

All-Hazards Disaster Planning Guide

The official guide for Sarasota County
Are you ready?



***YOUR NEW HURRICANE
EVACUATION MAP INSIDE***



Hurricane Season is June 1st – November 30th

Now is the time to prepare!

Know your risk! www.tampabayprepares.org



If a disaster struck, would you be ready?

Would your family be ready? Would your business be ready?

It takes an entire community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster. We need to involve everyone — our government, neighbors, faith-based, volunteer and civic groups, schools, businesses, and all residents. Talk about being prepared at your school, work, club, or place of worship. Go the extra mile and enroll in a Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) offered by your county.

This guide offers the most important tips to prepare for a disaster and highlights the extra things to consider for children, seniors, pets, and people with medical needs. Follow the simple steps and checklists in this guide to protect your loved ones, your home, and your business.

Helping you stay ready year-round,

- SARASOTA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Your Disaster Plan

Prevent panic and confusion by making sure everyone knows **where to go** and **what to do** in an emergency situation, whether at home or at work.

KNOW YOUR RISK

Learn what disasters might affect your area. Are you in a **Hurricane Evacuation Level** (*see inside map*) or **FEMA Flood Zone**? They are different! Prepare yourself for emergencies by taking first aid and CPR courses (redcross.org).

PICK TWO MEETING PLACES

The first should be just outside your home or business for sudden events such as a fire. The second should be outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot get home or family members get separated.

ARE YOU COVERED? INSURANCE TIPS

1. Know your flood risk.* Standard homeowner insurance policies do not cover damage from floods, including storm surge from a hurricane.**
2. Purchase a policy. Remember, there is a 30-day waiting period for flood insurance to go into effect. Do not wait until a storm is threatening to purchase a policy.
3. Insure your property for its reconstruction cost, not its real estate value.
4. Get covered for the costs of building code upgrades.
5. Set aside funds to pay your hurricane deductible.
6. Inventory and take a video survey of your property and possessions to accurately price coverage and speed up the claims process. If you rent, you need insurance to protect your belongings.

* Hurricane Evacuation Levels and FEMA Flood Zones (floodsmart.gov)

** Educational resources are available from the Insurance Information Institute (iii.org).

Disaster Safety Tips



FLOODING

1. Determine your flood-risk and purchase flood insurance.
2. If flooding threatens, get to higher ground. Stay away from flood-prone areas, including low spots and ditches. Take dry clothing, a flashlight, and a portable radio with you.
3. **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN.** Avoid flooded areas or those with rapid water flow. Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream or drive in water. The depth is not always obvious. It takes only six inches of fast flowing water to sweep you off your feet.
4. Do not allow children to play in or near high water, storm drains, or ditches. Flood waters may be contaminated with oil, gasoline, or raw sewage.
5. Do not sweep or blow yard leaves, pine needles, grass clippings, or soil into the street or stormwater system. Doing so clogs pipes and prevents flood waters from draining.



FIRE SAFETY

1. **PLAN:** The time to plan for a fire emergency is now. Take a few minutes to discuss with your family or coworkers what actions you will need to take as you make your Disaster Plan for your family or business. Contact numbers are extremely important. Test smoke alarms in your home monthly.
2. **EVACUATION PLAN:** Decide where you will go and how you will get there. Unlike evacuating for a hurricane, with fire you may only have a moment's notice. Have at least two escape routes out of your home and out of your neighborhood. Have a plan for evacuating your pets or service animals.
3. **FIRE DRILLS:** Make sure everyone knows at least two escape routes from your home or business and practice regularly.



HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

IF YOU ARE TOLD TO EVACUATE:

1. Stay calm. Quickly gather what you will need, unless you are told to leave immediately.
2. Move to the place/shelter designated by public officials.
3. Keep car windows/air vents closed. Do not use the air conditioner until you are out of the evacuation area.
4. Do not return to the evacuation area until/unless the all clear has been given by public officials.

IF YOU ARE TOLD TO STAY INDOORS & SHELTER-IN-PLACE:

1. Bring pets indoors.
2. Close all doors and windows. Seal all gaps under doorways and windows with damp towels and duct tape.
3. Turn off heating, cooling, or ventilation systems.
4. Stay inside until local officials say you can leave safely.



