SHINEOTTER
FAMILY OWNED EXTERIOR CLEANING

Call or text
(425) 977-5156
shineotter.com · info@shineotter.com

CHECKLIST FOR AFTER A STORM

After a Hurricane: What to Do Outside Your Home

Safety and photos come before cleaning. Stay away from power lines, have a damaged home inspected before you go in, contact your insurer and take pictures before you start cleanup, and keep generators at least 20 feet from the house.

1. Safety first, outside the house

- ☐ **Stay away from downed power lines.** Never touch a power line, and do not enter a home with obvious damage such as downed power lines.
- ☐ **Have damage inspected** by a professional before you go in.
- ☐ **Stay out of floodwater.** It can contain germs and chemicals. If skin touches it, wash with soap and clean water.
- ☐ **Generators outside only,** at least 20 feet from windows, doors, and vents, with a battery-operated or battery-backup carbon monoxide detector.
- ☐ **Chainsaws by the book.** Follow the maker's safety instructions and make sure others stand back.
- ☐ **Pace yourself.** Take breaks and drink water, especially in the heat.

2. Document before you move anything

- ☐ Contact your insurance company and take pictures of your home and belongings **before cleanup**. Your insurer should evaluate the damage before you arrange repairs.
- ☐ From the ground, photograph the roof line, gutters, walls, windows, screens, fences, trees, and debris, wide shots and close-ups.
- ☐ Keep the photos and any receipts for emergency work together in one place.

3. Debris: what can wait

Rules for storm debris piles vary by city and county, so check your local government's instructions before you move anything to the curb. Left sitting, debris can hide damage, create tripping hazards, and block drains and gutters.

4. Look over the outside from the ground

What you see	What to do first
Branches or fronds on the roof	Photograph them from the ground. Do not climb onto a wet or storm-damaged roof, and call a roofer or tree service.
Clogged gutters and downspouts	Photograph them, then clear them when it is safe so water drains.
Torn screens or cracked glass	Photograph first, and keep people away from broken glass until it is made safe.
Cracks in stucco or loose roofing	Photograph them and leave them to a licensed professional. Cleaning is not a repair, and washing over cracks can push water behind the finish.
Salt, mud, and grime on glass and walls	Wait. Cleaning can follow once the house is inspected and repairs are arranged.

5. Hiring after a storm

- Be wary of anyone who approaches you unsolicited offering a discount with supplies left from a previous job.
- Get **at least three written, itemized estimates**, and check the company at BBB.org.
- Verify the license at MyFloridaLicense.com, check proof of insurance, and confirm with the insurer that the policy is current.
- Read the contract before you sign. **Avoid large deposits,** and never pay the full amount of a repair up front.
- Do not sign a certificate of completion until you are satisfied with the work.

To report a scam: MyFloridaLegal.com or 1-866-9-NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226).

When cleaning comes next. Once the house is safe, documented, and repairs are arranged, cleaning can start. Shine Otter's storm debris cleanup crews clear branches, leaves, and yard debris and check roofs and gutters for visible storm damage. We handle cleanup, not roof or structural repairs. Call or text **(425) 977-5156**.

Disclaimer. General information, not emergency advice. In an emergency call 911, and follow your county emergency management office and the National Weather Service. **Sources:** CDC, Safety Guidelines for Returning Home After a Natural Disaster, and Protect Yourself and Your Family After Hurricanes; Florida Attorney General, Scams at a Glance: After the Storm (revised Feb. 2025); MyFloridaLicense.com.

Full guide with links: shineotter.com/blog/after-a-hurricane-outside-your-home-florida.html · Updated November 11, 2026

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