

# FORREST LAKE TOWNHOMES



## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 5

Paula Williamson, Editor ([FLNewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:FLNewsletter@yahoo.com))

June 30, 2010

### Security Corner

Ken Barker

Considering the high rate of crime in the area surrounding Forrest Lake (FL), our community currently has few incidents to report. Does this mean that we are immune from what goes on around us? No, and unless we maintain our vigilance and are prepared to make that call to HPD and our own security officers when we see or hear anything suspicious, then we and our neighbors may also quickly join the distressing number of local crime victims. For law enforcement and security personnel to learn about a problem two days later does not help the situation one bit, so make that call immediately.

Of particular relevance is the increased rate of juvenile gang activities and this unfortunately may get an unwelcome boost as several of the new owners of apartment complexes in our area are, in order to reduce costs, cutting back on their own security operations and also on the youth programs that provide such a valuable outlet for children and teenagers during the school vacations. Near Northwest's "Weed and Seed Program" is endeavoring to fill some of these new activity needs in other ways, but we can be sure that idle hands will still find many illegal things to do.

In Forrest Lake we are now back to our full strength of two security officers, and are beginning an extensive proactive safety orientation program guided by a deputy from the Precinct One Constables Office. Watch for more about this program next month.

Many members of the Greater Inwood Partnership (GIP) and other local organizations visited the City's council meeting earlier this month to protest the slow progress in the demolition of several abandoned apartment complexes in our area. These havens for high crime activities were slated for removal but legal problems to achieve this still persist.



### Important Phone Numbers

Office Manager ( <i>Cheryl</i> ) .....	713-681-3591
Property Manager ( <i>Pokey</i> ) .....	713-956-6236
Security .....	713-201-5656
Emergency (Life Threatening) .....	911
Houston Police Dept. (non-emergency) .....	713-884-3131
City of Houston (Loose dog pickup) .....	713-222-3501

#### Board Members:

Earline Soteras .....	713-688-3730
Ken Barker .....	713-681-1115
Elva Bryant .....	713-688-5807
Stephanie Rush .....	713-812-1080
Bob Wharton .....	713-680-8377

#### Maintenance (for after-hours appointments)

Francisco .....	713-409-4820
Willie .....	713-828-2428
Nahun .....	713-202-7148
Omar .....	713-818-4738

### Neighborhood News:

- Speedy recovery to **Tommye Barker** who is recuperating at home following surgery. We know she is going stir crazy and hope she is feeling like herself soon!
- We are also wishing a speedy recovery to **Betty Franklin** who is home following a surgical procedure.
- Welcome new neighbor, **John McCormick**, who has purchased #26! He is an engineer and has a 5-year old son, **Amon**.
- **Toni Troxell** and her daughter, **Trisha**, has gone to Pensacola, Florida, to visit her grandson in the military before his tour of duty in Afghanistan.
- **John Weining** recently returned from the casinos, but no one knows whether his luck was good or bad. He's keeping that information to himself!
- **Marga Oliver** is keeping the road hot. She visited lifelong friends in Port Arthur and has just returned from a visit to Royce City where she spent time with her daughter and that precious great-grandson!
- Has anyone seen **Bill Smith**? He must be in hiding.



### FYI:

Earline Soteras

- **Garner Bluhm**, our day guard, helped Mrs. Craft (#212) get rid of a snake in her home. He helped Mr. Hester (#23) with an internal water leak. Good job, Garner!
- The Maintenance Department would like to extend its thanks to Mr. **John Mitsherling** for his expertise in repairing an air condition line that was damaged when work was being done in the rear of a building,. We also thank him for his donation of valuable equipment to the Maintenance Department. Again, thanks, John!
- When you see a notice of repair scheduled for your building, please leave your patio gates open. If you do not do so, Maintenance people cannot do scheduled repairs.
- If you think you have foundation problems, please contact a foundation company. Remember, the foundation is your responsibility – not Forrest Lake's.
- We are looking for ways to repair the cracks in the concrete on the sidewalks. Remember, we can repair but they will return to the way they were because of the trees we have.

