

ARE YOU PREPARED

Last year's hurricane season has emphasized the need for everyone — families, businesses, agencies and institutions — to be prepared. This guide is part of the official regional awareness program prepared and sponsored by your County Emergency Management Agency, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, the National Weather Service and the American Red Cross with the cooperation of Bay News 9 and our sponsors. We hope you will use the information on these pages to make your family and business disaster plans to ensure your family's safety and security. For more information online contact www.tbrc.org or www.floridadisaster.org or call the Florida Alliance for Safe Homes at (877) 221-SAFE.

Warnings & Advisories

Tropical Depression: A disturbance with a clearly defined low-pressure area; highest wind speed is 38 mph.

Tropical Storm: A low-pressure area defined by a counter-clockwise rotating circulation with winds of 39-73 mph.

Hurricane: Once a tropical storm's constant wind speed reaches 74 mph or greater, it is classified as a hurricane. In the western Pacific, hurricanes are called "typhoons," and similar storms in the Indian Ocean are called "cyclones."

Tropical Storm Watch: An alert for specific areas that a tropical storm may pose a threat within 36 hours.

Tropical Storm Warning: An alert that tropical storm conditions, including sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph, are expected in specific areas within 24 hours.

Hurricane Watch: An alert for specific areas that hurricane conditions pose a threat to an area within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning: An alert that hurricane conditions are expected in a specified coastal area within 24 hours. All precautions should be completed immediately.

Evacuation Order: The most important instruction you will receive. Once issued, an evacuation order is mandatory.

Hurricane Hazards

Storm Surge: Storm surge is an abnormal rise in sea level 50 to 100 miles wide, that sweeps across the coast near the "eye" of the hurricane's landfall. The surge of high water, topped by waves, is devastating. Along the immediate coast, storm surge is the greatest threat. Most hurricane-related deaths are caused by drowning.

Winds: Hurricane-force winds, 74 mph or more, can destroy buildings and mobile homes. Debris can become flying missiles in hurricanes. Winds often stay above hurricane strength well inland. If you do not have to evacuate, it is extremely important to secure your home and cover your windows before the storm. Remember, mobile homes are extremely vulnerable to high winds and should be evacuated regardless of location in the county.

Heavy Rains/Floods: Widespread torrential rains often in excess of 10 inches can produce destructive floods. This is a major threat to areas well inland.

Tornadoes: Hurricanes also produce tornadoes, which add to the hurricane's destructive power.

Hurricane Safety

■ Refer to the Hurricane Evacuation Map. Locate where you live and your evacuation level (color). Determine if and when you would have to evacuate. REMEMBER: All mobile home residents must evacuate, regardless of location.

■ Decide NOW where you would go if ordered to evacuate (a friend's or relative's, a hotel, out of the region or, as a last resort, to a shelter). If you are going to leave the region or go to a hotel, you must leave early. Determine your route.

■ Update your disaster supplies kit.

■ Keep your home in good condition. Tack down loose roofing and siding. Trim dead or broken branches from trees.

■ Make minor improvements to your home, such as bracing gable roofs. Contact a professional engineer, licensed contractor or architect to inspect your home for structural integrity.

■ Make plans and purchase materials to protect your home before the storm.

■ Purchase a battery-powered weather alert radio.

■ Take inventory of your property (a video tape is excellent). Store with insurance and title papers in a safe place and send a copy to a relative.

■ Make sure your address is clearly marked on your home.

■ Whether you rent or own your home, review your insurance policies with your agent now.

Disaster Supplies

Stock up today on emergency supplies and store them in a water-resistant container.

