

# REAL ESTATE WEEKEND

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Contents prepared by the Marketing Department

## GUEST COLUMN

# Protect your home from a hurricane

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Though today's new homes are built with hurricane protection for openings and doors, owners must also be prepared in other ways to protect their homes and possessions.

During the hurricane season, homeowners should prepare well ahead of a storm. Don't wait until the last minute, as supplies, and materials will be in high demand and short supply.

Have large trees trimmed to avoid uprooting. Remove coconuts and dead fronds from palms, as they are potential projectiles in gusty winds. Small or newly planted trees should be staked. Prune back all shrubs to half their normal size and height. Cut back all freeze damaged trees and plants, as they easily break off in a storm.

Be prepared to remove all loose, objects from your yard, patio deck and

porch, and store them inside. This includes patio furniture, decorative items, potted plants, lighting, awnings, barbecue grills, hoses and tools. Large items that cannot be moved and stored by two people should be tied down and anchored.

All older homes and apartments should have up-to-date storm shutters installed on all windows, garage doors and sliding-glass doors.

If you belong to a homeowners or condominium association, check with your property manager or the board of directors, prior to installing any storm shutters, to find out what can be installed, and how.

Remove all television, radio and citizens-band antennas from the roof. Look for power lines in the surrounding area, and be extremely careful when removing any antennas if they are near electrical or utility lines. Remove several sections of screening on

porches and pool enclosures to allow wind pressure to escape. Remove and store window screens if you do not have shutters.

Increase pool chemicals before the storm hits, but do not lower the water level. Groundwater levels may rise and cause the pool and deck to "pop" out of the ground. Cover the pool pump and filter with strong plastic, tape the joints and shut down the system.

Remove mailboxes if they are not securely anchored. Boats and trailers should be stored in the garage, but if they are too large, make sure that they are anchored. Protect the engine and remove and store all equipment indoors.

Now is a good time to review your insurance coverage. Make sure all policies are up-to-date and paid. Consider buying a flood-insurance policy to protect the contents of your home or apartment. If your building is in a

flood plain, a master flood policy must be purchased well in advance of a storm, since insurance carriers stop writing insurance when a storm is approaching.

Finally, check with your local Red Cross. (561) 833-7711 to find out what supplies, materials and procedures you will need to weather the storm - either in your own home or at an agency shelter.

Useful Web sites include the Florida Division of Emergency Management, at [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org) and the Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management, at

[www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/EOC](http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/EOC).

For more information call John R. Math at (561) 588-7210.



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