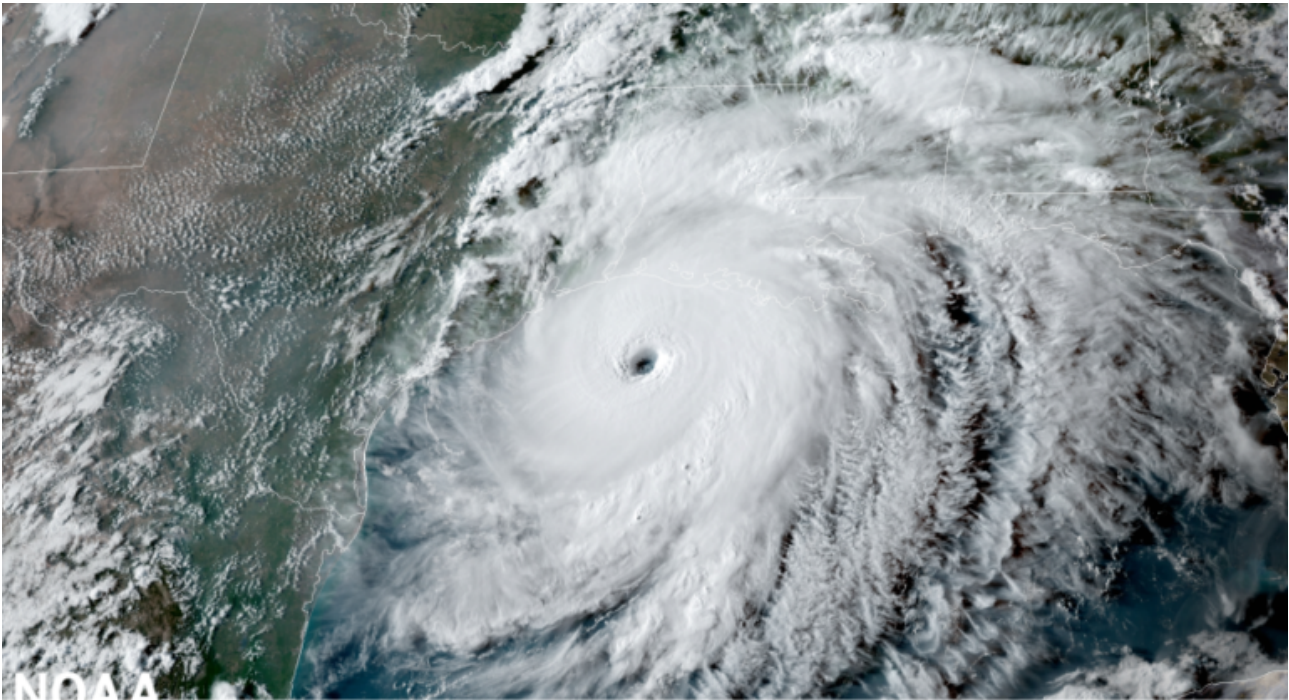


Preparing Your Home For Florida's Hurricane Season



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Running from June 1 to November 30, hurricane season is officially here. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted another above-average, highly-active season this year, but likely not as dramatic as 2020.

NOAA is forecasting 13-20 named storms for 2021, including six to 10 hurricanes and three to six major (Category 3 or higher) hurricanes. While it's unclear if any of these storms will hit South Florida, Colorado State University recently predicted a higher-than-usual chance of a storm tracking within 50 miles of Florida. South Florida homeowners should prepare their homes now to keep any storms and expensive damage at bay.

Prepare your roof

Hurricane Charley (2004), Hurricane Ivan (2004), Hurricane Wilma (2005), Hurricane Katrina (2005), and Hurricane Michael (2018) are some of the most damaging past storms to hit South Florida. Financially, these storms resulted in damages ranging from \$15 billion (Charley) to \$105 billion (Katrina).

Roof damage, in particular, can be expensive to repair. Annual roof inspections can ensure your roof is well-maintained and any issues (like missing or damaged shingles) promptly repaired; leaving vulnerabilities easily paves the way for further destruction by storms. Tree branches should be kept away from the roofline.

Roof clips or straps can also be used to keep your roof in place during a heavy storm. Don't forget to check your roof is up to code. If your roof was installed before 1997, you'll likely need a new one in keeping with major hurricane code changes implemented in 1996.

Protect your plumbing

Protecting your plumbing can prevent storm damage and expensive repairs. First off, before the storm or hurricane hits, turn off your water heater. Leaving it on places undue extra pressure on your plumbing system. If your water heater is leaking or otherwise damaged, it'll need repairing. Consult a water heater repair cost guide for an estimate (repairs typically cost \$506 on average).

Also, switching off your main water pipe can protect your water from external contamination. Open the faucet farthest away from the main line to ensure that air is still able to circulate the system. Outdoor drains should additionally be cleared of debris; blocked drains can't cope with the volume of water and debris generated by major storms.

Hurricane-proof your windows

Storm shutters provide simple yet effective protection for windows during major storms. Flying debris, including broken glass, will be prevented from entering your home. Hurricane window film can provide further protection; it can be installed either by yourself or a professional and left in place all year round.

The clear plastic film is inconspicuous, and can also stop broken glass and debris from coming in through the windows. Hurricane glass can similarly protect against hurricane-force winds: it consists of two panes of tempered glass separated by a plastic film for extra strength and protection.

Effective home maintenance is essential for South Florida homeowners during hurricane season. By preparing your roof, plumbing and windows, you can protect your home and keep it in good condition for years to come.