



FIELD GUIDE Nº 01
SOUTH FLORIDA
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A WELL KEPT PRO FIELD GUIDE

The South Florida Hurricane Season *Closeout Checklist.*

Every item your hurricane closet should hold before the season closes in — and a defensible reason for each one. Built for homes from West Palm Beach down through Broward County.

WELL KEPT PRO

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A HOME THAT BREATHES

PREFACE

One closet, prepared once, used quietly for six months.

Hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30. In South Florida, the difference between a stressful storm and a manageable one usually comes down to a single decision: did you set up the closet before the season started, or are you setting it up at the Publix on Tuesday with the rest of the county.

This guide is the closet, written out. Every item below earns its place. If we couldn't write a defensible reason for the item, we left it off the list. If your closet has things this list doesn't, that's fine — you've thought about it. If your closet is missing things this list has, that's the work for this weekend.

Items are organized by category. The order within each category roughly follows priority: top of the list goes in first, the bottom is nice-to-have. Use the checkboxes. Restock the closet on the last weekend of May, every year.

— *Well Kept Pro*

HOW TO USE THIS

Print it. Walk the closet with a pen. Check what's there, note what isn't, and shop the gaps in one trip. Refile this PDF in a kitchen drawer for next year.

IF YOU'RE A SNOWBIRD

The closet matters more, not less — an unattended home in a storm is a worst case. The last section addresses what to do before you fly out.

The supply that runs out first, every time.

Municipal water can be shut off, contaminated, or pressurized below safe levels for up to a week after a major storm. Boil-water notices commonly run 3–7 days even in undamaged neighborhoods.

One gallon of drinking water per person, per day — seven days minimum

FEMA's standard, and the figure South Florida utilities plan around. Covers drinking and basic hygiene. For a family of four, that's 28 gallons in the closet before the storm watch is issued.

Water purification tablets or a personal filter (LifeStraw or equivalent)

Backup when your stored supply runs out. Lets you safely drink rainwater, pool water, or unverified municipal water once it returns.

Two five-gallon containers, empty

Fill these and the bathtub before landfall, for flushing toilets and washing. Once water stops, the window for filling is gone.

One gallon per pet, per day

Dogs and cats dehydrate faster than people in a Florida home without air conditioning. Easy to forget until day three.

Unscented bleach, one gallon

Eight drops per gallon purifies questionable water. The same bottle handles surface sanitation and the first round of mold prep. Scented and splash-less varieties contain additives that aren't safe to drink.

Seven days, no cooking, no refrigeration.

Assume the power is off, the gas line is shut, and you cannot open the refrigerator past day two without spoiling its contents. Everything in this section is shelf-stable, requires no fuel, and travels if you have to evacuate.

Canned tuna, chicken, beans, and soup

Shelf-stable protein. No cooking, no refrigeration. Look for pop-top lids in case the can opener walks off.

Manual can opener

The single most-forgotten item in every hurricane kit. Cans without an opener are decorative.

Peanut butter, one large jar

Calorie-dense, doesn't need refrigeration after opening, eaten by every age group. Quietly carries a family through a long outage.

Shelf-stable UHT milk, four cartons

Months of shelf life unopened. Saves coffee, cereal, and the patience of anyone under ten in your home.

Energy and granola bars, one box per person

Grab-and-go calories if you have to evacuate suddenly. They also bridge the awkward middle of the day when no one wants to open another can of beans.

Crackers, dried fruit, and nuts

Snacks. Morale drops faster than blood sugar in a hot, dark house. Sealed packaging keeps pests out during storage.

Electrolyte powder or tablets

Heat exhaustion is the most common post-storm medical issue in South Florida. Plain water alone doesn't replace what you sweat out cleaning up a yard in August.

Paper plates, plastic utensils, paper cups

No dishwashing when water is rationed. Reduces waste of your stored supply.

How you stay informed when the grid goes quiet.

FPL restoration after a major hurricane has historically taken three days for most customers and up to two weeks for the worst-hit areas. Your closet should assume the longer end.

LED lanterns, one per room you'll occupy

Candles cause house fires. Insurance carriers see a measurable spike in fire claims in the days after every major Florida storm. LED lanterns light a whole room safely and run for days on a set of batteries.

Headlamps, one per person

Hands-free light for cleanup, cooking, and finding things at 2 a.m. Worth twice what they cost.

Flashlight at every bedside

If you wake up to a noise or a leak, the light needs to be within arm's reach, not in the closet down the hall.

Spare batteries: AA, AAA, D

Sized to match the lights, fans, and radio you actually own. Batteries expire; rotate the closet's stock every spring.

