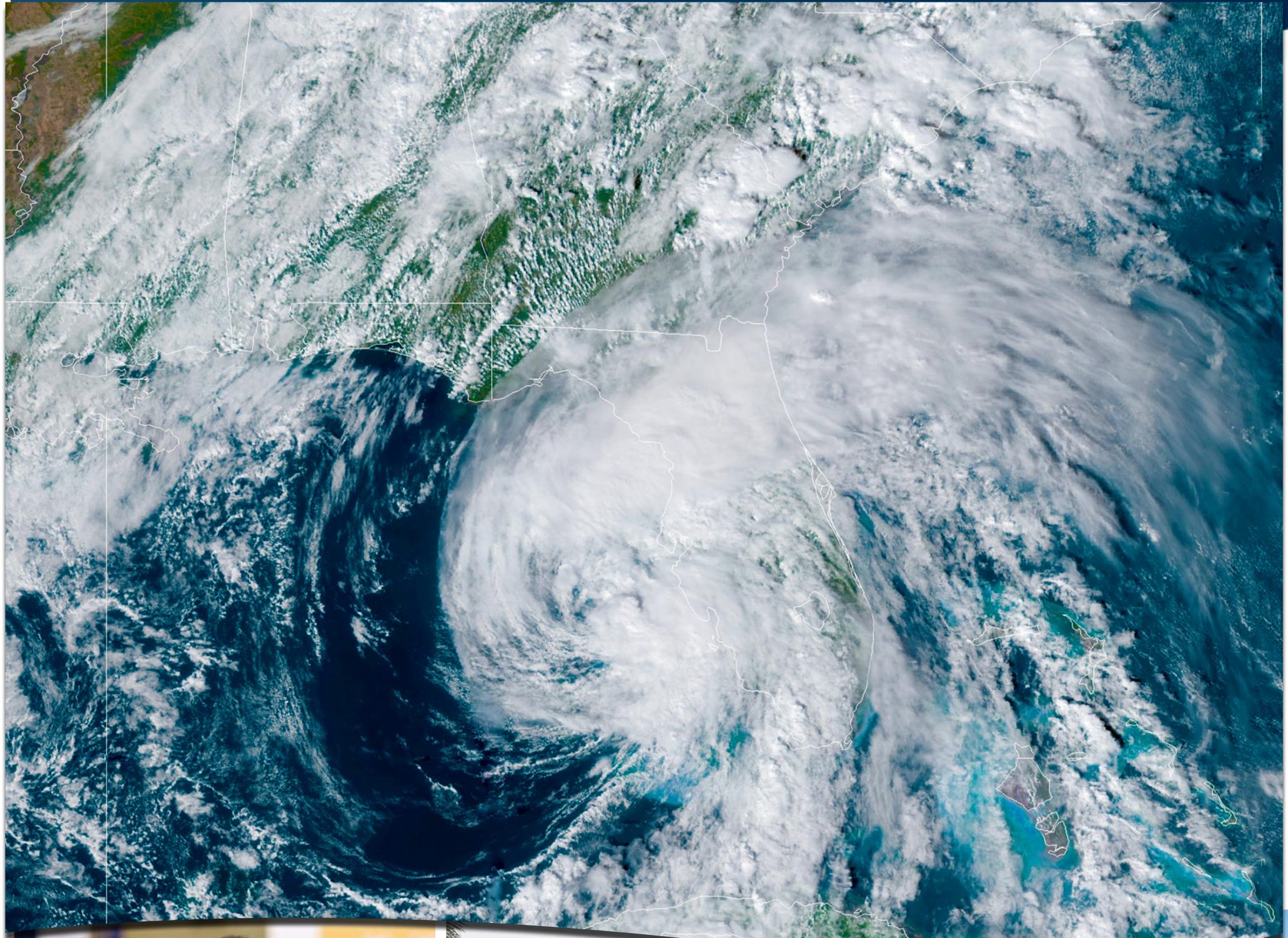




HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

A 2021-2022 annual guide
to all-hazard planning



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All-Hazard Preparedness

To be prepared for any storm, there are three things everyone must do:

1. Know your Risk 2. Make a Plan 3. Stay Informed

No two storms are the same. If the last storm missed you, don't assume that the next one will, too. This guide is designed to help you take the steps you need before a storm arrives, to know what to do when a storm threatens our area and what to do after a storm.

If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out to Pinellas County Emergency Management. For handy tools, download the Ready Pinellas app on your mobile device to sign up for emergency notifications. When the storm is approaching, our County Information Center will open so that you can call with your questions. We are in this together.

Know your risk

Storm Surge



Water threats such as storm surge and flooding can be life-threatening situations. Evacuations are based on the amount of storm surge that is predicted for the approaching hurricane. **Storm surge is water that is pushed from the Gulf of Mexico onto the land by the force**

of the wind. It happens quickly and is powerful, rushing over land and overtaking everything in its path.

There are five zones for evacuation based on where the surge may impact. "Zone A" areas are most vulnerable to storm surge. The barrier islands and low-lying areas in the county are considered the highest risk for storm surge. Listen carefully to evacuation guidelines. There may be times when only the high risk areas of Evacuation Zone A will be directed to leave. If the storm is large enough we may call for evacuations of Zones B, C, D and up through Zone E. You should evacuate outside of the area called for evacuation. Each storm is different so it is critical that you stay informed.

Because evacuations take time to ensure everyone can get to safety, they are called well in advance of the storm. Evacuations have a beginning and end time. You must be in a safe location by the end of the evacuation period, well before the storm surge and high winds arrive.

Evacuation orders issued by Pinellas County are for the entire county, including cities and unincorporated areas.

Listen closely to the evacuation order to see if your zone is included. If it is not included, you do not need to evacuate based on storm surge.

Know your zone

There are several ways to find out your evacuation zone:

www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone

Ready Pinellas mobile app

Utility bill (Pinellas County Utilities customers, some cities)

Property Appraiser Parcel records

(727) 453-3150 (for landline phones only). If you live in or have a businesses in a "non-evacuation zone," you will not be ordered to evacuate (with the exception of mobile and manufactured homes).