## Front Yards/Common Areas

We will be evaluating the property and removing dead shrubs from the freeze during the winter. Hopefully we are now past any more freezes. Many of the plants will recover, so we do plan to give them the time to do so before removing everything that appears to be dead. If you have flowers or shrubs in front of your townhouse you planted and are now sure they are dead and want them removed, please contact Elva at 713-688-5807.

Please also be aware that all plantings placed in your FRONT yards become property of Forrest Lake and are maintained by Forrest Lake as stated in the by-laws. We ask that you take the time to trim your plants so that they not block your front windows and door. The Landscaper will not trim your blooming plantings, but we do ask that you keep them neatly trimmed. The Landscaper will trim where needed to maintain where plants have become neglected.

**Forrest Lake Legal Documents state:** 1.02. No person shall commence, or permit or cause the commencement of (a) the destruction (in whole or in part) of any Townhouse or the construction, erection or placement of any other or additional improvement or structure, permanent - or temporary, or a change (structural or non-structural) on a Townhouse Site or within a Townhouse, (e) the planting, rearrangement or alteration of any trees, shrubs, bushes, hedges, flowerbeds or any other type of garden or decorative vegetation on a "Townhouse Site (other than in interior patio areas) or elsewhere on the Property

## ARTICLE 4- COMMON OPEN AREA

4.03. No Owner shall ever deface, destroy, cut, remove or injure, or permit any of his family or guests to deface, destroy, cut, remove or injure, any improvement or any trees, shrubs, bushes, hedges or flowers situated upon or planted in or growing upon the Common Open Area.

## Yard Watering

The following townhouses have an irrigation system in the front yards and you will not need to water during the spring and summer months. If you feel your area is not getting sufficient, please notify either Maintenance or Elva. We have checked the sprinklers and have found them to all be in working condition. We do have a few adjustments to make to be sure they are reaching some isolated corners.

**Townhouses with irrigation are:** Units 1-5 and the south side of unit 1; Units 20-36, including all common areas; Units 76-85; Units 103-111 and all common areas along West Tidwell; Units 112-124 and the east side of unit 133; Units 223-228, including the common areas on the sides and in the fronts of these units; Units 229-243 and all the common areas next to and in front of these units.

All grassy areas have been fertilized. It has been brought to our attention that some homeowners are still fertilizing their yards. Please be advised that you risk burning the grass. Our Landscaper fertilizes twice a year and also puts down ant killer. The ant killer is designed to last a year, but we are finding it necessary to use twice a year.

Any areas not covered by irrigation, we ask that you take the time to give the yard in front of your home and the near common area a drink of water when times get dry. If you do water please take the time to deep water. Once or twice a week for 30 minutes to an hour is better than several times a week for 15 minutes. **If you are in need of a hose and sprinkler, please notify Maintenance or Elva.**

**Present:** Ken Barker, Earline Soteras, Elva Bryant, Stephanie Rush, and Bob Wharton

Earline Soteras called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Minutes of the April meeting were approved.

**Treasurer:** There is an YTD loss of \$31,317. The majority stems from the nonpayment of maintenance fees by homes in foreclosure. Below is the breakdown:

	<u>Budget YTD</u> 4/30/10	<u>Actual YTD</u> 4/30/10
<u>Total Income</u>	\$445,375	\$444,214
<u>Total Expense</u>	\$431,725	\$446,371
<u>Net Surplus</u>		
<u>before Appropriations</u>	\$ 13,650	\$ (2,157)
<u>Total Appropriations</u>	\$ 29,160	\$ 29,160
<u>Surplus to General Fund</u>	\$(15,510)	\$(31,317)

**Maintenance:** The crew is currently working on the back of townhomes. We are installing new gutters along with the repairs.

**Landscape:** Calls are being made weekly to the Harris County Flood Control regarding the mowing of the land along Cole Creek. Until the County starts moving the grass, Forrest Lake will have it cut up to twice a month. Trees have been planted throughout the property replacing some we lost in Hurricane Ike. Letters will go out in response to homeowner's questions on trees in different areas of the property.