TERRORISM / VIOLENT CRIME

1. **"See Something, Say Something."** Call local law enforcement, then Florida's toll-free hotline **1-855-352-7233 (1-855-FLA-SAFE)** to report any suspicious activity. If it is an emergency, dial **9-1-1!**
2. Your Family Disaster Plan should include emergency contacts and a designated meeting place. Be prepared to respond to official instructions to evacuate the building or area.

KEEP A PAPER TRAIL

Keep important documents in a fireproof safe or box, and store a copy in a secure location away from your home or business.

- Proof of residence/ownership
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Passports
- Social Security cards
- Bank and credit card info.
- Wills, deeds, and copies of recent tax returns
- Stocks and bonds
- Copy of driver's license
- Special medical information
- Insurance policies
- Property inventories or photos of your home and business
- Business tax license
- Business supply/vendor lists



TORNADOES

1. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio and/or a battery-powered commercial radio and extra batteries.
2. Many mobile phones are capable of receiving Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs). These alerts can inform you about life-threatening weather conditions in your immediate area.
3. Know the terms used to describe tornado threats:
 - a. **"Tornado Watch"** - Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms.
 - b. **"Tornado Warning"** - A tornado has been sighted or indicated by a weather radar. Take shelter immediately.
4. If a tornado threatens, seek shelter in a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
5. **Mobile homes and RVs are not safe during tornadoes.** Abandon mobile homes and go to the nearest sturdy building immediately.
6. If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter in a sturdy building, NOT a mobile home or portable structure.
7. If you cannot quickly walk to a sturdy building, immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt, and try to drive to the closest sturdy building. Take pillows/blankets with you.
8. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. **Now you have the following options as a last resort:**
 - a. Stay in your vehicle with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible.
 - b. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your car, and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.



DISEASE OUTBREAK

1. Prevention is key. Get your flu shot and other vaccinations.
2. Wash hands often and thoroughly.
3. Stay home when you are ill. Employers and schools should encourage this policy.

Follow Sarasota County's Social Media

facebook.com/SRQEmergencyServices

twitter.com/scgovEOC

Bracing for the Storm

Storms can be unpredictable. As the storm approaches, stay tuned for the latest weather updates on local radio and TV stations, NOAA Weather Radio, and your county's official social media.



MOBILE HOMES & RVs

Mobile home and RV residents must evacuate for any hurricane evacuation order given in the county, regardless of location within the county. **NEVER stay inside a mobile home or RV to ride out the storm.** Evacuate to a friend's or relative's home, hotel, motel, or nearby designated shelter/evacuation center. Anchor mobile homes or RVs with tie downs, and inspect tie downs annually.

AT-HOME HEALTHCARE & HOMEBOUND PATIENTS

Tell your home health agency and oxygen company where you will be during a hurricane. Ask them about their plans to provide care. If you are homebound, but not under the care of a home health agency, contact your physician to determine your best plan of action.

If you require respirators or other electric-dependent medical equipment, you should make **medical arrangements with your physician and register with your power company.**

SPECIAL NEEDS EVACUATIONS

If you evacuate, remember to take medications, written instructions regarding your care, special equipment, and bedding with you.

If you will need assistance in an evacuation or need to go to a special needs/medically dependent shelter/evacuation center, **please register with your county's emergency management agency now.**

Special needs/medically dependent shelters/evacuation centers do not provide hands-on medical care, only medical monitoring. You should bring one caregiver with you.

HELP YOUR NEIGHBORS

People with disabilities or in poor health (either mentally or physically), or those who are without the support of family or friends, should plan ahead for an emergency. They may need special assistance from family members, friends, neighbors, or social service agencies. **Please ask for help if you need it and volunteer to help those who do.** If an older adult lives in a nursing home, assisted living facility (ALF), or residential facility, the administrator should be contacted to learn about the facility's disaster plan.

Older adults who are also caregivers may require outside assistance. Excessive stress and anxiety can contribute to increased episodes of illness, particularly for persons with heart disease and other illnesses.