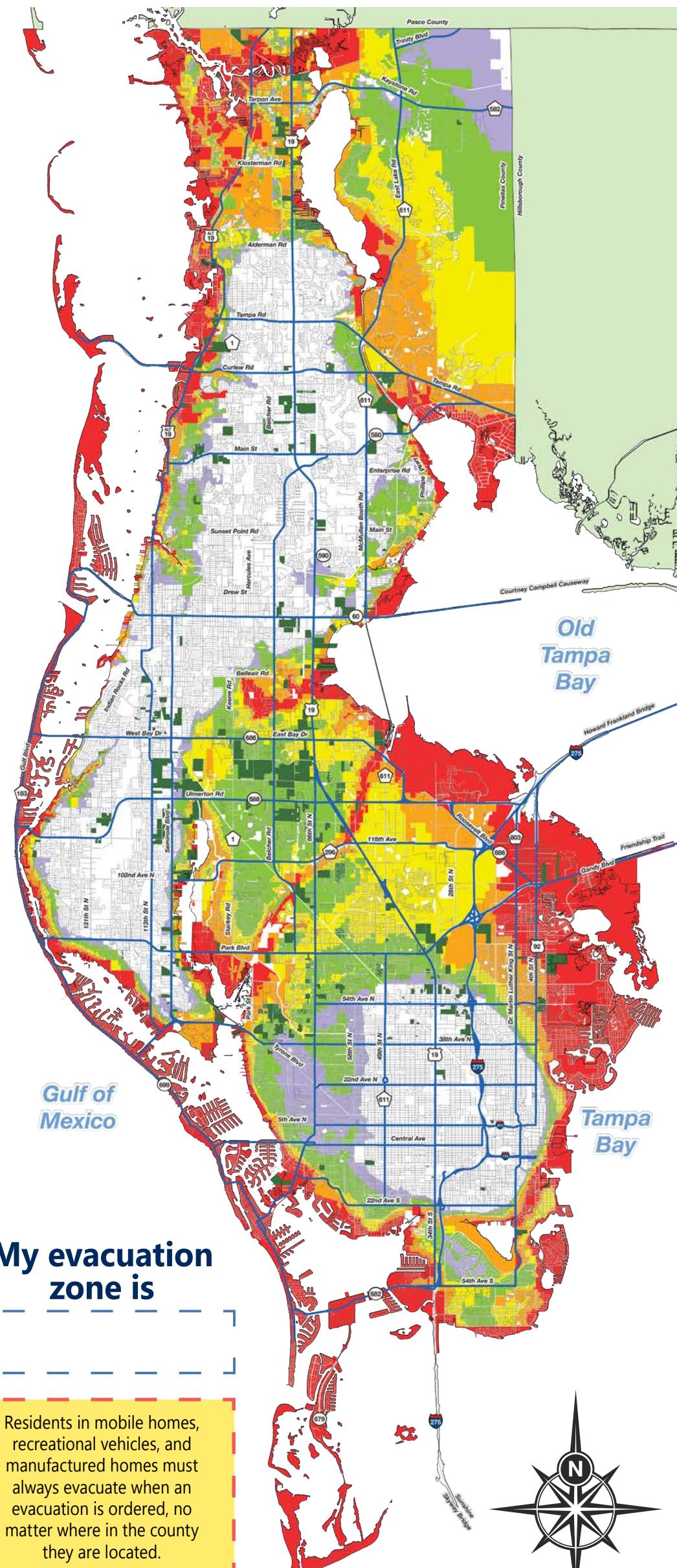
Evacuation Guidelines

EVACUATION ZONES	Potential Surge Heights (in feet)
Mobile Home Parks	Mobile homes MUST always evacuate.
A	Up to 11 feet Evacuate red areas and all mobile homes
B	Up to 15 feet Evacuate red and orange areas and all mobile homes
C	Up to 20 feet Evacuate red and orange areas and all mobile homes
D	Up to 28 feet Evacuate red, orange, yellow and green areas and all mobile homes
E	Up to 35 feet Evacuate red, orange, yellow, green and purple areas and all mobile homes
Areas shown in white are non-evacuation zones.	

Evacuation Routes

What's the difference between evacuation zones and flood zones?

EVACUATION ZONES	FLOOD ZONES
Based on tropical storm and hurricane scenarios	Based on the probability of flooding from heavy rain or high tides
Based on ground elevation and proximity to water	Based on flood risk over period of years for insurance and building purposes
Set by local Emergency Management; based on National Hurricane Center information.	Set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency
Look up online at: https://kyz.pinellascounty.org/	Look up online at: www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm





Flood

Hurricane evacuation zones and flood zones are not the same thing. You can live in an area that is in a non-evacuation zone based on storm surge, but everyone is in a flood zone, which may be a high, moderate or low flood risk.

It is important to check both your evacuation zone and your flood zone. Look up both at www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm.

Hurricanes, tropical storms and other severe weather can cause high tides, flooding and other drainage problems in Pinellas County. Just a few inches of rain over a short period of time can present flood hazards. Multiple days of rain can also have a lasting impact. Low-lying areas can be especially vulnerable during these events.

Like storm surge, floods from rain can be extremely fast-moving. If your neighborhood becomes flooded, do not attempt to walk in the water. Likewise, do not drive through flooded roads.

Wind

Hurricane wind speed is described in categories from 1 to 5. The scale to the right gives an idea of how much property damage could occur.

In assessing your risk for wind, consider the age and sturdiness of your structure. Was it built after 2002, when the Florida Building Code was established? Find out by visiting the Property Appraiser's website at www.pcpao.org.

If you live in a mobile home, manufactured home or recreational vehicle, you must evacuate no matter what, because these structures are not strong enough to withstand high winds, even if they are strapped down.

Has your home, business, or house of worship been hardened to withstand high winds? Be sure your structure is sound before inviting others to shelter there.

Category	Sustained Winds	Wind Damage	Saffir-Simpson Scale
1	74-95 mph	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage: Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles, vinyl siding, gutters. Snapped tree branches. Power outages likely.	
2	96-110 mph	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage: Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many trees snapped or uprooted. Near-total power loss.	
3 (major)	111-129 mph	Devastating damage will occur: Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees snapped. Electricity and water unavailable for days to weeks.	
4 (major)	130-156 mph	Catastrophic damage will occur: Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage, including roof structure and some exterior walls. Most trees snapped. Power outages for weeks or months. Most of the area uninhabitable for weeks or months.	
5 (major)	157 mph or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur: High percentage of framed homes destroyed, total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks or months. Most of the area uninhabitable for weeks or months.	

