

Preparing for severe weather

Severe weather can arrive quickly and with little warning, bringing heavy rain, strong winds, hail, or even tornadoes. While storms cannot be prevented, homeowners can take practical steps to prepare their homes and reduce the risk of damage. A little preparation ahead of time can protect property, improve safety, and provide peace of mind when severe weather strikes.

One of the most important places to start is the roof. The roof serves as the home's primary shield against rain and wind. Loose shingles, damaged flashing, or clogged gutters can allow water to enter the home during a storm. Regular roof inspections can identify small problems before they turn into costly damage. Cleaning leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts helps ensure rainwater flows away from the house instead of pooling near the foundation.

Windows and doors are another vulnerable part of the home during severe weather. Strong winds can force rain through small gaps, and flying debris can break glass. Homeowners should check that weatherstripping and seals around windows and doors are in good condition. In areas that frequently experience severe storms, installing

storm shutters or impact-resistant windows can add an extra layer of protection.

The yard also plays a role in protecting a home during severe weather. Tree branches that hang over the roof or power lines can become dangerous when winds pick up. Trimming back weak or overgrown branches reduces the risk of them breaking and causing damage. Outdoor furniture, grills, and decorative items should also be secured or brought inside before storms arrive, as these objects can become airborne in strong winds.

Another important step is checking drainage around the home. Heavy rain can quickly lead to flooding if water does not have a place to go. Make sure downspouts direct water away from the foundation and that drainage areas remain clear of debris. In flood-prone areas, sump pumps and backflow valves can help prevent water from entering basements or crawl spaces.

Power outages are also common during severe weather, so having an emergency plan is essential. Keeping flashlights, batteries, bottled water, and a battery-powered radio on hand can make a significant difference if

electricity is lost. Some homeowners choose to install backup generators to maintain power for essential appliances during extended outages.

It is also wise to review homeowners insurance coverage before severe weather occurs. Understanding what types of storm damage are covered can help homeowners make informed decisions about additional protection if needed.

Finally, communication and awareness are key. Monitoring weather forecasts and signing up for local emergency alerts can provide valuable warning time before storms arrive. Knowing where to take shelter in the home, such as a basement or interior room away from windows, can help keep family members safe during dangerous conditions.

Preparing a home for severe weather does not require major renovations. Simple maintenance, thoughtful planning, and staying informed can greatly reduce risks. By taking proactive steps before storms arrive, homeowners can protect their property and ensure their families remain safer when severe weather threatens.



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