WELCOMETOVI · RESIDENT EDITION

HURRICANE READY VI

The prep guide & workbook for life in the U.S. Virgin Islands



2027 SEASON EDITION

St. Thomas · St. John · St. Croix · Water Island

Plan · Stock · Protect · Ride it out · Recover

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THE 12 THAT MATTER MOST

If you only do twelve things this year, do these

01 **Sign up for Alert VI**
VITEMA's official alerts by text, call and email. Free, at vitema.vi.gov.

02 **Store two weeks of water**
At least 1 gallon per person per day. CDC: 3 days minimum, 2 weeks if you can.

03 **Fill and close off your cistern**
Top it up before the storm and keep storm runoff out of it.

04 **Pick an out-of-territory contact**
Local lines jam. One person stateside relays news for everyone.

05 **Refill prescriptions early**
Pharmacies may be closed for days. Ask for an early refill in a watch.

06 **Keep cash in small bills**
Card machines and ATMs need power and signal.

07 **Generator 20 feet out**
Outside only, at least 20 ft from doors, windows and vents. CO kills.

08 **Shutters tested in May**
Not the day of the watch. Label every panel to its window.

09 **Check your insurance now**
New NFIP flood policies usually wait 30 days before coverage starts.

10 **Photograph everything**
Every room, before the season. Store the photos in the cloud.

11 **Know watch vs. warning**
Watch: possible within 48 hours. Warning: expected within 36 hours.

12 **Check on your neighbors**
Elders who live alone can join the DHS disaster registry.

The island difference. On the mainland, help drives in. Here, everything comes by sea or air, and ports and airports can close for days. Plan to look after your household on your own for at least two weeks.

KNOW THE SEASON & THE WORDS

What the forecasts actually mean

The season

The Atlantic season officially runs **June 1 to November 30**. Most of the big storms come in **August, September and October**. Irma (September 6) and Maria (September 19–20) hit in 2017 at the very peak.

Preseason outlooks only tell you about the whole Atlantic. A "below-average" year can still bring one direct hit, and one is all it takes.

Watches & warnings

Alert	Means
Tropical Storm Watch	Winds of 39–73 mph **possible**, generally within **48 hours**
Hurricane Watch	Winds of 74 mph+ **possible**, generally within **48 hours**
Tropical Storm Warning	Winds of 39–73 mph **expected** within **36 hours**
Hurricane Warning	Winds of 74 mph+ **expected**. Finish preparing. Leave if ordered.
Storm Surge Watch / Warning	Life-threatening rising water from the sea, possible (48 h) / expected (36 h)
Extreme Wind Warning	Major-hurricane winds (115 mph+) expected within about an hour. Go to your safe room now.

Why 48 and 36 hours? Those times are counted to the arrival of **tropical-storm-force** winds, the point when outdoor work like shuttering becomes dangerous. The worst winds come later.

The categories

The Saffir-Simpson scale rates sustained wind only. Rain, flooding and surge can be deadly in any category.

Cat.	Wind (mph)	What to expect
1	74–95	Damage to roofs, gutters and trees. Power out for days.
2	96–110	Major roof damage, many trees down. Power out for days to weeks.
3 MAJOR	111–129	Roofs and walls fail. Water and power out for days to weeks.
4	130–156	Severe damage to well-built homes. Areas may be cut off for weeks to months.
5	157+	A high share of homes destroyed. Uninhabitable for weeks to months.

Who to trust

- **VITEMA**: local orders, shelters, curfews (vitema.vi.gov)
- **NWS San Juan**: the official local forecast office for the USVI (weather.gov/sju)
- **National Hurricane Center**: tracks and cones (nhc.noaa.gov)

> **Read the cone right.** The cone shows where the **center** may go. Damage reaches far outside it. If the islands sit at the edge of the cone, prepare as if you're in the middle.

THE TWO-WEEK SUPPLY

Why two weeks, not three days

Ready.gov's minimum kit covers **three days**. On an island, ports and the airport can close and supply ships can be days out, so plan for **two weeks**. The CDC recommends a 2-week water supply where possible, and so does DPNR's cistern guide.

Water: do the math

Household	3-day minimum	2-week target
1 person	3 gal	14 gal
2 people	6 gal	28 gal
4 people	12 gal	56 gal
Each pet (medium dog)	3 gal	14 gal

Based on 1 gallon per person per day for drinking and hygiene. In island heat, more is better. Add extra for babies, nursing mothers and anyone who is ill. Your cistern is for washing and flushing, and it's a backup for drinking only once treated (page 13).

Food that needs no fridge

- Canned fish, chicken, corned beef, beans, soups
- Crackers, cereal, oats, peanut butter, dried fruit, nuts
- Shelf-stable milk, juice boxes, coffee and tea
- Baby formula and baby food, pet food
- Manual can opener, plus a gas or propane stove for **outdoor** use

Medicine & health

- 2 weeks of prescriptions, plus a printed list
- First-aid kit, pain relievers, antiseptic
- Insect repellent and long sleeves (mosquitoes surge after rain)
- Hand sanitizer, wipes, trash bags

Power & light

- LED flashlights and lanterns (no candles)
- Spare batteries in every size you use
- Power banks, a solar charger, a car charger
- Generator fuel, stored safely (page 14)

Cash & fuel

- Cash in small bills. Card readers and ATMs need power and signal.
- Fill every vehicle when a watch is issued. Lines get long fast.