In 2017, Hurricane Irma only had wind gusts to Category 1 strength in Pinellas County, yet power was out for several days for many residents. Do not underestimate a hurricane or even a tropical storm.

Insurance

Assessing your risk and being insured

Property and casualty insurance insures your belongings and also provides you with liability coverage in case you are found at fault for injury or property damage in an accident.

If you own property, such as a home, rental property, boat or business, ask your insurance agent about the options for insuring that property against financial loss.

Not all insurance policies are created equal. It is important to discuss all of your insurance needs with your agent, prior to hurricane season, to ensure you are adequately protected. Consider insurance for mobile homes, boats and businesses. Insurance contracts are written for a specific type of risk; be sure to have coverages built in to best protect each type of asset. Understand your:

- Policy
- Coverage
- Deductibles
- Exclusives
- Responsibilities after a loss
- Statute of limitations for filing a claim

Remember that most forms of disaster assistance require a specific declaration from the president. This is not always offered after a disaster, and it often comes in forms of loans that must be repaid. Having homeowners insurance and flood insurance means that coverage and assistance is always available regardless of disaster declarations.

Loss assessment

Loss assessment coverage is an optional endorsement that you can add onto your homeowners insurance or condo insurance policy. This coverage helps protect you if you live in a shared community, like a condo or homeowners association (HOA) where you are responsible for a portion of damage or loss in a common area. It is recommended to speak to your insurance agent about your options for adding this endorsement and / or increasing the limits to best protect your investment.

Loss of Use (Additional Living Expense)

Loss of Use Coverage, also known as Additional Living Expense, is the portion of a standard homeowners insurance policy or condo insurance policy that protects you in the event that your home is destroyed or damaged by a covered peril and you must seek other living arrangements while repairs are made. Loss of use coverage can help reimburse you for hotel, restaurant and other living expenses you may incur during a specified time period as a result of your home being uninhabitable. Most flood insurance policies, including National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policies, do not cover Loss of Use. It is best to make sure this is covered on your standard homeowners or condo insurance policies.

Property insurance tips

Disaster restoration companies

From homeowners insurance to commercial insurance for your business, many restoration companies offer special or "preferred" programs for clients that contract prior to hurricane season for their services. Often, this includes a no-cost evaluation to determine the specific risks and needs associated with your property.

Establishing this relationship during "blue skies," or prior to hurricane season, ensures you will be able to secure the assistance you need after sustaining a loss from a storm. Once the storm has hit, these companies are overwhelmed with phone calls requesting bids for service. These "preferred" programs not only secure you as a client but can also protect you from the increase in cost due to the demand for restoration service throughout the county.

In addition, restoration companies are familiar with the insurance claims process and work with insurance companies regularly.

It is important to confirm the company you contract with is licensed, bonded and insured.

Assignment of Benefits

An Assignment of Benefits is an agreement a repair contractor may ask you to sign that transfers your insurance policy benefits and rights directly to them. This eliminates your ability to work with your insurance company adjuster and may result in theft of your claims payment. While this practice was originally designed to streamline the claims and repair process for a property owner, it's been increasingly exploited by scam artists, especially in Florida over the last several years. The challenge is that an Assignment of Benefits can make it more difficult to receive claims payments and can substantially delay the claims process.

Consult your insurance agent and/or an attorney if you are asked to sign an Assignment of Benefits.

Take photos and videos of your property

As property owner, you should document everything. There is no such thing as over documenting. Take plenty of photos and video of your property, document your contents (personal property) on a spreadsheet and take photos or scan receipts for big ticket items. Keeping this information organized and secure for easy access after the storm will make the claims process much easier, and quicker for all parties involved.

Be sure to keep updated maintenance records. Providing proof of updates, repairs or replacements to the major systems of the home or building will assist the adjuster in the claims process. If you have not kept records of when and how you repaired your 15-year-old roof, then you cannot expect to get paid full replacement cost of the roof at the time it was damaged.

Mobile homes must always evacuate



Mobile homes, manufactured homes and recreational vehicles are not strong enough to withstand the strong winds of a hurricane. Whenever an evacuation order is given in Pinellas County, residents of these types of homes must evacuate. This evacuation order is for the entire county, regardless of where you are located in the county.

- Even newer mobile homes, built under tougher laws, cannot withstand storm-force wind gusts or tornadoes. In addition, carports, awnings and parts of the home may become missiles in the wind, making the mobile home parks themselves dangerous places to be.
- Community centers in mobile home parks may not be safe shelters.

To protect your mobile home:

- Add anchors and straps if needed.
- Replace rusted anchors and connections.
- Tighten straps.
- Fix wood rot and termite damage at connections, joists and trusses.

Before you evacuate:

- Place shutters/plywood over windows.
- Remove loose items from around your unit.
- Lower TV and radio antennas.
- Lower/remove awnings.
- Elevate belongings if your park often floods.
- Shut off power and/or breakers

High-rise buildings

If you are in an evacuation zone and are ordered to leave, don't make the mistake of thinking that condominiums and other high-rise buildings are safe. They are not, for several reasons:

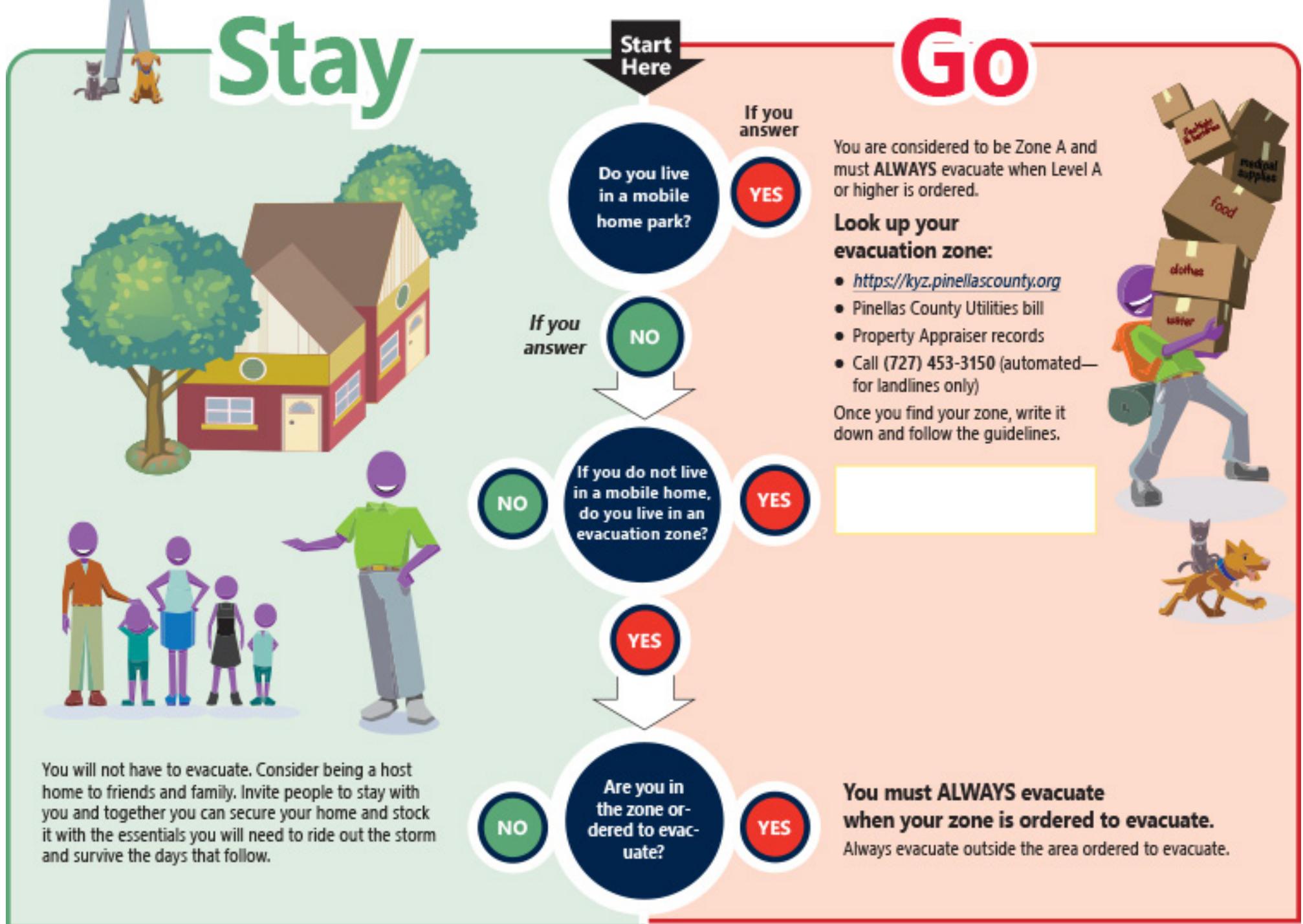
Storm surge may weaken the foundation of the building.

- Wind can cause windows to blow out, floors to collapse, roofs to rip off.
- Even if you have shutters, other units of the building may not. Unprotected windows can fail, allowing wind and water into interior areas and compromising the integrity of the building.
- If you stay, you could be cut off from any emergency help.
- Wind is stronger at higher elevations.
- After the storm, there will likely be no power (no elevators), no transportation, no water, sewer and other services.
- Your vehicle will be flooded (you will be stranded).
- Fire suppression systems in buildings may be compromised.
- Remember that an evacuation order applies to everyone, including condominiums and other high-rise buildings.



Should I stay or should I go?

Use this tool to see if and when you would have to evacuate.



If you have to evacuate, you have options



We recommend that you wear cloth face coverings, continue to practice proper hygiene and cleaning practices, and practice social distancing wherever you go. Have a face covering and hand sanitizing wipes for every person who will be evacuating with you.

Stay with family or friends

The best option for evacuation is staying with family or friends locally who are not in an evacuation zone, if possible.



If you live in a non-evacuation zone, have a sturdy home, and plan to shelter in your own home, consider inviting friends or family who have to evacuate to stay with you. Conversely, if you have to evacuate, consider asking a friend or family member in a non-evacuation zone if you can stay with them until it is safe for you to return home. When you shelter with other people, you can share preparedness tasks, such as collecting supplies, and provide comfort to each other during stressful times. It is the best alternative to a public shelter.

The host home program

Not everyone has family in the area or friends with whom they can stay. You may be able to assist by setting up a Host Home program within your organization, House of Worship, business or other affiliation.

With the Host Home program, the organizer distributes a survey that asks people if they are able to be a host home, based on their risk assessment. The survey is used to collect information from the potential host that will be used to "match" them to those who need a home to stay during a storm. The organizer will ask questions like: Do you have pets? Are you a smoker? Do you have small children? The residents who indicate that they will need to evacuate are asked the same questions. The Host Home organizer then suggests who would be a good fit.



At that point, it is up to the host and guest to plan the details of their sheltering. They may want to share tasks, such as shuttering windows. One might bring the non-perishables and the other supply sanitizer and other items. They make this plan together.

Use the toolbox available online at www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hosthomes.htm.

If you have managerial control over a structure, and a group with which you are affiliated, you might be able to offer your facility as a shelter to employees, congregations or members. To consider this option, you need to first know your risk. Assess your building. Is it in a non-evacuation zone? Is it in a low-risk flood zone? Is your building sturdy? You may want a professional to assess your structure to make sure it is a safe to stay in.

A template for a communications plan is available online at www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hosthomes.htm.

Pet host home

If you cannot host anyone but have room and a heart for pets, consider making the offer to shelter the pets of family or friends. This would give the pet owner more options for their own evacuation plans, while keeping their pets safe.



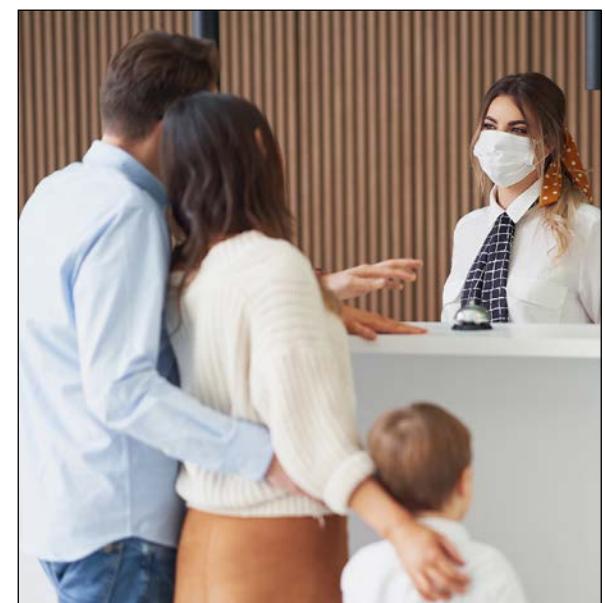
Out of town

If you decide that you will evacuate from the county, you must leave days in advance of the hurricane to beat overbooked flights and jam-packed highways.