- Two-week supply of prescription medicines
- Two-week supply of non-perishable/special dietary foods
- Drinking water/containers: 1 gal/per person/per day for two weeks
- Manual can opener
- Flashlights and batteries for each family member
- Portable radio and seven sets of batteries
- First aid kit including bandages, antiseptic, tape, compresses, non-aspirin pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication
- Mosquito repellent and citronella candles
- Two coolers (one to keep food; the other to hold ice)
- Plastic tarp for roof/window repair, screening, tools, nails
- Water purification kit (tablets, chlorine [plain] and iodine)
- Infant necessities (medicine, sterile water, diapers, ready formula, bottles)
- Clean-up supplies (mop, buckets, towels, disinfectant)
- Camera and film
- Extra batteries
- Plastic trash bags
- Toilet paper, paper towels and moist towelettes

If you evacuate you also should take:

- Pillows, blankets, sleeping bags or air mattresses
- Extra clothing, shoes, eyeglasses, etc.
- Folding chairs, lawn chairs or cots
- Personal hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant)
- Quiet games, books, playing cards and favorite toys for kids
- Important papers (drivers license, medical information, insurance policies and property inventories) stored in plastic
- Keys

Precious commodities before and after a storm:

- Cash (With no power, banks may be closed, checks and credit cards unaccepted, and ATMs may not be operational).
- Charcoal, wooden matches and grill
- Ice

Hurricane Categories

Category	Sustained Winds	Damage
1	74-95 mph	Minor
2	96-110 mph	Moderate
3	111-130 mph	Major
4	131-155 mph	Severe
5	more than 155 mph	Catastrophic

As The Storm Approaches

THESE SIMPLE TASKS COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE AND YOUR HOME

- Listen for weather updates on local stations, government access channels and on NOAA Weather Radio. Don't trust rumors, and stay tuned to the latest information.
- Check your disaster supplies kit. Obtain any needed items.
- Refill prescriptions. Maintain at least a two-week supply during hurricane season.
- Clear yard of potential flying debris, e.g. lawn furniture, potted plants, bicycles and trash cans.
- Protect your windows and glass doors! Brace double entry and garage doors at the top and bottom.
- Fill your car's gas tank and check oil, water and tires. Gas pumps don't operate without electricity.
- Secure your boat early. Drawbridges will be closed to boat traffic after an evacuation order is issued.
- Leave the swimming pool filled and super-chlorinated. (Cover the filtration system.)
- Get cash. Banks and ATMs won't be in operation without electricity and few stores will be able to accept credit cards or personal checks.
- Do not get on congested evacuation routes to try to out run the storm.

IF YOU CAN STAY HOME

If you live in a sound structure located outside the evacuation area and do not live in a mobile home, stay home.

- Make sure your windows are protected and home is secured.
- Offer your home as shelter to friends or relatives who live in vulnerable areas or mobile homes.
- Clean containers for drinking water and your tub to store cleaning water. Line the tub with plastic sheeting or clean shower curtain, or seal the drain with silicone caulking it will hold water for weeks and cleans easily when dry. Plan on three gallons per person, per day for all uses.
- Check your disaster supplies kit. Make sure you have at least a two-week supply of nonperishable foods. Don't forget a non-electric can opener.
- During the storm, stay inside and away from windows, sky lights and glass doors. Find a safe area in your home an interior, reinforced room, closet or bathroom on the lower floor.
- Wait for official word that the danger is over. Don't be fooled by the storm's calm "eye."
- If you lose power, turn off major appliances, such as the air conditioner and water heater to reduce damage.
- If flooding threatens your home, turn off electricity at the main breaker.

SAFE AREA

Is there a closet or small room in your home such as a laundry room, pantry or bathroom, that could become a safe haven during a tornado or hurricane? Taking refuge in such spaces lets the outer rooms buffer you from the storm by protecting your family if flying debris penetrate the outer walls. To find out how to build a FEMA tornado safe room or fortify an existing room to FEMA standards visit www.fema.gov or call (877) 221-SAFE.

IF YOU MUST EVACUATE

Stay tuned to your local radio and television stations and government access channels for emergency broadcasts. If ordered to evacuate, you must do so immediately.

- Take your disaster supplies kit with you.
- Take important papers with you, including your driver's license, special medical information, insurance policies and property inventories.
- Let friends and relatives know where you are going. Make sure your neighbors have a safe ride.
- Turn off electricity, water and gas.
- Lock windows and doors.
- If a storm threatens, visit www.wtsp.com for your up-to-the minute information and preparedness tips.

