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**Trusted Choice Independent Insurance Agents Provide Tips in Advance of Hurricane Florence**

*Take these steps to protect your family and your property.*

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia, Sept. 10, 2018— As Hurricane Florence threatens the East Coast, Trusted Choice® independent insurance agents and the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA or the Big “I”) suggest taking the following steps to prepare for the storm:

**Before a hurricane:**

• Install hurricane shutters or precut 3/4" pieces of marine plywood for each window of your home.

• Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased or damaged limbs, then strategically removing branches so that wind can blow through.

• When a hurricane is approaching, a hurricane watch or a hurricane warning will be announced through your local news media. Be prepared to evacuate, especially if you live on the coastline, on an offshore island, in a mobile home, or near a river or floodplain. High winds and flooding are common even if the hurricane doesn't make landfall. Take your disaster supplies kit, sleeping bags and blankets.

• Lock the windows and doors of your home before leaving and turn off all utilities.

• Follow the recommended evacuation routes.

• Store away lightweight objects that could become airborne.

• Anchor outdoor objects that cannot be brought inside.

• Call your emergency contact person to report your plans.

• Fill your car's gas tank.

• If you are not told to evacuate, settle in and stay put. Keep the roads free for those who need to use them. Don't be fooled! The first part of the storm is followed by a period of tranquility. It is only the eye of the hurricane passing over. The rest of the storm is yet to come.

• Collect your disaster supplies kit, blankets and sleeping bags and keep them near you.

•Ensure that you have at least a seven-day supply of any important medications. Call ahead to your pharmacy or doctor for refills.

• Keep children and pets indoors.

• Make sure your battery-powered radio is nearby.

• If you're along the immediate coast and in danger of a storm surge, go to a room on an upper floor, preferably one without windows. Stay there until the storm passes.

• If you're in a location not susceptible to a coastal storm surge, then go to an interior room on the lowest floor to protect yourself from wind-related damage.

To request an interview with a national spokesperson or a Trusted Choice® insurance agent in your area, please contact Sue Nester (broadcast), (703) 706-5448, or Katie Butler at (703) 706-5428.

[***Trusted Choice®***](https://www.independentagent.com/Resources/CompanyPartners/Pages/Trusted-Choice/Trusted-Choice-partners.aspx) *educates consumers about the benefits of using independent agents and brokers for their insurance needs: choice of companies, customized policies and advocacy support. The brand is the consumer marketing identity for more than 26,000 independent insurance agencies and brokerage firms and 62 leading insurance companies.*

*The* [***Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America***](https://www.independentagent.com/default.aspx)*(IIABA or the Big “I”) was**founded in 1896 and is the nation’s oldest and largest national association of independent insurance agents and brokers, representing a network of approximately a quarter of a million agents, brokers and their employees nationally. Its members are businesses that offer customers a choice of policies from a variety of insurance companies. Independent agents and brokers offer all lines of insurance—property, casualty, life and health—as well as employee benefit plans and retirement products.*

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