Fill your gas tank as early as possible and get cash.

- Bring your emergency kit, including emergency supplies for your vehicle (*See page 10 for a list of recommended supplies*).
- Shut off water, gas, and power or breakers to your structure before leaving.
- Travel to an area that is not anywhere close to the forecasted path of the hurricane. There are many examples of people evacuating to the east side of the state, or to a state north of Florida, only to have the hurricane hit there.
- After the hurricane passes, you may not be able to return to the county right away.
- Flights may be canceled, highways closed and bridges damaged. Traffic may be restricted until it is safe.
- Even if the county is open for re-entry, your community may not be. If you live on a barrier island, for example, you may not be able to return home right away. If this is the case, make arrangements to stay with family or friends before you travel.
- Consider the impact to counties that you might have to travel through. Even if conditions in Pinellas County are safe, other areas of the state or even beyond Florida may not be.

- Monitor the Pinellas County website at www.pinellascounty.org for updates. Check trusted media outlets.
- Remember to travel with personal identification, proof of residence and an Emergency Access Permit for re-entry to the barrier islands, if needed. You can obtain one at your municipality or by going to pcsweb.com/emergency-access-permit.



Hotel/motel

If you are planning to stay in a hotel or other lodging, choose wisely and remember to leave early enough so that you can travel safely.

- Check the evacuation zone of the hotel.
- Make reservations early and call ahead to confirm your stay.
- If you have a pet, look for pet-friendly lodgings. Check for changes to pet policies. Sometimes the pet policy will differ during an emergency.
- Know what hotels are available. Visit St. Pete/Clearwater participates in a statewide Accommodations Availability and Information Hotline. Call **(800) 317-5050** or visit www.visitstpeteclearwater.com/storm, which is active before and after a storm.
- Do not depend on the hotel to provide food or water. Bring enough supplies to last for at least two weeks.

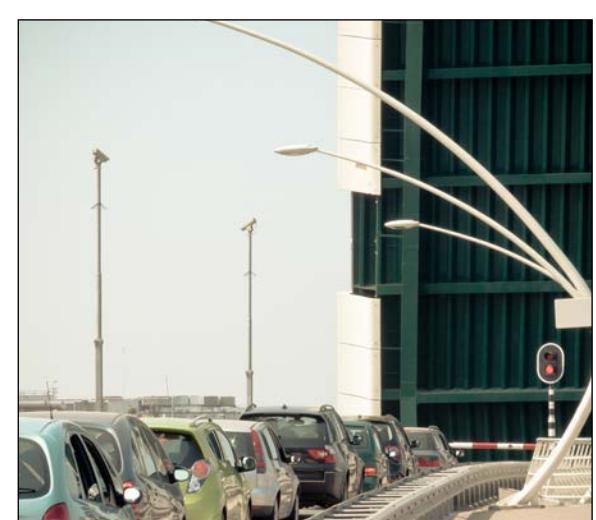
Modified bridge closings

When a hurricane is approaching, Pinellas County's drawbridges will not open for boats on demand, giving preference to evacuating vehicle traffic. As the storm gets closer, the bridges will be locked down to ensure that the barrier islands are evacuated and to protect the bridges from wind damage.

A special marine advisory will be issued by the U.S. Coast Guard to update boaters.

The drawbridges include:

- Corey Causeway
- John's Pass
- Tom Stuart Causeway
- Indian Rocks
- Dunedin Causeway
- Beckett Bridge
- Park Boulevard
- Treasure Island



Public shelters

Public shelters are designed for the safety of everyone. But please remember that public shelters are lifeboats, not cruise ships. Come prepared for an environment that is noisy and well-lit throughout the night. The space that you are allocated will be limited. You should also be prepared for a long period of time waiting out the storm. With the exception of special needs shelters, the public shelters do not have generators. There is a good chance that power will be lost—a battery-powered fan is recommended. Don't forget a flashlight and battery powered radio for updates.

COVID-19 Considerations:

- We plan to use all available shelter space to allow for social distancing. Alternate locations may be used, and it will be important to monitor the news for an up-to-date list of sites for any evacuations that are ordered and the shelter locations that will open.
- Following social distancing will keep everyone safer. In general public shelters, we will increase the amount of space per individual/family households, increase routine cleaning of common areas, and work to provide proper hand washing materials and hand sanitizer, as able.
- Cloth face coverings are recommended when you are in public places. Plan to bring your own mask to a shelter. Have enough clean masks per person in your household in your hurricane kit.

Remember: Public shelters do not have cots or generators, and the space you will be able to utilize is limited.

Prepare by bringing:

- a one-person air mattress
- books and activities
- a fan
- earplugs
- covering for your eyes for sleeping
- other hygiene, comfort items and medications

Often, there is food and water served, but you may want to bring your own food if you are on a special diet.



Residents who have tested positive for COVID-19

Those who have tested positive in Pinellas County will be notified by the Department of Health in Pinellas County to talk about sheltering options. If you do not hear from the DOH or if you have tested positive outside of Pinellas County, please contact the DOH at **(727) 824-6932**. This call center is open 24 hours, seven days a week.

Pinellas County has designated a shelter for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 within 30 days of an evacuation being ordered. If an evacuation order is issued, and you have tested positive for COVID-19 in Pinellas County, the Florida Department of Health - Pinellas will contact you to inform you of where the shelter is located. If you have tested positive in a different County, and are impacted by an evacuation order, please call FDOH-Pinellas at **(727) 824-6932**.

Special needs shelters

Special needs shelters are for those who need minimal medical assistance or who are dependent on electricity for life-sustaining equipment. They are not for residents of assisted living facilities or long-term nursing care. If you are an assisted living facility resident, you can ask your facility's administrator for information on your healthcare facility's emergency plan.

