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Weather Safety and Preparedness

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The recent winter storm in Texas made it essential for us to be prepared for the next weather emergency. We discovered our critical needs were water and electricity, which is typically the case in extreme weather disasters.

The most notable weather emergencies in our part of the state and surrounding areas are hurricanes, tornados, rain/hailstorms, and flooding. Severe weather emergencies sometimes happen when we least expect: Be prepared and avoid personal injury and property damage by doing some preliminary planning.

Our Gulf Coast hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30 and can cause winds as high as 100 mph and severe thunderstorms capable of producing large hail and wind gusts over 58 mph. We have no control when, where, or how disasters strike, but we can do some planning to prepare to deal with a disaster.

In case of evacuation, a bag/kit packed with emergency/disaster supplies. Sometimes called a Get Home Bag (GHB) or Bug-out Bag (BOB), you should include:

- Fresh water
- Flashlights and batteries
- Non-perishable foods and snacks (simple, easy to prepare)
- Extra clothing
- Blanket/sleeping bag
- Medications/prescription information
- List of emergency contact numbers
- Important documents to include car, medical, and homeowner's insurance.
- First aid kit including hygiene products/toiletries
- Communication devices with chargers
- Battery-operated or hand-cranked radio

Your GHB should only contain very basic necessities. Your bag is only meant to protect you when you must shelter-in-place or leave your home for a short period of time during a natural disaster.

We should always be alert and monitor our local weather updates and emergency instructions, especially during hurricane season. Keep an emergency bag packed and your vehicle fueled in case you must evacuate your home.

I've personally survived several hurricanes on the Texas Gulf Coast. As a survivor, I know the damage to home and property can be devastating, both emotionally and financially. Stay prepared. Keep your emergency bag packed and be aware and understand the type of hazardous weather that can affect you and your family where you live.

For more information on weather safety and preparedness, visit <https://www.weather.gov/safety/> or <https://www.weatherbug.com/>.