Portable power bank, 20,000 mAh or larger

Your phone is the radio, the map, the camera for insurance, and the lifeline to family. A multi-day outage will drain it repeatedly. One large bank charges a modern phone four to five times.

Hand-crank or solar NOAA weather radio

Cell towers fail. AM/FM stations sometimes go off the air. NOAA Weather Radio is engineered to be the last broadcast standing, and a crank model needs no batteries to keep working.

Glow sticks, a pack of twelve

Child-safe ambient light. No batteries. Useful for marking exits, stair edges, and the bathroom door in a flooded or unfamiliar dark home.

Spare phone charging cables — USB-C and Lightning

Cheap and easy to lose. One frayed cable shouldn't take your phone offline at the worst possible moment.

12V car USB charger

Once it's safe to sit in the car, your vehicle becomes a generator for charging phones, lanterns, and battery packs. The car charger is the bridge.

Battery-powered or hand-crank fan

South Florida heat plus no air conditioning is heat-illness territory inside 24 hours. Moving air drops felt temperature meaningfully and helps everyone sleep.

The first 72 hours, you treat yourself.

Hospitals triage to life-threatening cases after a major storm. Urgent cares close, then reopen on generators with long lines. The closet handles everything below stitches.

Comprehensive first aid kit

Bandages, antiseptic, gauze, tape, butterfly closures, scissors, tweezers, thermometer. The kind sold for hiking expeditions, not the kind sold for paper cuts.

Fourteen-day supply of every prescription

Pharmacies close. Supply chains break. Florida law allows early refills before a declared storm if you ask — do it the week the National Hurricane Center names a system.

Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, antihistamines, antacids

Stress, heat, dehydration, and unfamiliar food cause the same predictable issues every year. Stock the closet for adults and, separately, for any children in the house.

Insect repellent, DEET 25% or higher

Standing water after a storm produces a mosquito boom inside 72 hours. South Florida has seen recent cases of dengue, EEE, and West Nile in bad seasons. Stronger repellent matters here than it does up north.

Sunscreen, SPF 30 or higher

Cleanup happens outdoors, often for full days, often without an air-conditioned break to retreat to. Sunburn on top of dehydration is how people end up at urgent care.

N95 masks, a box

Mold spores and pulverized debris dust in the days after a storm cause respiratory issues in healthy people and serious ones in anyone with asthma. Wear them during any indoor cleanup of a wet building.

Spare reading glasses

Medication instructions, breaker labels, and battery markings are small print. The glasses you wear daily will be misplaced precisely when you need them.

EpiPen, inhaler, or other emergency-use prescription — double-stocked

If anyone in the household relies on one, the closet holds a spare. The original lives where it always does; the closet's copy is for the moment the original is in someone's bag in the car they had to abandon.

The first repair is always temporary.

A FEMA blue tarp can take two to six weeks to arrive after a major storm. The closet covers the time between the wind dying down and a real contractor showing up.

Leather work gloves, two pairs

Debris cleanup involves nails, glass, and jagged metal. Nitrile gloves and gardening gloves shred on contact. Leather is the only material that holds up.

Multi-tool

One tool for ten jobs. Lives in the closet so it doesn't get buried in a toolbox in the garage you can't get to.

Heavy-duty contractor trash bags, one box

Wrap wet electronics, line a leaking ceiling, seal a broken window from inside, haul out drywall, double as a poncho. The hardest-working item in the closet.

Duct tape, two rolls

Temporary patches on screens, tarps, plumbing, shoes, and the cracked corner of the kid's drinking cup that you'll be using for a week.

Two 20×30 ft tarps

Roof damage needs immediate cover or the next afternoon thunderstorm finishes what the hurricane started. Two tarps cover most single-family roofs.

Bungee cords and 100 ft of paracord

Secure tarps against the wind, lash debris before it walks, improvise a clothesline. Paracord is rated for hundreds of pounds and weighs nothing.

Whistle, one per person

If you're trapped, a whistle carries farther than a voice and lasts longer. Three short blasts is the universal distress signal.

ABC-class fire extinguisher

Generator fires and candle fires are the leading post-storm property loss causes in Florida every season. One extinguisher in the closet, one in the kitchen.

Portable, battery-powered carbon monoxide detector

Generators kill more people than the storm itself in most Florida hurricane seasons. Even when run outside, exhaust can drift into a window. The detector tells you when it has.

Closed-toe shoes for every person, pre-packed

Cleanup involves nails and glass. You don't want to be looking for shoes in the dark after waking up to broken windows. Sized for kids who've grown since last June.

One pouch that goes with you in any evacuation.

The fastest insurance claims are the ones filed in the first 48 hours, with photos and policy numbers ready. The slowest are the ones that wait for documents pulled from a wet filing cabinet.

