

Healthy Indoor Environments

Where We Live, Learn and Play

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Planning Ahead

Now is the time to make sure you have a plan along with a fully stocked emergency kit.

[Resident’s Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards in Georgia](#)

[Natural disasters and COVID-19](#) (CDC)

[Food and Water safety](#)



Image Source: Pixabay

In the “I” of the Storm: Three I’s to Help You Prepare for Hurricane Season

Written by Dana Carney, FACS Agent, UGA Extension Lanier County

The 2020 hurricane season is expected to be one of the most active seasons in recent history. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting 19-25 named storms, of which 7-11 will become hurricanes. It is important to take steps now to prepare for a storm long before it strikes.



Image Source: Pixabay

1. Identify Risks & Coverage

When preparing your home for hurricane season, first assess your property. Inspect buildings, trees, sources of power, farm equipment, and any additional buildings in order to confirm they don’t pose a threat to your safety if a severe storm were to strike. Confirm that your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are properly functioning. Plan ahead for what you can use to cover your windows, and keep water from entering your home. Additionally, review your insurance policies as soon as possible in case changes are needed. Additional coverage, such as flood insurance, must be purchased long before a storm arrives.

2. Information

During times of emergency, being “in the know” is one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself, your home, and your family. Make sure you know how you will receive information on weather and potential evacuations. Apps used for daily weather updates may not be the best choice, as they are not designed to adapt to volatile conditions during storms and can often delay important information. Instead, tune in to the National Hurricane Center and National Weather Service in order to receive the most accurate and up to date information. Your local news station and Emergency Management Agency will be able to provide you with critical and locally relevant information as well.

3. Important Items

Finally, make sure you have the important items needed to weather a severe storm. A basic emergency supply kit should include water (1 gallon per person per day for at least 3 days); food (at least a 3 day supply of non-perishable food); battery-powered or hand crank radio; flashlight; extra batteries; first aid kit; special items such as prescription medication; items for children and pets; and important documents such as insurance policies and identification. It is also a good idea to make backup copies of important documents. If you have an existing emergency supply kit, make sure all items are still usable and meet your current needs. Be sure to add to your kit cloth face coverings for everyone over age 2, soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes. For a complete list of items to include in an emergency supply kit, visit [Ready.gov](#).

Safely Storing Household Products

Written by Becca Stackhouse, FACS Agent, UGA Extension Crisp County

It doesn't take much time to prevent accidents and injuries caused by improper storage of household products. Some of the cleaning and home maintenance products used in your home are toxic, corrosive, flammable, and may even be explosive! Products that have a signal word like danger, warning, caution, corrosive, poison, or flammable are hazardous products and need to be stored in a safe location.

First, you need to identify the hazardous products in your home. Start by taking an inventory of the products you use in and around your home. Any products with a signal word on the label should be stored away from the other products. For all items, it is important to make sure there is a readable label on the product. A best practice is to leave products in their original container whenever possible.



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The most common areas for storing cleaning products are under the kitchen and bathroom sinks, so they are easy to access. That also means they are easy for children to access. It is advisable to store hazardous products in a locked cabinet at no higher than eye level of the person who is most likely to use the products. This way the products are accessible and you reduce the risk of a hazardous spill.

When selecting a storage location look for a space that is clean, secure, dry, and cool. Make sure it is a well-ventilated space, away from the HVAC intake vents, so the fumes released from the products do not circulate throughout your home. Avoid storing chemicals in the well house, since they could leak and contaminate the drinking water. Periodically check the lids of the products to make sure they are still tight and no damage has occurred to the storage container.

The best ways to reduce risks from hazardous household products are:

- ◆ Limit the number of products you purchase to what you currently need.
- ◆ Dispose of household products you no longer need. If they are still usable, donate them. If not, recycle them.


Take a room by room tour of potentially hazardous products in your home with the UGA Extension guide to good health in your home. Learn how to select safer products and dispose of products you no longer use.