**Security:** A change has been made by ABM regarding the Security Officers working at Forrest Lake. Wayne has been transferred to another ABM site. ABM will make a suitable replacement.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** An Open Forum Meeting will be held on May 27, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the Club Room. N W Management will have a meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup> for hurricane preparedness. We will renew the flood insurance on the common property.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectively submitted,

*Bob Wharton*, Secretary

## **Reminder About Our Website:** [www.forrestlake.com](http://www.forrestlake.com)

To view the newsletter in color and save pictures, go to the Forrest Lake website, [www.forrestlake.com](http://www.forrestlake.com). Although the pagination is sometimes off, the photos in color make a real difference. You may also find bylaws and other information on the website. Bookmark it and return to read it each month. **Ollie Perry**, former FL resident and Board member, is our webmaster and he does a great job of keeping it up to date for us!



**4<sup>th</sup> of July  
Independence Day**

# Letters to the Editor:

May22, 2010

Dear Editor,

This is the 2nd time one our maintenance crew has been asked to not dump and clean painting tools on the grass. This needs to be addressed to correct the practice. I invest 300 dollars each month to maintain the exterior appearance of the community. In addition my neighbor and I personally invested 80 dollars to repair damage due to the hurricane two years ago and the freeze this past winter. I also water the grass in the courtyard area since we have no working irrigation system, all these efforts, time, and money are to improve the look of the bushes and grass. When the maintenance crew deliberately dumps debris onto the grass and bushes it demonstrates that they no longer work to care for our property as more to take our money.

As board members you are charged to be stewards of the communal resources, representing homeowners first. Don't allow levels of comfort judge your decision making.

**Ron Watts**

~~~~~

May 27, 2010

Ron,

Sorry that this didn't make the May Newsletter. It will be printed in the next one. I am forwarding this to the Board so that they can have the opportunity to reply.

Paula

~~~~~

May 27, 2010

Paula,

Thank you for acknowledging my article. The board has a copy and has not responded to the concern. I am upset in that the newsletter is becoming a tool of propaganda for Ken Barker and Earline Soteras. This "elephant" of ineffective maintenance and security continues to be shoved under the carpet. We need a reduction of costs that are no longer efficient nor effective; but there exist a conflict of interest developed in both the maintenance crew and the security (especially Garland) with the two aforementioned board members. I feel that the board will respond with an over abundance of rhetoric as Earline demonstrated in the last newsletter.

**Ron**

Ron,

Everyone in Forrest Lake is invited to submit articles, letters, or questions for the newsletter. Ken Barker, who is the Board member responsible for security and finance, is commended for submitting a financial report and security information on a monthly basis. He has done this every since I began writing the newsletter in 2003. Earline Soteras has begun submitting an FYI column regarding maintenance issues several issues ago. Elva Bryant submits information regarding landscape when relevant. Minutes of board meetings submitted by Bob Wharton are printed in the newsletter at the request of residents who find it difficult to read the minutes posted in the mailroom behind the glass because they are too high. All letters (unless slanderous) are printed. The newsletter is NOT "a tool of propaganda" as you assert for anyone.

