proof container

- Make a “Go Bag” that you can grab and go if you need to leave your home quickly. Have extra clothes, medication, and anything you would need for 72 hrs.

Prepare for loss of electricity:

- Have battery powered or solar powered lighting
- Have extra drinking water and water for washing and for flushing the toilet
- Have food that does not need to be refrigerated
- Consider getting a generator especially if you use medical equipment daily
- Have extra fuel on hand (gas, propane, kerosene) for lighting, heating and cooking

Prepare for loss of communication:

- Have battery powered radios with extra batteries to listen for emergency information or alerts
- Get an amateur (HAM) radio license and become familiar with how to receive and give information
- Have a family communications plan to discuss what you will do and where you will meet if there was an emergency
- Have a designated friend or family member who is out of state be the contact person through whom you will give and receive information

Prepare for limited mobility:

- Have extra food and water on hand
- Have extra medication on hand

We all can be just like the farm hand who thought about what could be done prior to the big wind so that when it did come, he was prepared.

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