After the Storm

After a disaster, you may be without power, water, food or any of the services and businesses we rely on. Immediate response may not be possible, so residents must be prepared to be self-reliant for several weeks.

RE-ENTRY

- Be patient. Access to affected areas will be controlled. You won't be able to return to your home until search and rescue operations are complete and safety hazards, such as downed trees and power lines, are cleared. It may take two to four weeks before utilities are restored.
- Stay tuned to your local radio or TV station for advice and instructions about emergency medical aid, food and other forms of assistance.
- Have valid ID. Security operations will include check points. Valid ID with your current local address will be required.
- Avoid driving. Roads will have debris that will puncture your tires! Don't add to the congestion of relief workers, supply trucks, law enforcement, etc.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

- Avoid downed or dangling utility wires, especially when cutting or clearing fallen trees. Metal fences may have been "energized" by fallen wires.
- Beware of snakes, insects or animals driven to higher ground by floods.
- Enter your home with caution. Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- If there has been flooding, have an electrician inspect your home or office before turning on the breaker.
- Be careful with fire. Do not strike a match until you are sure there are no breaks in gas lines. Avoid candles. Use battery-operated flashlights and lanterns instead.
- Keep grills outdoors in a well-ventilated area.
- Use your telephone only for emergencies to keep lines open for emergency communications.

GENERATORS

Fueled by gas, generators can run appliances and fans. Sizes range from 750 watts, which will run a fan and a light, up to 8,000 watts, which will practically run a house (except for the air conditioner). Refrigerators require 400-1,000 watts. If you have lost power, don't connect a portable generator to building wiring (this could injure or kill neighbors or electrical crews). Plug appliances, etc., directly into the generator, place generator outdoors or in a well-ventilated area. Don't forget to check the oil every time you add gas.

REPAIRS

- Make temporary repairs to correct safety hazards and minimize further damage. This may include covering holes in the roof, walls or windows and debris removal.
- Protect yourself from contractor fraud. Only hire licensed contractors to do repairs. Check with the local building department to ensure they are licensed and certified.
- Take photographs of all damage before repairs and keep receipts for insurance purposes.
- After assessing damage to your home, contact your local building department for information on required building permits. Permits are always required for any kind of demolition or permanent repairs, reconstruction, roofing, filling and other types of site development. Report illegal flood plain development to your local building department.
- Local ordinances do not permit dumping in drainage canals or ditches because it causes backups and overflow in the system. Report illegal dumping.

WATER PRECAUTIONS

Whenever widespread flooding occurs, there is a potential for bacterial contamination. Bacteria, such as shigella and salmonella, can lead to life-threatening dehydration for people and their pets if untreated by antibiotics. Disinfect any tap water you drink or use for cooking or cleaning. You must purify the tap water until officials notify you of its safety. Bring water to a rolling boil for 10 minutes or use chemicals (eight drops of chlorine bleach or iodine per gallon) or water purification tablets, as directed. Let the water sit at least 10 minutes before using. Water you saved in clean containers before the storm will be fine for two to three weeks. To be sure, add two drops of chlorine or iodine per gallon before drinking.

Helpful Web Sites

American Red Cross Disaster Services

www.redcross.org/services/disaster/

Bay News 9 Weather Page

www.bn9.com/Weather.html

The Herald Weather Page

weather.bradenton.com/US/FL/Bradenton.html

The Tropical Meteorology Project

hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/

Current Florida Weather Warnings

iwin.nws.noaa.gov/iwin/fl/allwarnings.html

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

www.fema.gov

FEMA for Kids Hurricane Page

fema.gov/kids/hurr.htm

Manatee County Government

www.co.manatee.fl.us/

National Hurricane Awareness Week Resources

www.nhc.noaa.gov/

National Weather Service

www.weather.gov

National Weather Service Tampa Bay Forecast

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tbw/>

The St. Petersburg Times' Florida Forecast Page

www.floridaforecast.com

The Weather Channel

www.weather.com