THE ABCS OF SEVERE WEATHER

To withstand the forces of wind associated with severe weather remember your ABCs:

- A** ANCHOR ROOF
- B** BRACE ENTRY & GARAGE DOORS
- C** COVER WINDOWS
- S** SAFE ROOM

DO NOT stay in a room which does not have shielded windows/glass doors. Find an interior room — a bathroom, hallway, or closet — which will help buffer you from the storm's winds and any flying debris. Safe rooms can also be site-built or manufactured, and can be installed in new or existing homes. Make sure all family members know where the safe room is and be sure to take your disaster supplies with you.

Disaster Supplies

Stock up now (or a little at a time) and store where you can get to them quickly.

STORE UNTIL NEEDED:

- First aid kit including bandages, antiseptic, tape, compresses, aspirin and aspirin-free pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid, and important phone numbers
- Flashlights and batteries for each family member
- Portable radio and batteries
- Mosquito repellent
- Sunscreen
- Whistle and/or distress flag
- Plastic tarp, window screening, tools, and nails
- Non-electric can opener
- Instant tire sealer
- Fire extinguisher (small canister, ABC type)
- Water purification kit (tablets, chlorine (odorless) and iodine)
- Clean-up supplies (mop, buckets, towels, disinfectant)
- Garbage can or bucket with tight-fitting lid and cat litter (emergency toilet)
- Toilet paper, paper towels, and pre-moistened towelettes or baby wipes

REPLENISH FOR FRESHNESS:

- Up-to-date list of family medicines and dosages, along with doctor and pharmacy phone numbers, and a 2-week supply of prescription medicines.
- Enough non-perishable foods to feed your family and pets for 3-7 days. Special dietary foods or baby food and formula, if needed. Replenish every 6 months.
- 1 gallon of drinking water per person, per day, plus water for cooking and washing (minimum 7 days). Stock up on a few cases of bottled waters at your home and/or workplace in the event that there is a "boil water" order.
- Infant items (medicine, sterile water, diapers, ready-made formula, bottles), if needed.
- Extra batteries (camera, flashlight, radio, portable TV, lamp)

ITEMS FOR BEFORE & AFTER A STORM:

- Emergency charger for cell phones and other devices (consider a solar powered alternative)
- An old-fashioned corded telephone that does not require electricity (i.e. not a cordless phone or cell phone)
- Cash (with no power, banks may be closed; checks and credit cards may not be accepted, and ATMs may not be operational)
- Charcoal, matches, and grill (do not use indoors)
- Ice chest/cooler and ice
- Generator fuel

Keep Pets Safe

Do not leave your pet, and do not use a pet as an excuse not to evacuate!

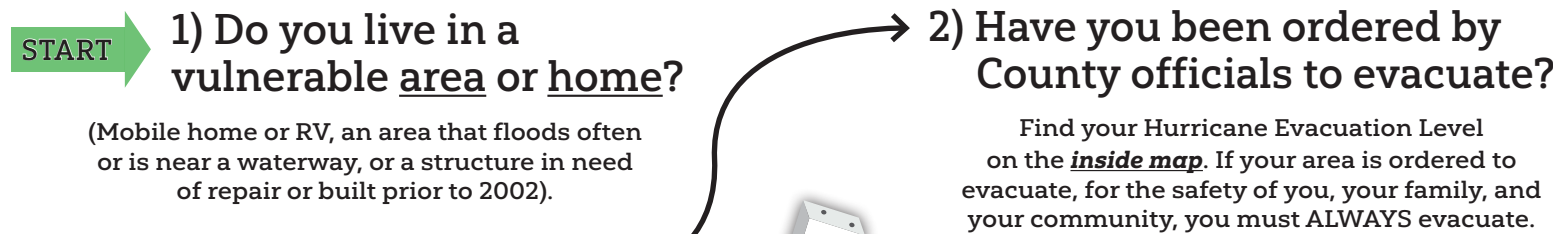
- Nearly 80% of pets displaced by a storm are never reunited with their owners. If you are ordered to evacuate, take your **Pet Disaster Supplies** with you to a safe location. Many shelters/evacuation centers may allow pets; however, as a pet owner, **you must plan ahead.**
- Make sure your pets have had all of their shots within the past 12 months. Pet-friendly shelters/evacuation centers and boarding facilities will require **proof of vaccinations.**
- Research your options for evacuating with pets. Call your local SPCA, Animal Control, or Humane Society for more information. If you plan to go to a hotel or motel, visit petswelcome.com.
- After the storm has passed, **be careful allowing pets outdoors.** Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and pets could easily be confused and become lost. Downed power lines, other animals, and insects brought in with high water could present dangers to pets.

