

Mitigation: What You Can Do Before A Disaster Occurs

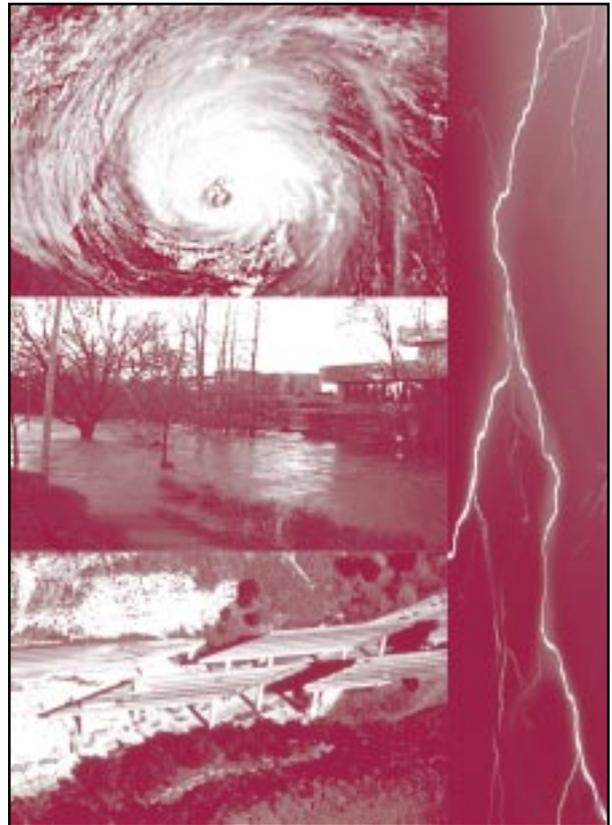
For More Information contact:
Your Local County
Emergency Preparedness Agency
OR

South Carolina Emergency
Preparedness Division

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www.state.sc.us/epd



Information Before The Emergency

MITIGATION

The term “mitigation” describes actions that can help reduce or eliminate your long-term risk from natural disasters. With mitigation, you can avoid losses and reduce your risk of becoming a disaster victim.

You can take many mitigation measures you to protect yourself, your home, or your business from losses.

FLOODING



Low-lying areas in South Carolina are subject to flooding, with river basins and coastal regions being particularly vulnerable. If you find out from your local emergency management office or Red Cross Chapter that you live in a flood-prone area, you should:

- Become familiar with flood warning signs and alert signals in your community.**
- Stockpile emergency building materials such as plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber, nails, shovels, hammer and saw, and sandbags.**
- Have the main breaker or fuse box and electrical meter in your home or business elevated above potential flood levels.**
- If your home has a basement and is prone to flooding, make sure that all valuables and appliances have been moved out.**
- Buy flood insurance to cover the value of your home and its contents. To learn more about flood insurance, contact your insurance company or agent, or contact the South Carolina National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator at (803) 734-9120.**

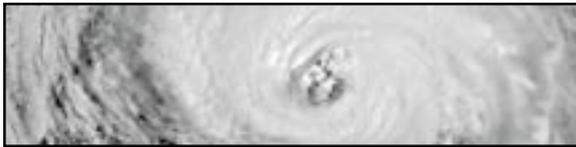
EARTHQUAKES



On August 31, 1886, the City of Charleston experienced the most damaging earthquake east of the Mississippi River in the United States. It killed approximately 110 people, damaged 90 percent of the homes and businesses in Charleston, and was felt over an area of 2.5 million square miles. South Carolina averages 10 earthquakes annually, with five of those felt by people. There is no doubt that South Carolina will continue to experience life threatening earthquakes. They have occurred in the past, and although we cannot predict them, they will occur in the future. To save lives and reduce property damage, you should:

- Ensure that your home is anchored to its foundation. Anchor bolts, which cost as little as \$2 a piece, should be installed every six feet around the perimeter.**
- Secure fixtures such as lights, ceiling tiles, cabinets, computers, and top-heavy objects to resist moving, coming loose, or falling during an earthquake.**
- Fasten the water heater to the wall. If a gas water heater is not secure and falls during an earthquake, the gas line may break and start a fire.**
- Check the electrical wiring and connections to gas appliances. Defective electrical wiring, leaking gas, or inflexible connections are hazardous.**
- Remove heavy and hazardous objects from high shelves, or secure them. Objects can be secured with heavy string, fastening fabric, wire, and screws.**

HURRICANES AND TORNADOES



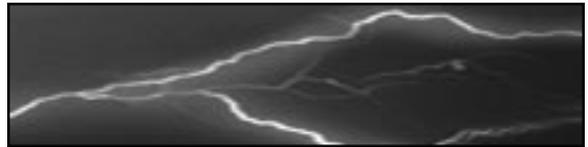
On September 10, 1989, Hurricane Hugo made landfall in Charleston, S.C., bringing with it wind gusts that remained near 100 mph as far inland as Charlotte, N.C. By the time the high tides, accompanying tornadoes, torrential rain, and floods had subsided, over \$6 billion in damage had been done to South Carolina. Despite many “close calls” since 1990, South Carolina remains very much at-risk from the effects of what have been called the “greatest storms on earth.”

Tornadoes are also an ever-present danger within the state. South Carolina averages more than 20 tornado touchdowns every year, and on average, one person is killed and nine are injured annually. From 1953 to 1992, 44 deaths were attributed to tornadoes and in 1995 some 54 tornadoes were reported in the Palmetto State.

To better mitigate against the effects of these dangerous hazards, you should:

- Have hurricane straps installed in your home to better secure the roof to the walls and foundation.**
- Ensure that adequate tie-downs are installed on manufactured homes.**
- Install and maintain storm shutters to protect all exposed windows and glass surfaces. Doing so will not only protect your home against wind, but will protect against flying debris as well.**
- Install tie-downs for outside utility buildings, fuel tanks, TV antennas and satellite dishes.**
- Have your home inspected by a building professional to ensure that at-risk areas are capable of withstanding high winds.**

LIGHTNING



Annually in South Carolina, lightning is responsible for more deaths than tornadoes and hurricanes combined. Because lightning can, and does, occur everywhere within the borders of South Carolina, the following steps should be taken to mitigate against, and prepare for, the effects of this dangerous, and often underrated hazard:

- Make sure that all electrical appliances not necessary to receive storm-related information are unplugged.**
- Install “surge protectors” to prevent possible damage to computers, television sets, and any other sensitive electronic appliances.**
- Do not handle any electrical appliances or telephones because lightning could follow the wire.**
- Avoid bathtubs, water faucets, and sinks because metal pipes can transmit electricity.**
- If outside, avoid tall structures, bodies of water, and natural lightning rods such as golf clubs, fishing rods, tractors, bicycles, or camping equipment.**

REMEMBER...

Most communities have building codes and ordinances designed to reduce your risk from all types of hazards. If you have questions concerning these local codes and ordinances and how they may impact mitigation efforts in your area, contact your local building official or your local emergency management agency.

For more information about hazard mitigation measures, contact the South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Division at (803) 734-8020, or visit our website at: www.state.sc.us/epd.