-pw

~~~~~

May 28, 2010

Hi Paula:

Thanks for your participation in our lovely community. I enjoy the newsletter.

Here is a response to the meeting last night. Would you please publish it in the newsletter. Thank you.

**Virginia Lee**

FLTA Homeowners:

As a homeowner of Forrest Lake, I felt the Town Hall meeting was very poorly managed, and therefore, little was accomplished other than a lot of venting. I must give credit to the volunteer board members who really work tirelessly on behalf of all of us. I do appreciate what you do. Having a town hall meeting can be very productive if conducted properly. We can disagree and still be civil.

There was a lot of bullying by Mr. Barker and Mr. Elswick last night that was unacceptable. The homeowners were talked down to, reprimanded and scolded as if they were children. It would behoove the board to hire a parliamentarian to help conduct the meeting as it was clearly out of the scope of anyone trying to take charge last night. Bullying accomplishes nothing. Stonewalling accomplishes nothing.

I think it is fair to say that the homeowners want some answers about the money spent. I, for one, feel there our labor costs are questionable. We need to LOOK at those costs and justify each and every employee on staff. Do we REALLY need an office person? Why do we need someone sitting in the office? Accounts Receivable/Acct's Payable can be outsourced for a LOT less than we currently pay for staff. It is not a leasing office.

Do we NEED four maintenance men and a supervisor? And, I understand FLTA pays 100% insurance for all employees. All the extras, taxes, worker's comp, etc., usually amount to another 25% on top of their wages. That's a HUGE bite out of our maintenance fees. SURELY there is no-one who would object to considering alternatives. I am not suggesting outsourcing the maintenance. We just need to look at things realistically.

FLTA Homeowners want and expect security. FLTA Homeowners want to maintain our lovely environment; yet the homeowners do not want continued escalation of their maintenance fees. Therefore it behooves us to look at ways to CUT expenses by looking at other options for handling our lovely community.

Mr. Barker should be commended for serving on the FLTA board for as long as he has, but it may well be time for him to step down. As well intentioned as he may be, his attitude is indefensible. His unwillingness to look at alternative programs or ideas makes it evident it is time for him to retire from the board. Gosh, he's been on the board for at LEAST ten years. From the attitude he displayed at the town hall meeting, I feel for the other board members. Sometimes it is just a good idea to have new people to come in, with new ideas that would help our community, just as efficiently as this current regime. As homeowners, we all have a vote on who will serve on the FLTA board. Please pay attention to the nominees. We need some new blood and new ideas. This is a Year for CHANGE. Please vote this September.

**Virginia Lee**

Virginia,

Thank you for your concern and for expressing your points of view. I appreciate your reminder to residents regarding the importance of voting for board members who represent and make decisions for you. Very few people ever file to run for a position on the Board. Last year is the first year that I can remember in several years that anyone ran against one of the incumbents. It is a thankless job which requires a lot of personal time and attention and puts those who are willing to serve in a position where no matter what they do, they can't satisfy everyone. Information regarding filing for a position on the Board will be published in the next newsletter; perhaps you might be interested in running.

-pw

~~~~~

June 1, 2010

Hi Paula,

It is with great pleasure that I am announcing my marriage to Kerry Rock on May 14, 2010. Kerry has moved into my home at Forrest Lake, and has got me on the tennis courts.

Warm regards,  
**Ruth Seiler Rock**

Dear Ruth and Kerry,

Congratulations on your marriage. Kerry, welcome to our community; we will all look forward to meeting you!

-pw

~~~~~

June 21, 2010

Forrest Lake Residents,

My name is Mary Bird. I am a homeowner and resident in Forrest Lake. I live here and do not work here. I have never said I represent any company. It interests me to know that I upset someone so very much when I have an opinion different from his or her own. I have no business dealings with Forrest Lake except as a resident.

I do feel anyone spending the money for Forrest Lake should spend it wisely. Spending more money for something does not always mean it is of better quality.

Regards,

*Mary Bird*

~~~~~

June 23, 2010

Hi Paula,

I was wondering if, when you put your next newsletter out, would you please put in there that I am not taking coupons anymore. Anyone that wants to take this on can do so, or anyone wanting to still give coupons can drop them at *The Leader* on T C Jester. Tell all the folks thanks for the years they have done this.

Thank you so much.

*Sylvia Busey*

~~~~~

June 24, 2010

FLTA:

I would like to commend Garner (security). I don't know what I would have done without his help. I've never felt so helpless. Monday night I returned home from work only to find a huge disaster. Apparently my upstairs toilet bowl broke and created a flood upstairs and was flooding through my living room ceiling. I couldn't turn the knob on the toilet and didn't know where the turn off valve was for the house. In a panic I called Security (hoping Garner was there) – my prayers were answered and Garner came to save my beautiful new home. He turned off the water to the house, then the knob on the toilet.

I have grown to love Garner in the 9 months I've been here. He follows me home from work at night to see me safely home which means so much to me. I miss Wayne escorting me home at night. The new guy is nowhere to be seen – not once. We need more caring and helpful people like Garner (and Wayne.) I know I appreciate him, even more now, as I know the other residents do also.

Thanks for taking care of us!

*Debbie Hester*

~~~~~

## Fitness and Fun at Forrest Lake

Most people would not put the words Fun and Fitness in the same sentence. My goal as Fitness Trainer here in Forrest Lake is to try to bring **fun** to your exercise program. If there was more pleasure in exercise, we might be able to get ourselves up off the couch and into some form of exercise activity.

