Evacuation Safety Rules

1. Before making any last-minute preparations, be absolutely certain you have time. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Don't wait until the last minute to leave, hoping to save your possessions. Save your life!
2. Move quickly and calmly. Don't take chances. Getting safely to higher ground or away from the storm area is your first consideration. In a flash flood, your automobile may not be your safest and quickest form of transportation. If you live near a hill, walking up the hill might be the fastest way to safety.
3. If you are caught in the house by suddenly rising waters, move to the second floor, or, if necessary, the roof. Wear warm clothing and take a portable radio and flashlight with you. Don't try to swim to safety - just wait for help. In fast moving water, you are not strong enough to walk or swim through it.
4. Keep your radio turned on and located where you can hear it.
5. When leaving the house, avoid flooded areas if possible. Don't try to walk through stretches of flood water that are more than knee deep. Wear heavy shoes, rather than going barefoot, since you cannot see what you are walking on.
6. Know where you're going before you leave. Local officials will probably establish shelters in public buildings. If you don't know the location of public shelters, listen to your radio for evacuation instructions. If cellular signal is available, many communities have text alert systems, and/or use social media to broadcast emergency information. If an evacuation route is suggested, use it. Other "short cuts" could have roads or bridges blocked or washed away, or downed power lines.
7. If you have limited time for evacuation preparations, take only family medicines, blankets, a charged cell phone, and a battery or windup-powered radio with you. If you have time to gather supplies, take with you:
   1. Protective clothing, especially water-repellent outer garments and footwear; several blankets
   2. Flashlights and batteries; battery or windup-powered radio; mobile power pack to charge cellular phone
   3. Personal hygiene items
   4. Infant supplies
   5. Important documents and papers
   6. Drinking water in plastic bottles
   7. Emergency supplies of ready-to-eat foods
   8. Necessary prescription drugs or medicines (such as heart medication or insulin)
   9. First aid kit
8. If you are certain you have time before you leave your house:
   1. Turn off utilities (main panel shut off, gas, L.P. gas tank, fuel oil tank).
   2. If flood waters threaten, open basement windows to let water in and equalize pressure on the foundation – you may lose what you have in the basement, but you could save your foundation.
9. Don’t lock your home when you leave it. Emergency first responders may conduct a house-to-house search for flood victims, which means they may have to enter your home. If it is locked, they may have to break in to check for potential victims.
10. As you travel listen to the radio or monitor social media on a smartphone. Watch for:
    1. Washed out bridges or roads
    2. Undermined roadways
    3. Landslides
    4. Fallen rocks
    5. Downed power lines
    6. Floating hazards
11. Don't drive over flooded roads, especially where they cross overflowing streams and rivers. Flood currents are strong, and cars and people are easily washed away in them. It only takes about 12 inches of fast flowing water to push a car sideways.