[What's in Your House?](#)

GOOD HEALTH STARTS AT HOME:
What's In Your House?

Revised by: Pamela Turner and Diandria Barber
Written by: Pamela Turner and Colin Couch





Common hazardous household products by room:

Living Room: Carbon monoxide, candles, incense, tobacco smoke and lead.

Bedroom: Dry cleaning, mercury thermostat, tobacco smoke, mothballs and lead.

Garage: Pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, weed killer, fertilizer, automotive batteries, antifreeze, brake fluid, gasoline, diesel, motor oil, transmission fluid, starter fluid, carbon monoxide, and car polish and wax.

Kitchen: Ammonia, air freshener, furniture polish, lighter fluid, metal polish, oven cleaner, batteries, light bulbs and lead.

Bathroom: Medications, aerosol sprays, corrosive chemicals, disinfectants, drain cleaner, tub and tile cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, window cleaner, and lead.

Laundry Room: Bleach, detergent, stain remover, fabric softeners and fluorescent light bulbs.

Basement: Paint, paint stripper, paint thinner, stain, turpentine, varnish and radon.



Safely Repairing and Renovating Older Buildings

Written by Pamela R. Turner, FACS Extension Housing & Environment Specialist

Renovation projects, replacing windows and even painting an older building can create harmful lead dust. Children, especially under age six, are at greatest risk of being harmed when exposed to lead. It only takes a small amount of lead exposure to lower a child's IQ, damage their nervous system, or cause speech, language, behavioral and learning problems.



Image Source: Pixabay

Lead is a toxic metal that was used for many years in products in and around our homes. The most common source of lead in your home is paint. Until the ban in 1978, house paint could have contained lead. The older the building, the more likely to find lead in the paint. About 87% of houses built before 1940 contain lead-based paints, whereas only 24% of houses built between 1960 and 1977 contained lead-based paint. The greatest concern is chipped and peeling paint around windows and doors.

If you have a home or child care business that was built before 1978, you need to hire a Lead-Safe Certified contractor before renovating. A homeowner working on their home is not required to use a Lead-Safe Certified contractor, but should definitely follow lead-safe work guidelines. Adults can also experience negative health effects when exposed to lead. Start your renovation right by hiring a certified contractor. For a list of Georgia-Certified Renovation Contractors visit the [Georgia Environmental Protection Division](#). Visit the EPA website for a list of certified contractors in other states and to learn more about the [Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule](#).

Keep your family and the children in your care free from lead by renovating right.

Ways to protect children from lead exposure.

1. Inspect all painted surfaces to make sure they are not cracking or peeling
2. Clean regularly to reduce dust, especially around windows and doors
3. Add a doormat by exterior doors
4. Remove your shoes and leave them by the door
5. If you use well water, have it tested for lead. Until 1986 lead pipes and lead



Healthy Home Hacks

Clean the inside of the microwave with a lemon and water. Fill a microwave-safe bowl with 1½ cups of water. Slice a lemon in half and squeeze the juice into the water. Drop the lemon halves into the bowl. Heat on high until the water comes to a boil (about 3-5 minutes). Leave the bowl in the microwave with the door shut for 5 minutes. The steam trapped inside will help loosen the food bits. All you need to do is wipe off the walls with a damp sponge. ~Pamela Turner

Check your gutters with a mobile phone. All you need is a selfie stick to look into your gutters for debris, or even behind the dryer or refrigerator. Those selfie sticks can be handy! ~Pamela Turner

Remove fresh red drink stains from carpet by first blotting the stain and then pouring clear alcohol onto the stain. You can use rubbing alcohol or vodka. ~Pamela Turner

Make a faucet extender. If the faucet is too far away for your toddler to reach, make a spout with an empty lotion bottle. Cut the top off of it and a hole in the bottom that fits over the faucet. ~ Diane Bales

Remove faucet stains by rubbing the faucet with a fresh lemon. ~Pamela Turner



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