PET DISASTER SUPPLIES

- Proper ID collar & rabies tag/license
- Microchipping your pet is strongly recommended
- Vaccination paperwork
- Leash
- Carrier or crate large enough for your pet to move around and contain a litter box if needed.
- Newspapers, cat litter, scoop, and plastic trash bags for handling waste
- Non-electric can opener
- Ample food supply (at least 2 weeks)
- Ample water supply (at least 2 weeks)
- Water/food bowls
- Indoor pee pads
- Necessary medications
- Specific care instruction
- Photo of you with your pet
- A comfort item such as a favorite toy or blanket
- Proper ID on all belongings (including emergency contact information if you evacuate)

If a storm is approaching, there are two paths to consider.

EVACUATE OR STAY? WHICH PATH SHOULD YOU TAKE?



YES NO

YES NO

Don't roll the dice and take a chance on your life!

EVACUATE!

Do not panic. Move at a steady pace and leave enough time to get to where you will weather the storm.

DO NOT take chances by staying in an unsafe location or waiting until it is too late!

STAY HOME!

Sheltering in place is a practical option if you live in a safe area and structure. Offer your home as a shelter to relatives or friends in harm's way.



IF YOU EVACUATE, ALSO TAKE:

- Hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.)
- Extra clothing, shoes, eyeglasses, hearing aids (and batteries)
- Important papers and irreplaceable keepsakes (driver's license, special medical information, insurance policies, property inventories, photographs, etc.)
- Pillows, blankets, sleeping bags, or air mattresses
- Folding chairs, lawn chairs, or cots

EVACUATION ITEMS FOR CHILDREN:

- Baby food jars- combination of vegetables, fruits, cereals, & meats
- Formula (powered and/or ready-made)
- Oral electrolyte solution, such as Pedialyte
- Cereal (child age-specific)
- Favorite healthy snacks
- Juice boxes
- Baby feeding spoons
- Baby bottles
- Nipples for baby bottles
- Toddler potty seat
- Diapers / pull-ups
- Diaper wipes
- Diaper rash ointment
- Disposable changing pads
- Infant bathing basin, wash cloths and towels
- Infant hat and booties
- Lightweight blankets
- Portable crib
- Small toys that do not make noise such as books, cards, puzzles, handheld games with extra batteries

BUILDING OR REMODELING?

There are ways to retrofit your home to minimize flood risks, including elevation, flood barriers, dry and wet flood proofing. Ask your insurance agent if there are any discounts for performing mitigation measures to your home or business. Tips for how to make your home safer:

- flash.org** (Federal Alliance for Safe Homes)
- Call FLASH toll-free at **877-221-SAFE (7233)**
- mysafeflorida.org**
- floodsmart.gov**

For more disaster planning information, contact your local emergency management agency (see **inside map** for contact numbers), your local chapter of the **American Red Cross**, or go online to: tampabayprepares.org, floridadisaster.org, or ready.gov.

Get extra cash

Banks and ATMs will not operate during power outages. Few stores will be able to accept credit cards or personal checks.

Check on your neighbors

Especially the elderly and people with medical needs. Are they prepared?

Stay alert

Stay alert to weather advisories. Use a NOAA Weather Radio and follow County web and social media updates.

RIDE OUT THE STORM

Listen to local officials for the all clear before going outside or returning home. Florida Emergency Information Line: 1-800-342-3557

Hit the road

When advised by your County, grab your family, pets, and supply kit and head to safety using your Hurricane Evacuation Map (*inside this guide*).

Check on your neighbors

Especially the elderly and people with medical needs. Do they need transportation assistance?