- Please preregister for special needs shelters by calling **(727) 464-3800** or visit: www.pinellascounty.org/specialneeds to download a form and find more information.
- If you need assistance with transportation, you must be registered. Use the special needs shelter form to indicate your transportation needs.
- The guidelines that apply to general public shelters will be the same in special needs shelters. Additional precautions will be taken when transporting clients or evacuees to the shelters.
- Caregivers and immediate family members will stay together as a family unit, with appropriate spacing between each unit.
- As with general public shelters, precautions will be taken to keep the area clean and sanitized. Keep in mind that not all special needs shelters have cots for everyone, so bring a one-person air mattress with you if needed. You will need to bring your own medical

equipment and cloth face coverings for each person in your party.

- Please see the section on public sheltering for other general guidelines.
- If you are staying at a special needs shelter, your pet cannot stay with you. If you do not have a family member or friend who can take care of your pet while you are in the special needs shelter, the staff and volunteers at Pinellas County Animal Services will care for your dog or cat.
- Simply bring your dog or cat with you to the special needs shelter. An Animal Services staff member or volunteer will take them to the Animal Services site on Ulmerton Road in Largo.
- You will need to provide a leash, carrier, license, health records, medication and any special instructions for your pet. Food is supplied, but you may supply your own if you prefer.
- Once you return home, Animal Services staff will bring your pet home to you.
- Please note that is only for cats and dogs. If you have a pet other than a cat or dog, make plans now for someone to care for them while you are staying in the shelter.
- Service animals are welcome at any shelter; note that you must bring the service animal's supplies.

Special transportation needs

If you are planning to evacuate to a special needs shelter, you can get transportation assistance.



You must register for special transportation assistance through the special needs shelter program.

Using the registration list, personnel from an emergency response unit will contact you if there is a hurricane threatening our area and evacuations are possible. This phone call is to ask you if you still need the transportation assistance. If you do need it, and an evacuation is called, you will be notified again the day of the evacuation. Please be packed and ready to leave with emergency personnel once they come to your home to pick you up.

Please remember to register if you will need special needs transportation assistance, so that you are on the list to be called. You do not need to renew every year. We will call you to update our records.

To request a registration form for special needs and transportation assistance, call Pinellas County Emergency Management at **(727) 464-3800**.

Public transportation



- If you are in need of transportation to a shelter, PSTA buses run free to public shelters during evacuations as long as it is safe. They may modify regular routes. Pets are allowed. Buses will stop running just before the winds increase to give staff time to reach safety.
- Check for updates at www.psta.net
- If you have to evacuate, be ready to leave your home early because these services will stop as soon as conditions start getting worse.
- If you plan to use taxis or other commercial transportation services, do so early. These drivers may have to evacuate as well and may stop providing transportation.
- If you have special medical or transportation needs, prepare ahead and register for transportation assistance.

Planning for your pet



Your pets are a part of your family, and it is important that you plan ahead for their needs.

- Update your pet's vaccinations and make sure their county license is valid.
- Microchip your animal in case you get separated. If your contact information changes, update it with the service that you registered with.
- Bring a photo of you with your pet. Keep it with your important documents and on your phone.
- Obtain a crate for your pet that is large enough for them to turn around in. Do not wait to purchase one. They may not be available later in the season.
- If your pet takes medications, keep a two-week supply on hand. Pets may get anxious during stressful events; ask your veterinarian for advice.

If you will evacuate

- Never leave any pet alone at home if you evacuate.
- If you plan to evacuate out of town or to a public shelter, consider asking friends or family who live in an area that is not being evacuated to care for your pets. It will make it easier for you and less stressful for your pets.
- If you will be bringing your pet to a host home, hotel or shelter, make sure your type and number of pets will be accepted.
- Many hotels allow pets during evacuations. Check hotel availability at www.visitstpeteclearwater.com, where Visit St. Pete Clearwater has a statewide directory that is updated during emergencies.
- If you make arrangements with a kennel or veterinarian, check with them ahead of the storm to make sure they still plan to remain open.

Pet-friendly shelters

If you have no other option, the County has pet-friendly shelters available for dogs and cats.

At the pet-friendly shelters, your pet will be in a crate in a separate area of the shelter from you. You must stay at the shelter and care for your pets. You will need to provide the crate and have a leash and collar, food and water bowls, litter box and litter, medicine and any comfort items. Food is available for the pets at the shelter, but you may want to bring your own.

Pre-registration is not required. A [Pet Shelter Enrollment Form](#) is available on the Pinellas County Animal Services website at www.bit.ly/pcasprep. Fill it in and tape it to your pet's crate. It will make registration easier once you get to the shelter.

PSTA provides free bus service to pet-friendly shelters. Small pets must be in a carrier. Large dogs must be leashed and muzzled.

Service animals are always allowed. They need an emergency preparedness kit, too, with enough food and supplies for two weeks. Service animals do not have to be muzzled or crated.

Where you cannot bring your pets

Do not bring your pets to Pinellas County Animal Services, SPCA of Tampa Bay, Humane Society of Pinellas or any other animal welfare organization. Check with your veterinarian or boarding facilities and make plans early. Before making final preparations as a storm nears, confirm that the facilities are going to remain open.

Other pets

If you have pets other than cats and dogs, you are responsible to make a plan for their safety.

- All animals need at least two weeks of food, water and other supplies. After a hurricane, it will be difficult to get supplies for more exotic animals, so be prepared for at least a month.
- When you evacuate with your pets, be sure to keep them secure.
- Never let your animal loose. It is not safe for them or others.

Horses

- Make sure vaccinations are up to date.
- Form a neighborhood disaster committee so your neighborhood can work together and share resources.
- Have sufficient animal identification.
- Clean up your property, before the storm as part of your preparations.
- If you plan to evacuate, leave early.
- If you are staying home, have at least two weeks supply of hay and water.
- Learn more about how to prepare your horse farm for hurricane season at: <https://largeanimal.vethospitals.ufl.edu/hurricane-season-preparation-for-florida-horse-farms>.
- For an online resource of locations and facilities in the case of an evacuation, visit <https://evac.flahorse.com>.

Lost pets

If you lose your pet during the storm, do not look for them until the storm passes and it is safe to go outside. Check the area around your home, but do not put yourself in danger.

Once the hurricane passes, responders will pick up stray animals and bring them to temporary collection sites to keep them safe. Once they are brought to a more permanent site, instructions will be announced to the public.



How kids can help Make plans with the whole family



Involve children in emergency planning.

- Let them help build the emergency preparedness kit. Use matter-of-fact language to discuss safety steps you will take.
- Play "let's pretend" games with young children to help them work out "what if" situations.