Waterproof document pouch or dry bag

One container that lives in the closet and leaves the house with you in any evacuation. Everything below lives inside it.

Insurance policies: homeowners, flood, auto, life, umbrella

Claim numbers, adjuster contacts, and your declarations page need to be reachable within hours of the storm passing — not days.

Photo and video inventory of every room

Insurance carriers require it for major claims. Walk every room with your phone, narrate model and brand for high-value items, save to the cloud and to a thumb drive that lives in the pouch.

Copies of IDs, passports, and Social Security cards

For shelters, FEMA assistance, and replacing originals if the house is lost. Make new copies every two years; old photocopies fade.

Property deed, mortgage statement, vehicle titles

Required for claims, refinancing after damage, and proving ownership for FEMA grants. Originals stay in the safe; copies live in the pouch.

Medical records and prescription list

Lets any pharmacy out of state fill your prescriptions if you evacuate. Lets any ER understand your history in five minutes instead of fifty.

Cash, \$300 or more, in small bills

ATMs and card readers fail in outages. Gas stations with generators usually take cash only. Vendors can't make change for hundreds, so stock twenties and below.

Printed contact list

Family, doctor, vet, insurance agent, property manager, pharmacy, school. Your phone will die, and your contacts live in the cloud you can't reach.

The small comforts that hold a household together.

Trash pickup stops. Water gets rationed. The supplies that feel unromantic in the closet are the supplies you remember on day four.

Toilet paper, more than you think

First item to disappear from shelves before any named storm in Florida. Overstocking it costs almost nothing and prevents the most predictable household stress of the entire outage.

Baby wipes and adult wet wipes

Bathing without running water. Cleaning hands before eating when soap and water aren't an option.

Hand sanitizer, multiple bottles

Hygiene drops in outages. Infection risk rises with any cut from debris cleanup. One bottle by the door, one by the kitchen, one in the bathroom.

Feminine hygiene products

Same shortage logic as toilet paper. Plan for a full cycle plus a buffer for anyone in the household.

Travel-size toiletries, sealed

Toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant. If you have to evacuate to a shelter or a relative's home, you don't want to be packing toiletries while loading the car.

Small scented trash bags

Garbage collection stops for days, sometimes more than a week. Sealing waste indoors keeps the house livable and the smell controlled in 90-degree heat without air conditioning.

The hours between the wind and the all-clear.

Most of the closet is for after the storm. This category is for during. Three days without screens, lights, or routine is long, especially for kids, pets, and anyone who lives by a schedule.

Books, card decks, and board games

Three days with no power is long. Quiet activities reduce household conflict and help children sleep. Choose games that work in low light by lantern.

A small dedicated flashlight for each child

Fear of the dark is real in actual darkness. A child's own light, that turns on with one button, takes a surprising amount of stress out of a long night.

Lightweight blanket per person, sealed

Public shelters run cold from heavy A/C. At home, even without A/C, humid air gets clammy at night. A blanket helps either way.

One full change of clothes per person, sealed in a zip-top bag

Stays dry through a flooded laundry room. You will thank yourself for this on day two.

Pet food, seven days, sealed

Pet food disappears from shelves before human food. Seal in a plastic tote to keep pests out during the months of off-season storage.

Pet vaccination records, in the document pouch

Required at most evacuation shelters that accept pets, and at all boarding facilities if you have to leave the animal behind.

Pet carrier, leash, ID tags

Evacuation orders come fast. You don't want to be chasing a cat around the living room with the bands picking up.

Pet medications, 14-day supply

Vets close. Refills are slow. The same logic that covers human prescriptions applies to the animals.

Recent photos of each pet with a household member

Proves ownership if pets get separated, and makes effective lost-pet flyers on the spot.

IF YOU'RE CLOSING THE HOME FOR THE SEASON

The week before you fly out: top off the closet, photograph every room, file a copy of your insurance with your property manager, leave a key with a trusted neighbor, set the A/C to 78°F with the fan on auto, shut the main water valve, unplug what isn't essential, and confirm shutter or impact-glass coverage on every opening. The closet does the rest while you're gone.

*A home that **breathes** — even during the six months it isn't supposed to.*

FROM WELL KEPT PRO

If the closet still feels like a project, we'll build it with you.

Well Kept Pro opens this summer in South Florida, serving homes from West Palm Beach down through Broward County. We organize hurricane closets the same way we organize pantries, garages, and primary closets: once, properly, with a system that holds.

WELLKEPTPRO.COM · HELLO@WELLKEPTPRO.COM



This field guide is informational and reflects general best practice for South Florida homes. It is not a substitute for guidance from your insurance carrier, local emergency management office, or the National Hurricane Center. For declared storms, follow instructions from Palm Beach County or Broward County emergency management.