

# Hurricane Preparedness Checklist

**Don't wait for the cone of uncertainty.** In Southwest Florida, preparing your home early ensures it remains a fortress rather than a liability. Use this checklist to systematically protect your property from wind, driving rain, and structural hazards.

## STEP 1: EXTERIOR SECURITY & PROJECTILE MANAGEMENT

- Secure Outdoor Furniture & Decor**  
Move patio tables, chairs, umbrellas, potted plants, bird feeders, and wind chimes into the garage or shed.  
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- Anchor Heavy Items**  
Chain down trampolines and grills to ground anchors, or relocate them inside a secure enclosure. Ensure trash cans are locked inside.  
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- Hurricane Tree Pruning**  
Thin out dense canopies so wind can flow through safely. Trim dead branches that risk falling on power lines or windows.  
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- Harvest Mature Coconuts**  
Remove loose coconuts from palm trees; they quickly become destructive flying projectiles in 100 mph winds.  
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## STEP 2: ROOF & GUTTER INTEGRITY

- Inspect Shingles & Tiles**  
Check for loose, brittle, or missing shingles/tiles. Even one minor opening can let pressurized wind compromise the attic envelope.  
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- Verify Flashing Seals**  
Examine flashing around vents and chimneys to verify it remains entirely watertight.  
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- Clear the Gutter Network**  
Remove all leaves, pine needles, and debris. Clogged systems back water under roof tiles or flood home entryways.  
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### STEP 3: WINDOWS, DOORS & OPENINGS

#### Impact Window Check

Check window glass panes for structural seal integrity. Fogging between panes reveals a seal failure.

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#### Test & Lubricate Shutters

Deploy accordion, roll-down, or Bahama shutters ahead of time. Lubricate corrosive tracks early so they don't jam in severe weather.

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#### Plywood Pre-Staging

If using plywood, pre-cut the panels and install matching mounting anchors in your stucco long before it rains.

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#### Reinforce the Garage Door

The home's largest opening is highly vulnerable. Install a vertical bracing kit if yours isn't modern hurricane-rated.

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### STEP 4: MOISTURE CONTROL & DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT

#### Test Sump Pumps

Verify correct operation in low-lying crawlspaces or basements, and confirm the battery backup system functions.

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#### Clear Property Swales

Inspect neighborhood drainage ditches (swales). Remove any blocking landscape overgrowth or debris.

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#### Tighten Door Weather Stripping

Inspect entry thresholds. Visible light streaming underneath a door indicates a clear path for storm water penetration.

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## STEP 5: SAFE ROOM & INTERIOR SUPPLIES



### Water Storage Logistics

Store at least 1 gallon of fresh water per person, per day, for a minimum of 7 days.

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### Non-Perishable Food Reserves

Stock up on pantry goods requiring zero cooking. Post-storm power outages can persist for weeks.

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### Power and Generator Readiness

Charge all portable power banks. Test your generator in advance. \*Never operate a generator inside or near an open window.\*

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### Waterproof Document Container

Seal your home insurance policies, birth certificates, and property deeds inside a portable, waterproof dry box.

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### Common Mistakes to Avoid:

- **Never Tape Windows:** It fails to prevent glass breakage and only creates large, dangerously sharp shards.
- **Unplug Non-Essential Electronics:** Severe power grid surges can instantly destroy expensive plugged-in appliances.
- **Fix Minor Handyman Vulnerabilities:** Loose fencing or shaky railings turn into dangerous battering rams under high wind loads.

## Let GQ Properties Help You Prepare

With 25 years of local handyman experience across Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Estero, Bonita Springs, and Lee County, we can secure your gutters, reinforce exterior fixtures, and make sure your property is fully storm-ready.

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