What you might need

If you are evacuating or even if you're riding out the storm at home, don't forget the everyday items your children will need. Think through a typical day at home and plan as if there will be no power. A few suggestions:

- Face masks
- Diapers and wipes
- Powdered milk
- Blanket and pacifier
- Stuffed animal or favorite toys
- Favorite non-perishable snacks
- Games
- Plenty of batteries



Sites for kids

- Pinellas County Hurricanes for Kids Activity Book www.pinellascounty.org/kids
- Ready for Kids • National Hurricane Center www.ready.gov/kids
- Weather Wiz Kids www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-hurricane.htm

How can I prepare my home?

There are several simple steps to making your home storm ready, and they do not have to be expensive fixes.

Brace your gabled roof

Gabled roofs—two slopes that come together to a peak at the top—are prone to failure if not properly braced in construction. High winds could cause your end wall to collapse. See the Florida Division of Emergency Management's Hurricane Retrofit Guide for advice: www.floridadisaster.org/hrg.

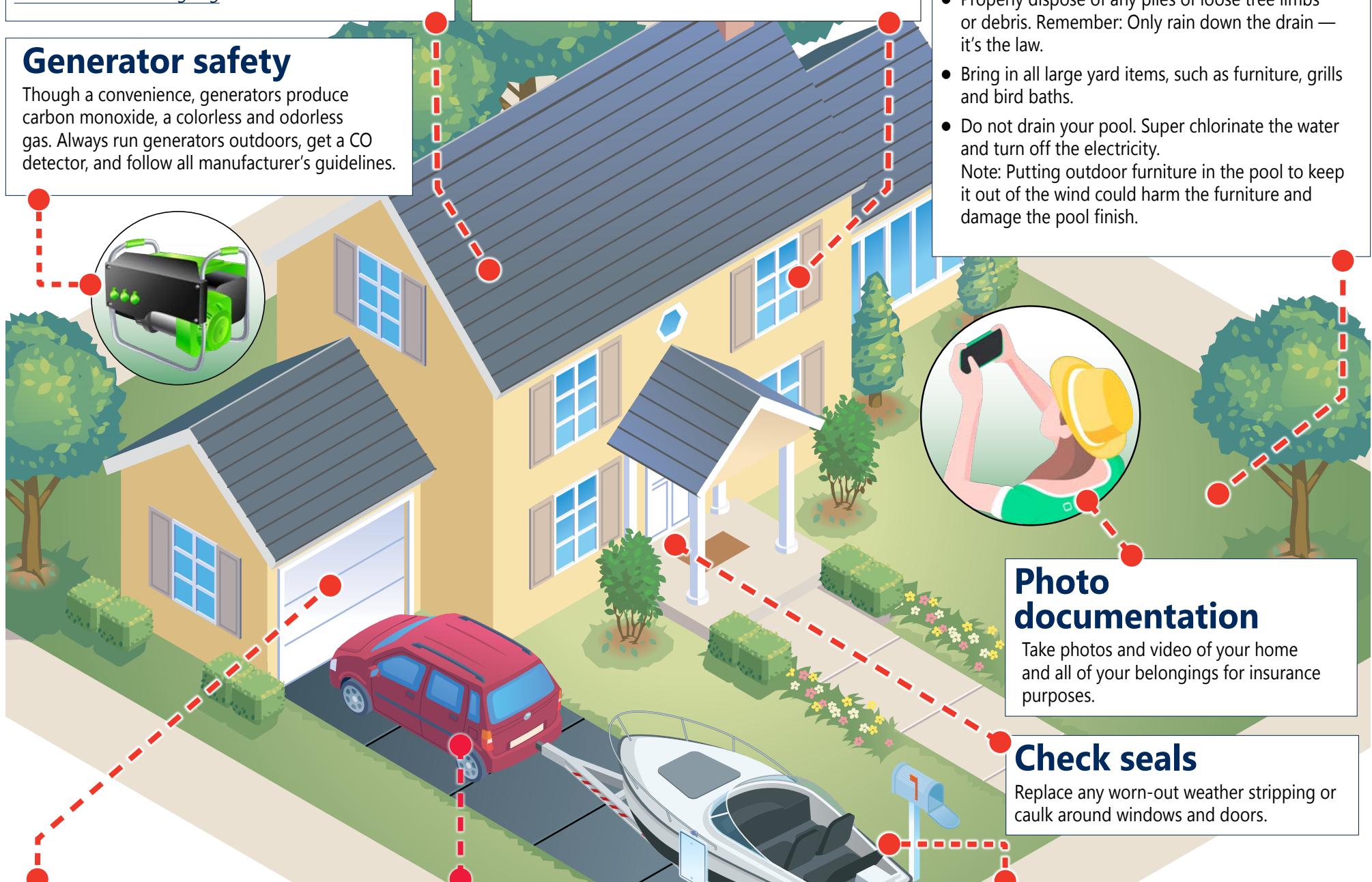
Protect your windows

Your best option is to install impact resistant windows or hurricane shutters. Otherwise, be ready to cover your windows with commercial exterior plywood—7/16" minimum—when a storm is approaching.

Duct tape provides NO protection.

Generator safety

Though a convenience, generators produce carbon monoxide, a colorless and odorless gas. Always run generators outdoors, get a CO detector, and follow all manufacturer's guidelines.



Prepare your yard

Rocks, mulch, sagging tree limbs, yard furniture and decorations are among the objects that could become deadly missiles in high winds. Keep your trees pruned, clean out your gutters on a regular basis, and when a storm is coming:

- Properly dispose of any piles of loose tree limbs or debris. Remember: Only rain down the drain—it's the law.
- Bring in all large yard items, such as furniture, grills and bird baths.
- Do not drain your pool. Super chlorinate the water and turn off the electricity.
Note: Putting outdoor furniture in the pool to keep it out of the wind could harm the furniture and damage the pool finish.

Brace your garage door

Old garage doors in good condition can be braced with retrofit kits while new doors must meet stringent wind requirements. After Hurricane Andrew, engineers determined four out of five homes that suffered major structural damage lost their garage door first.

Prepare your vehicle

- Keep up with your car's maintenance.
- Keep gas tank at least half full—fill tank during a Hurricane Watch.
- Build a survival kit for your car: first aid, non-perishable food/water, tire inflator, tool kit, jack and spare tire, jumper cable, road flares, flashlight, DC/AC power inverter, mobile device chargers.
- Know your flood risk to your vehicle. Your home may not flood but your vehicle may in the driveway.

