



KNOW YOUR UTILITIES

Disaster Series: What To Do to Prepare for Disasters
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Available in English & Spanish
UF/IFAS Miami-Dade
County Extension Resources

Fact Sheet
Publication year: 2023

Gas

- Locate your gas meter shut off valve and learn how to turn the gas off.
- Call your utility company for a operational check of the gas valve, specially if you suspect that the shutoff valve may be corroded and not working properly.
- If you smell natural gas, get everyone out and away from the home immediately.
- Do not use matches, lighters, and open-flame appliances or operate electrical switches.
- Call the gas company from a phone outside of the home or building. If you can, shut off the gas at the main valve outside. Let the gas company turn the gas back on.
- Seek the assistance of a plumber to repair gas pipe damage.

Electricity

- Locate your main electrical switch or fuse panel and learn how to turn off the electrical power.
- If you are using a generator as a backup power supply, remember to: Make sure the portable generator is properly grounded.
- Connect the portable generator directly to the appliances to be powered using approved and properly sized power cords – do not attach to existing house wiring.
- Operate portable generators outside the home or building, away from flammable materials, children, and pets.
- Never add fuel when a generator is running; turn it off and let it cool first.
- Have generators connected to a utility company's electrical system inspected by the utility and the state electrical inspector.

Sewer

- Your sewer system could be damaged during a disaster. Make sure the system is functioning as designed before using it to prevent contamination of your home and possibly the drinking water supply.
- Have a bucket or portable toilet available for disposing of human waste. Plastic bags placed in the toilet bowl will also work.

Sources:

- [HUD Exchange.](#)
- [Housing Counseling Disaster Recovery Tool Kit](#)
- [Ready.gov](#)
- [FEMA.gov](#)

Water

- Label the water shutoff valve and learn to turn off the water supply to your home.
- If the shutoff valve is located outside of the home in buried housing, keep all debris out of the housing and keep the housing covered.
- Ensure that the valve can be fully turned off. If the water valve requires the use of a special tool, make sure the tool is readily available. The valve should be turned off and on several times a year to verify proper operation.

Note: Renters may need to work with their landlord to shut off utilities.

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