Image Credit: The Sims 4 Electronic Arts

What to Expect After a Storm



After a disaster, you may be without power and many of the services you rely on, including water, sewer, phone, cell phone, businesses, etc. Immediate response may not be possible, so you must prepare to be self-reliant for at least 3-7 days after the storm.



RE-ENTRY AFTER THE STORM

1. **BE PATIENT.** You will not be able to return to your home or business until search and rescue operations are complete and safety hazards, such as downed power lines, are cleared. It may take time for emergency crews to reach your neighborhood.
2. **Residents:** Have valid ID with your current address.
3. **Businesses:** Have a valid picture ID, documents showing proof of ownership/rental, County business tax license, and names of individuals authorized to be given access on a business letterhead.
4. **Avoid driving, especially through water.** Roads may have debris which can puncture your tires! Until power is restored, traffic signals may be inoperable for an extended period of time. Treat any intersection where traffic signals are out as a 4-way stop.
5. Once you arrive back, walk around your home or business from the outside first to **survey damage and enter with caution.**
6. **Be extremely cautious with fire.** Do not light a match without first making sure that there is not a gas leak.
7. If you suspect a gas leak, **leave immediately and call 9-1-1.** Contact your natural gas provider from a safe location.
8. Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home or business.
9. If your home or business has been flooded, have a qualified licensed electrician inspect the electrical system and appliances before turning the power back on.
10. Let your out-of-town contact know you are safe and uninjured.



POST-STORM SAFETY

1. Keep grills and generators outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a frequent killer.
2. Avoid candles. Use battery-operated flashlights and lamps instead.
3. Stay tuned to your local media for up-to-date emergency information.
4. Avoid driving. If you drive, treat any intersection with inoperable traffic signals as a four-way stop.
5. Always supervise children.
6. **DO NOT WADE IN FLOOD WATERS.**
7. Be aware of snakes, insects, alligators, or animals driven to higher ground by floods.
8. Avoid downed or dangling power lines. Be especially careful when clearing fallen trees.
9. Be extremely careful with a chainsaw and follow all safety precautions.
10. Call professionals to remove large, uprooted trees, etc.
11. **Always use proper safety equipment** such as heavy gloves, safety goggles, heavy boots, long-sleeve shirts, and long pants. Tie back long hair. Wear a hat and sunscreen.
12. Drink plenty of fluids, rest and ask for help when you need it.
13. Do not burn trash.



GENERATORS - TAKE PRECAUTIONS & STORE FUEL SAFELY!

1. Generators can provide power to your home or business in case of a power outage or shortage.
2. Determine the appliance or equipment you want to use.
3. Determine if a portable or stationary generator is required.
4. Stationary (whole house) generators run off gas utility lines or an LP tank and supply electrical power to pre-selected circuits. They **MUST** be professionally installed by a licensed electrician.
5. Determine if you will need multiple outlets or multiple types of outlets on your generator.
6. Store fuel safely outside in labeled approved storage containers.
7. **NEVER connect a portable generator to building wiring.** There is an extreme danger of generator back-feed for the general public (downed wires etc.) and utility workers. Plug appliances, etc., directly into the generator.
8. Place generator outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide (CO) to come indoors. **Exhaust fumes are deadly.**
9. Before refueling your generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Do not forget to check the oil every time you add gas. Keep generators dry. Conserve fuel by limiting use of appliances.



CLEAN-UP & REPAIRS

1. Know what your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy covers and what you will need to submit a claim. Take photographs of all damage before repairs and keep all receipts.
2. Make temporary repairs to correct safety hazards and minimize further damage.
3. 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, or filling.



BEWARE OF CONTRACTOR FRAUD

1. Hire only licensed contractors. Be cautious of anyone coming to your home uninvited and offering to do home repairs.
2. Obtain a written estimate or contract. Insist on start/completion dates and payment terms in the contract. Do not pay in full before work begins and do not pay the final balance until the work is completed to your satisfaction. **NEVER pay with cash.** Do not pull the permits for the contractor. This may be an indication they are not properly licensed.
3. If you suspect a contractor of potential fraud, contact the State of Florida Consumer Fraud hotline at **1-866-966-7226.**