

Preparing Your Pool for a Hurricane

It's that time of year again: hurricane season. The [Atlantic hurricane](#) season begins June 1 and the Eastern Pacific season May 15, and both run through November 30. During an average season, [12 tropical storms](#) will form over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea or Gulf of Mexico, and six of these will become hurricanes. During that time, your home is threatened by disasters including destructive winds, tornadoes, storm surge flooding and inland flooding caused by heavy rains.

Did you know that pools face special risks of their own in extreme weather? But fear not: Proper preparation both throughout the year and directly before a storm can limit damage during tropical storms or hurricanes. This guide will help you get your pool and patio area prepared so you can worry less about damage and more about your own safety when the storm hits.



Image via [Pixabay](#)

Before the Storm: Preparing Your Pool and Outdoor Areas

Pool Preparation

It's easy to jump to the assumption that you should drain your pool in the event of a hurricane, but [draining is actually a major no-no](#). The strong winds that occur during tropical storms can cause hydrostatic pressure beneath your in-ground pool, potentially causing it to pop out of the ground. The water acts as an anchor to weigh it down, and also protects your pool's finish against damage from flying debris. If you do decide to drain your pool at all prior to a hurricane, lower it by no more than one to two feet.

[Add extra chlorine](#) (or "shock") to the pool to help fight any potential pollutants that might contaminate the water during the storm. Keep in mind this means you will not be able to use the pool for about 24 hours afterward — reference your own chemicals and supplies for safety details.

Another instinct pool owners have while preparing for tropical storms is to cover the pool to prevent debris from flying into it, but again, [resist!](#) Strong winds can actually cause a pool cover to fly up and potentially away. (Imagine the damage one of those can do while caught in high winds!) Even if they stay where they're supposed to, covers also face damage from sharp flying debris like tree branches and roof shingles. Water can also gather on top and collapse it. While leaving the pool uncovered may seem counter-intuitive, think of how expensive it would be to replace your cover – and repair any damage caused by it flying off!

Turn off the electric breaker system to your pool to avoid electrical surge damage. This includes all the mechanical systems in your pool as well as any lighting. Filter damage is the most common pool damage that occurs during hurricanes, so it's important to protect it. If the filter is going to be at risk for complete water submersion, remove the pump and secure it in a safe, dry location inside. Some also opt to merely [cover the pump](#) with watertight plastic and rope to prevent water damage.



Image via [Pixabay](#)

Patio and Yard Preparation

General yard and tree upkeep throughout the year [can help you be prepared](#) in the event of a hurricane. Keep large trees around your home trimmed and be especially wary of weak and low-hanging branches. Remove Spanish moss and keep limbs less than five feet long to reduce the risk of them becoming weak and breaking in strong gusts of wind or heavy rainfall. Have branches close to utility lines trimmed by a professional, or contact your utility company to have the tree trimmed. Gravel has been known to shred vinyl house lining, so consider replacing gravel and rock walkways with shredded bark or wood chips.

If your pool is in a lanai, your structure is also at risk for damage. [Remove screening panels](#) and doors to create a vent for the wind to escape. If very strong winds are a guarantee and you suspect wind damage is inevitable, [you can also cut "X" shapes](#) into multiple screens to reduce the wind resistance. Insurance won't cover the slashes, but rescreening is significantly less expensive than replacing the entire framework.

[Remove all loose items](#) from the pool area, including furniture and plants. If possible, bring gas and charcoal grills indoors, but never use them once they're inside. For heavier, bulkier outdoor objects, anchor them to something solid and secure with rope or chains. Never store propane tanks in your home or garage. Instead, chain them in an upright position to a secure object away from your home. Some choose to toss things like lawn furniture into the pool to prevent it from flying around in strong winds, but [because it could cause damage to your pool's](#) finish and you risk chemical damage to your furniture (especially if you super-chlorinate the pool water), it is not always your best option.



Image via [Pixabay](#)

After the Storm

When the storm has cleared, [check your surroundings](#) before inspecting for pool damage. If you chose to submerge items in the pool, remove them as soon as possible. Don't use your pool water for drinking or sanitation as it may be contaminated or still super-chlorinated. Inspect your pool's plumbing, pumps and filters for cracks and leaks. Check water and chemical levels, and set your valves to the circulation position before turning on the pumps. Then turn the power back on to the outlets.

Don't reconnect the power [until debris is removed](#) and you are sure there is no damage to the electrical system. You may want to consider calling a professional before you turn the system back on, especially if you suspect electrical damage.

Additional Helpful Resources

Besides the care of your pool, there are (of course!) many safety measures to consider in the event of a hurricane or other tropical storm. The following resources will help keep you, your family, and your home ahead of the storm.

The National Hurricane Center of the National Weather Service has [helpful tips](#) for ensuring you and your family are prepared for a hurricane's arrival.

The [American Red Cross](#) has great information on disaster alerts and preparation.

[Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) has information on hurricane preparation, as well as information on preparing for other natural disasters.

[The National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov) is one of the best resources to get up-to-date information on hurricanes that are headed your way and those which are still forming.

There is only so much you can do to prevent damage to your pool once a hurricane is on its way. Being as well-prepared as possible ahead of time and proactive once the warning is issued can make a world of difference. Remember to always put your own safety first — pools can be repaired, but you and your family are irreplaceable!



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