

# Safety Sense

## A Rare Opportunity To Prepare For Hurricane Season

(NAPSA)—According to the National Weather Service, the possibility of an El Niño weather pattern this year means the likelihood of a significant hurricane is lower than average. That means homeowners have more time to prepare.

The United States is struck by a major hurricane about once every two years, meaning that the next big storm could be brewing in the not-so-distant future. The potential for a slower season affords residents in hurricane-prone areas a rare opportunity to shore up defenses and prepare for the next big storm.

Every hurricane that makes landfall causes about \$3 billion in damage.

“Even with eight of the 10 most deadly hurricanes striking the U.S. in the past eight years, building along the East and Gulf Coasts continues and property values are increasing,” says Karen McCague, claims operations manager, Liberty Mutual Insurance. “It is imperative that coastal residents are prepared. We see it time and time again: Those who have planned ahead fare far better during and after a major storm and are back on their feet sooner.”

McCague recommends following a preparation outline she calls “The Three Ps,” to ensure safety of people, property and possessions:

- During a hurricane, follow all evacuation directives. If evacuations are optional and you decide to stay in your home, take precautions against extended power outages by replacing batteries in flashlights and filling bathtubs and sinks with clean water in case the water supply is compromised.

- To secure your home, install hurricane shutters, prune back



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trees and secure loose roof shingles to minimize damage from heavy winds and rain. When the storm approaches, turn off all electronics and circuit breakers to prevent damage from power surges.

- Every household should have a fully stocked hurricane emergency kit, which includes first-aid supplies, food, water and other necessities. All families should identify an out-of-area contact. This person should have copies of your important documents (passports, birth certificates, property deeds, etc.) as well as an up-to-date phone list.

- Have an evacuation plan mapped out well in advance and make sure you know the best route to a predetermined meeting point or shelter. Fill your vehicle with gas ahead of time to protect against long lines at the pump and gas shortages.

Regardless of your level of preparation, always follow instructions from local authorities and evacuation directives. For more information, visit [www.libertymutual.com/prepare](http://www.libertymutual.com/prepare).