Here are just a few benefits we can receive from exercise:

- Laughter - Works your abdominals and facial muscles. Laughter also is one of the best anti-depressants.
- Connection – Works your social muscles. Make new friends and have fun with current ones.
- Better Sleep – Exercise helps us relieve stresses in our lives that impede a good night's sleep.
- Improved balance – Which makes daily living much easier and safer
- Relief from arthritic pain - Movement helps this condition
- Straighter posture – Which can also relieve neck and back pain
- Stronger lungs, heart, and bones – The body needs movement
- Weight loss – Which also then helps decrease diabetes, high blood pressure and improves many many problems

So, why not join one or more of the activities offered here and have some Fun?

**Please note two schedule changes below:**

**Monday Noon – Sit 'n Fit 12 noon – 12:45PM.** Please register ahead for this class at phone # below.

**Tuesday Morning– Aqua Fitness 9:30 - 10:30AM – NOTE EARLIER TIME** (it's not quite so hot)

**NEW CLASS : Wednesday Evening– Aqua Fitness - 6:30 - 7:30PM** (replaces the Walk 'n Boot Camp)

**Saturday Morning – Aqua Fitness 9:00 -10:00AM**

## **YOUR FIRST CLASS IS FREE**

For Information or Questions –  
Call or Email **Jeannie Hughes**  
(Forrest Lake homeowner since 1999)  
713/906-8348  
[yesfitness@sbcglobal.net](mailto:yesfitness@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.yesfitnesstraining.com](http://www.yesfitnesstraining.com)

### **Submissions for Q & A**

Residents are encouraged to submit questions about matters concerning Forrest Lake and the Board member responsible for that matter will respond in the newsletter. So few people attend the Town Hall meetings that responses to community questions only get circulated by word of mouth and sometimes are misinterpreted. Please send your questions by e-mail to [FLNewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:FLNewsletter@yahoo.com) or you may place them in the suggestion box in the mailroom or drop them by the office and Cheryl will forward them to the Board.

# Q and A to the Board:

**Q:** Re: Suggestion re online payments

Has it ever been discussed to have online payments for the monthly dues? I know it's more quick and convenient for the tenant, but it's also a faster form of payment for the Association as well.

*Kerra Turner*

**A:** Dear Kerra,

We have received your email of May 27 from Paula Williamson (Newsletter Editor) and respond as follows:

The on-line payments method is already used by many Forrest Lake (FL) homeowners to make regular and timely payments of their monthly maintenance fees. Individual banks have different names for this procedure but basically the way it works is that the FL home owner makes arrangements with their bank to pay FL an agreed amount on an agreed day for an agreed length of time. On that date, their bank then debits their account and sends a conformation (actually a check) by mail to the FL office where it is treated just like a standard check and processed through our Quick Book financial system. Their payment ends up being deposited in our bank usually in a matter of a day or two. This system gives FL an immediate advice that a maintenance fee has been made on time by a specific unit.

There is another system used by many commercial organizations that allows a direct transfer to be made from an individual homeowners account direct to a receiving account at another bank where it is credited. Again, the name for this type of transaction varies from bank to bank, but the practice is basically the same. This system is not very applicable to FL operations as it normally does not provide to us any immediate advice that the transfer has taken place and requires our checking to establish the situation each month.

We accept the first method bank transfer and encourage FL homeowners to use it, but the second method is not acceptable.

Many thanks for your suggestion.

Sincerely,  
Forrest Lake Board of Directors

**Q:** Re: Shopping carts in 6100 block of W. Tidwell

I would like to have the shopping carts along the 6100 block of W. Tidwell pick up....these carts are an eye sore for our community... Thank you

*Rose McGill*



**A:** Dear Rose:

As always, many thanks for your timely action regarding the shopping carts. They pop up with monotonous regularity and are such a visual blight on our neighborhood. I think you are fairly well up to date on related area matters from copies of the input we get from the Greater Inwood Partnership (GIP) and the Near Northwest Management District (NNMD), but as you so well know delays abound in many programs and progress towards improvement is patchy. This is particularly evident in the slow eradication of the abandoned apartments on DeSoto that are such havens for crime.

