

# After the Storm

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Storm Damage and Inspections

Some natural disasters strike without much warning while others are predicted well in advance. Here in Raleigh, we experience a wide variety of weather events throughout the year. If your property has sustained damage due to a storm event, this information may help you determine what to do next.

### **What does the City do to prepare for a large weather event?**

If a large weather event is imminent, the City's Emergency Management office closely monitors the situation and relays information to City departments. During and immediately following the event, officials are learning what areas have been impacted and work as quick as possible to get help to those that need it. Critical information will be conveyed to the public via radio and television. If you experience an emergency, call 911.

### **What should I do if I lose power?**

If you lose power during a storm event, notify your power company as soon as possible. The power company can then begin the process of restoring your power. Use flashlights instead of candles to reduce the risk of fire.

If the meter box on the outside of your home is damaged, you will need to call a professional electrician to make repairs before power can be restored. All repairs must be permitted and inspected by the City of Raleigh to ensure that all code requirements are met. Your power will be reinstated once all repairs are made and City inspectors sign off on all work.

### **Where is it safe to use a generator?**

If you have lost power and plan to use a generator, DO NOT use it indoors. That includes the garage, carport, basement, crawlspace, or other partially-enclosed area, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent a buildup of Carbon Monoxide in the home which can't be seen or smelled and can be deadly.

### **Is it safe to begin assessing the damage immediately after a storm?**

Use extreme caution when doing so. It may be difficult to see downed power lines or sharp objects like glass or exposed nails. It is also possible that a dangerous structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazard exists. To prevent injuries resulting from such hazards, turn off the power at the breaker box and contact your gas company to shut off the gas to the building. Then contact a professional to determine the extent of the damage.

## **What should I do if there is damage to my property?**

Once it is deemed safe, you should begin the process of assessing the damage to your property. Then you can decide to clean and repair your property.

If you are renting the property, you should immediately notify your landlord of any damage and follow-up by putting requests for repairs in writing.

If you own a building that is damaged, you should contact your insurance company immediately. Your agent will likely send an adjuster to the property to survey the damage. Once this is done, debris removal can begin and a plan for making repairs will be made. If you do not have a homeowner's insurance policy or don't want to file a claim, you may choose to act as your own contractor or call a contractor to assess the damage.

## **If a major storm event occurs, will City inspectors be deployed to affected areas?**

Yes, City of Raleigh inspectors will be deployed to the hardest hit areas to make a list of affected structures, evaluate and classify the damage, and complete all required assessment forms. This information is quickly conveyed to City leaders to determine the impact on local resources.

A quality damage assessment is required as the basis for federal assistance and will help ensure that the City of Raleigh receives funding for a wide range of emergency relief efforts. During the damage assessment it is likely that non-storm-related inspections will be delayed until complete.

## **What should I do before selecting a contractor to make repairs?**

Be cautious when selecting a contractor to repair or rebuild your home. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for scammers to prey on storm victims. Be sure to check references and contact the Better Business Bureau to ensure that you are hiring a reputable contractor. Get an accurate evaluation and estimate for the work to be done, as well as a cost of construction and replacement items. Shop around and get multiple quotes before making a final selection.

Carefully read contracts and documentation associated with the work to be done and only sign it if you agree. Lastly, determine who will be responsible for obtaining the required permits and requesting inspections from the City. If the contractor agrees to obtain the permits, ask for a copy of the permits for your files. The permits, also known as "yellow cards" and are required to be displayed at the job site. If the work is not permitted, and therefore not inspected, there is no way to ensure that it is safe for habitation. Unpermitted work may also pose problems for anyone trying to sell their property in the future.

## **Where can I obtain permits following a storm?**

- Development Services Customer Service Center | One Exchange Plaza | Suite 400 | Raleigh
  - 919-996-2500
- Litchford Road Satellite Office | 8320 Litchford Road | Suite 130 | Raleigh
  - 919-996-4200

Keep in mind that City offices may have also been affected by the weather event. If so, a temporary operations center will likely be established at another location. You should call the office prior to your visit.