> **Build it slowly.** Add a few items with each grocery run from January to May. You'll avoid the empty shelves and price spikes of storm week, and you can rotate food into your meals each December.

SUPPLY CHECKLIST WORKBOOK

Tick as you buy. Re-check every June 1 and each time a watch is issued

WATER

- [ ] Drinking water: ____ gal (1 gal/person/day × 14)
- [ ] Pet water
- [ ] Unscented bleach, 5–9% (dated)
- [ ] Medicine dropper
- [ ] Clean lidded containers
- [ ] Cistern filled & closed off

FOOD

- [ ] 14 days of no-cook food
- [ ] Manual can opener
- [ ] Outdoor stove + fuel
- [ ] Baby formula / food
- [ ] Pet food (14 days)
- [ ] Cooler + ice packs

HEALTH

- [ ] Prescriptions (14 days)
- [ ] Printed med list
- [ ] First-aid kit
- [ ] Glasses / hearing aids
- [ ] Repellent & sunscreen
- [ ] Sanitizer, wipes, soap

POWER & LIGHT

- [ ] Flashlights (1/person)
- [ ] Lanterns
- [ ] Batteries, every size
- [ ] Power banks (2/adult)
- [ ] Solar charger
- [ ] Car charger
- [ ] Generator serviced
- [ ] Fuel (safe cans)
- [ ] CO alarm with battery

INFORMATION

- [ ] Alert VI registered
- [ ] Battery / crank radio
- [ ] Paper list of numbers
- [ ] Offline maps downloaded

MONEY

- [ ] Cash, small bills
- [ ] Vehicles fuelled

HOME & TOOLS

- [ ] Shutters + hardware
- [ ] Drill, bits, spare bolts
- [ ] Tarps & rope
- [ ] Duct tape, plastic sheeting
- [ ] Work gloves, boots
- [ ] Fire extinguisher
- [ ] Bucket, mop, bleach for cleanup
- [ ] Machete / handsaw

GO-BAG

- [ ] Document pouch (page 17)
- [ ] Change of clothes
- [ ] Toiletries
- [ ] Phone + charger
- [ ] Snacks & water
- [ ] Whistle
- [ ] Comfort item for kids
- [ ] Pet carrier & leash

WATER & YOUR CISTERN

Most VI homes run on rainwater. Here's how to keep it safe

Before the storm

- **Fill your cistern** to the top. It's extra supply, and on a rooftop tank the weight helps hold it down in high winds (CDC).
- **Keep storm water out.** Close off the inlet or divert your gutters and downspouts away from the cistern before the rain arrives.
- Store your **bottled drinking water** separately. That's what you drink first.
- Keep a dated bottle of **unscented household bleach (5–9% sodium hypochlorite)**. Bleach weakens with age, so replace it each season.

After the storm

- Drink stored bottled water first.
- **Fuel, oil or chemicals in the water?** Bleach and boiling won't fix that. Don't use it. Drain it.
- Cistern full of debris or floodwater? Don't use it. Ask the Health Department (DOH) or DPNR what to do.
- Until you know it's safe, treat cistern water **a gallon or less at a time** before drinking, cooking, brushing teeth or making formula.
- Untreated water is fine for **flushing toilets**.

Treating a gallon (EPA)

Water	6% bleach	8.25% bleach
1 quart / liter	2 drops	2 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	6 drops
2 gallons	16 drops (¼ tsp)	12 drops (⅛ tsp)
4 gallons	⅓ tsp	¼ tsp

Stir, cover and **wait 30 minutes**. It should smell faintly of chlorine. **Double the dose** if the water is cloudy or colored. Or bring it to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute.

Disinfecting the whole cistern

CDC says to do this if officials tell you to, if you evacuated, or if you were away for weeks. It applies to cisterns that store **treated** water. For open rainwater systems, ask DOH or DPNR first.

Cistern size	¼ full	½ full	¾ full	Full
200 gal	1.5 c	3 c	4.5 c	6 c
450 gal	3.5 c	7 c	10.5 c	14 c
600 gal	4.5 c	9 c	13.5 c	18 c
1,000 gal	7.5 c	15 c	22.5 c	30 c

That's 3 cups of 5–9% bleach per 100 gallons. Larger tanks scale the same way: 10,000 gallons full is 300 cups (about 18¾ gallons) of bleach.

1. Close valves to any filter or UV unit, and disinfect it as its maker says.
2. Add the bleach. Open each tap until you smell chlorine.
3. Close the taps and let it sit at least **12 hours**.
4. Drain the cistern, then refill with clean, safe water.
5. Run each tap until the chlorine smell is gone.

> **Ask before you dump.** Draining thousands of gallons of chlorinated water onto a hillside or into a ghut can harm plants and reefs. CDC says drain to a sanitary sewer. If you have none, ask DPNR (340-773-1082) how to drain it safely.



AFTER THE STORM, THE ISLANDS COME BACK

ASK MOKO, YOUR AI VIRGIN ISLANDS GUIDE

Year-round, Moko answers island questions in seconds: what's open, where to eat, how to get around, and what's happening this weekend. Locals use it free every day.

WELCOMETOVI.COM/AI-GUIDE

Also in the shop: St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix guides, the BVI Day-Trip Guide and The Island Move.