

2021 Hurricane Preparedness – Trinidad Way Style*

Preparing

First, remember the story of the ant and the grasshopper. The ending of that one varies, including the New Orleans variation which blames the government for the grasshopper's predicament. However, the moral remains clear: you are the one responsible for your own planning. In a serious storm, there may be people to help – or the helpers may be rather tied up ensuring their own survival. It doesn't pay to assume that others will cover your lack of planning. It may also be helpful to remember the story of the Little Red Hen – nobody wanted to help her in the early stages of preparing her bread, but everyone wanted to help eat it...

There is absolutely no excuse for not preparing for hurricane season. It's not hard to do, and it's not expensive to do. On the other hand, it's **really** difficult and expensive to deal with a lack of preparation. Think about it. It's better to be prepared than to be scared.

We are fortunate to be living on Trinidad Way, where neighbors care about each other, watch over each other, and help each other out. This was evident before, during, and after Wilma in 2005. Teams were seen roaming the street to be sure that everyone who wanted help with their shutters was able to get help. Wilma, though, was very different from other storms – we had a lot of time to prepare, and we had a lot of warning from the Mexican devastation. If you can't get your shutters up yourself, arrange for a service to assist you. Relying on your neighbors may be a bad choice, if they choose to evacuate. As a last resort, call a street rep – they may know of someone who can provide last-minute assistance, but they may not. If **you** can help someone out, be sure a street rep knows.

In Florida, we rely heavily on electricity for safety and comfort. Following a hurricane, there isn't any. Sometimes for days, maybe for weeks after a major storm. If you think a generator is right for you, don't wait. Go buy one now. Learn how to use it. You'll be glad you did. If you're going to keep gas around in cans, or in the generator itself, be **sure** to add stabilizer – otherwise, your emergency gasoline will resemble useless Jello. If you hope to rely on a neighbor to let you plug in an extension cord, be a sport – go buy a 5-gallon gasoline can, fill it, add some gas stabilizer, and keep it next to a long heavy-duty extension cord. There are several generators on Trinidad Way, and the owners might be able to help, but you'll see lots more smiles if you arrive with that can of **stabilized** gas to go with your own extension cord (unless it's a propane generator...)

If you're planning to deal with a hurricane by leaving, you'll probably be in the majority – **please** put away your "stuff". Some of us, though, will be sticking around unless it looks like a real monster coming. Even if you're the hardy type, pay attention to the emergency management folks – if they say to evacuate our area, there just might be a really good reason.

OK, now we're down to those of us who are likely to stick around. Your **shutters** are up, you've got your **three-day supply of fresh non-perishable food, \$500 cash** or so, **medications**, and **three gallons of water per person**. (On this street, you probably have a backup supply of wine, too.) You even remembered to have a **hand-operated can opener**. An **emergency NOAA weather radio** is an excellent addition to your preparations. During Wilma, very few people knew that

a tornado warning was issued for an observed tornado affecting our area around 2:30 AM – phones were out, making it impossible to warn neighbors, and it wasn't exactly prudent to go door-to-door right about then...

Things you might need to know

- Street reps are listed at <https://TrinidadWay.com>
- A hurricane can leave you trapped inside your house if debris clogs the exit. Be sure someone knows that you're planning to stay. [Your street reps will try to maintain a list, but they may leave...] Contact Ken Brown – while he's around, he'll have some duct tape to put on the outside of your garage doors. This will help identify people who are around, and we won't spend time "digging out" people who aren't.
- Disaster assistance is unlikely to arrive for three days.
- Wilma caused more flooding in the street than in the lakes, because the drains clogged. Time permitting, Ken will place markers at each drain, which are located near the oak trees (if they're standing) between the following homes:

1.	4017 / 4021	5 feet West
2.	4016 / 4020	5 feet West
3.	4056 / 4064	13 feet West
4.	4061 / 4065	14 feet East

If it's clogged, clean it – don't assume someone else will – but be aware of possible electrical hazards.

- ATM's, gas pumps, banks, and stores run on electricity – they won't be working.
- Flooding caused by rising water needs separate insurance coverage.
- Both regular and cell phone service can disappear.
- Don't expect to drive for a while – roads may be out.
- Power comes back in different sections of IslandWalk at different times – have a way to contact friends on other streets to obtain or provide assistance, even if you ride a bike or take a walk.
- A sharp knife can cut a screen panel in each side of your pool cage – it's cheaper to replace the screens than the entire cage. On the other hand, you might not want to do that unless the cage is in imminent danger 😊
- If you're OK, check your neighbor. They may not be.
- National Weather Service forecasts for storms, along with hourly graphs of predicted wind and rain conditions, can be found on the main page of the Trinidad Way web site:
<https://TrinidadWay.com>
- Post-storm coffee can often be found at the Browns', if we're (a) around, and (b) alive. Bring your own cup.
- Be an ant, or a Little Red Hen – don't be a grasshopper.

* This is edition #6, 26-Jun-2014. Contact Ken Brown if you have suggestions for revisions or additional information.