We are also watching development on the vacant site adjacent to the car lot across Tidwell from FL. This has now been cleared of all the trash that previously cluttered up that site but it is now being shown as being for sale or lease so who knows (with Houston's lack of zoning) what the future might hold.

Rose, we much appreciate all the good work that you do on behalf of our neighborhood and just wish there were many more like you in our community.

*Ken*

## Response from City of Houston:

From: Brown, Tonia - 311 [mailto: Tonia.Brown@houston.tx.gov]  
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2010 12:17 PM  
To: 'Rose McGill'  
Subject: RE: Shopping carts in 6100 block of W. Tidwell

Thank you for contacting us. Service Request number 10-00199344 has been forwarded to the appropriate department for investigation.

For further information regarding this request, please dial 311 (note: some areas of Houston must dial the full 10-digit number 713-837-0311), or e-mail us at [311@cityofhouston.net](mailto:311@cityofhouston.net) refer to the service request number above, and one of our Customer Service Representatives will be happy to assist you.

## Forrest Lake and Realtors

*This article appeared in the Newsletter some months ago. Sadly, some FL homeowners either did not read it or choose to ignore its recommendations. As a result, we still get new realtors arriving at the FL office with little knowledge of the unique characteristics and requirements that apply in our community and with a host of unrealistic demands for paperwork that does not apply to townhouses. In some cases they even want to contest the difference between a condo and a townhouse house. All this is very time consuming and stressful, and usually results in irritating delays in concluding a sale. Luckily we do have a handful of realtors working in FL who are very familiar with what is required and the selling transition usually goes very smoothly in these cases if we could only get all prospective FL sellers to use them*

*For this reason I think a repeat of this article might be useful.*

**Ken Barker**

Sooner or late (and we hope it will be later) every Forrest Lake (FL) owner will, for one reason or another, eventually desire or need to sell their property. Big decisions are involved, and not least on which realtor to use. From our experience with realtors involved with FL sales over the last 10 years we have found that many of those selected are very unfamiliar with FL and the unique conditions that apply to the sale of a townhouse in our community. Due to its complexity, this has led to in some cases to delays in the house sale, and even surprises for the owner and the new buyer when the transfer of ownership actually takes place. The selection of a realtor is always the owner's decision, but we suggest that it might be useful for you first to check with the FL office on those realtors who have considerable operating experience with FL and who have been particularly successful in the selling property in our community.



## FINANCIAL NEWS

Ken Barker

Seven months into our Fiscal 2010 year and the Year to Date (YTD) numbers (see below) show a small improvement over last month. We anticipate that this trend will continue through the remainder of this fiscal year. Matters to keep in mind are that Forrest Lake is not immune to the general increases in the local cost of goods and services. Of particular concern to us are some of the areas where we do not have any choice but to pay the going rate. Water and Sewer services provided in bulk to us by the City are a good example and where we have seen significant rises in the rates charged. Your Board continues to examine carefully all opportunities for cost reductions but we are very much aware that many of the services we use every day are vital to the appearance and general well being of our community, and its residents, and even small changes can have a very large impact.

	Budget YTD thru 5-30-10	Actual YTD thru 5-30-10
Total Income	\$ 519,604	\$ 518,724
Total Expenses	\$ 503,679	\$ 515,021
Net surplus before Appropriations	\$ 15,925	\$ 3,703
Total Appropriations (Roofing Fund)	\$ 34,020	\$ 34,020
Surplus to General Fund	\$ (18,095)	\$ (30,317)



When preparing for a possible emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: **fresh water, food, clean air and warmth.**

### Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- **Water**, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- **Food**, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- **First aid kit**
- Whistle to signal for help
- **Dust mask**, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers

### Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change

- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

### Before a Hurricane

To prepare for a hurricane, you should take the following measures:

- Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.

### During a Hurricane

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should:

- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks. Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Moor your boat if time permits.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

You should evacuate under the following conditions:

- If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions.
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If you feel you are in danger.

If you are unable to evacuate, go to your wind-safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:

- Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.