Prepare your boat

- Keep insurance up-to-date.
- Create a hurricane plan for your boat and file a copy with the marina operator.
- Take a photographic inventory of your boat and its contents.
- Purchase and stow mooring line for storms—line should be about twice the diameter of normal line. Allow extra line for tide and storm surge.
- When a storm is approaching, remove loose items on the deck and store them on land.
- Shut off fuel lines at the tank.
- Keep batteries charged; make sure bilge pumps are operating properly.
- Secure hatches and doors.
- Use several cleats to distribute the load on the boat.
- Use chafing gear, such as a reinforced radiator hose where lines will rub for protection—several feet on each side.
- Disconnect electric, water, fuel and other dock connections.

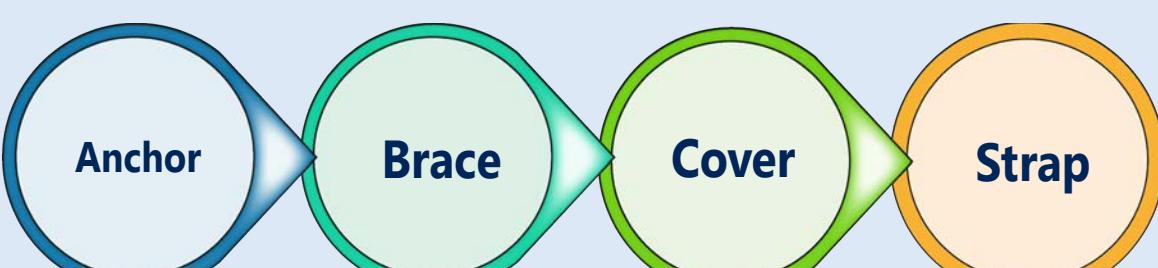
Land storage

- Store boat and trailer in a secure, covered building, such as a garage, if possible.
- If left outside, secure using ground hooks and straps.
- Put wooden blocks between trailer frame and springs for extra support with added weight.

Anchored storage

- Anchor on the lee side of protective land rather than mooring to a dock.
- Use two anchors and no stern anchor.
- Line length should be six to nine times water depth for storm surge shift.
- Keep batteries charged and bilge pumps operating properly.

Prepare your home before a hurricane arrives



- Bring in anything from the yard that could become windborne.
- Replace gravel/rock landscaping material with lightweight mulch.
- Trim and anchor down trees and foliage.
- Secure storage/utility sheds or carports (ask an installer about recommended methods).

- Bolt all doors with foot and head bolts.
- Reinforce doors and tracks.

- Cover all large windows, doors, especially patio doors, with securely fastened, tested and approved impact-resistant shutters with proper mounting hardware.
- Properly caulk and/or weather-strip windows and doors to reduce water intrusion.

- Tie down any freestanding fixtures in your yard.

Business preparedness

A hurricane or other major disaster could shut down your business for weeks or months. According to FEMA, nearly 40 percent of small businesses never reopen their doors after a disaster. Planning ahead may help keep your business running.

It is critical to have a business continuity plan so that you can resume offering your services to the community as soon as possible.



Get help with business disaster planning

Pinellas County Economic Development can help prepare your comprehensive business continuity, emergency preparedness and disaster recovery plan at no cost. Schedule an appointment with the Florida Small Business Development Center at Pinellas County Economic Development at www.pced.org/sbdc or by phone at (727) 453-7200.

You can also find guidance online:

Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.ready.gov/business>

U.S. Small Business Administration: <http://bit.ly/PCEMBiz>

What is your risk?

Look up the evacuation zone of your business at www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone, or check both your evacuation and flood zone at www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm. Assess the sturdiness of your building in the case of high wind.

If an evacuation is ordered for your zone, you must evacuate. If an evacuation is not ordered, use your risk assessment to decide whether to stay or go. Evaluate whether equipment in the building will need to be moved or protected.

Steps to prepare your business

- Make a plan for doing business without power.
- What are your critical business functions? Plan for an alternate location; prepare for the possibility of working with limited or no water, sewer or power for at least two weeks.
- Store your important documents and data in cloud-based storage, and back it up on a hard drive. Remember to share access information with more than one employee.
- Practice restoring your technology before you have to do it. Share the procedure, along with passwords and login information, with more than one employee.
- If employees will work from home (if there is power) and have not done so before, practice the plan. Make sure they have proper access to work remotely and that they can use the technology provided.
- Create an employee, vendor and key client communication plan. Share this plan and test it with your employees. Update it frequently. Print it out.
- Communicate your disaster plan to employees; specifically, when you will shut down operations and send them home, as well as your plans for reopening and your expectations of them.
- If you have a sturdy building in a non-evacuation zone, consider offering your employees a host home/building so that they have a safe shelter. If you do, be sure to communicate the guidelines and responsibilities beforehand. Will you allow family members and their pets to shelter? Who will bring food? Where will everyone sleep? How will your employees practice social distancing and other COVID-19 precautions?
- Protect your greatest assets by helping to prepare your employees. Share educational materials about personal emergency planning, and/or host a guest speaker



from Pinellas County Emergency Management or Economic Development. Be receptive to the concerns of your employees.

- Review your business insurance coverage. Does it include business interruption coverage? This is insurance to compensate you for lost income if your company is unable to operate because of disaster-related damage.
- Identify who is responsible for assessing your business after the storm. Ensure they have a letter or ID so they can pass through traffic control points if appropriate.

Prepare an emergency preparedness kit

Remember to print out key information:

- Insurance policies
- Contracts, plans
- Property management contracts
- List of vendors
- Employee contact information and emergency plans
- Photo inventory of the interior and exterior of the business
- Backup files/drivers for data
- Login information and passwords

When it's time to go

Evacuations are called according to evacuation zones. They apply to all types of properties. When an evacuation is ordered, businesses in the evacuation zone must leave as well.

- Before you go, clear your property of debris and loose items. Take down signs that could be damaged in high winds.
- Prepare the building by covering windows and securing doors.
- When considering the timing of evacuations, consider the responsibilities of your employees. Closing early and allowing employees to leave gives them the time they need to prepare at home.
- Before you go, shut off the electricity, water and gas.

Lodging and tourism industry

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater's Accommodations Hurricane Preparedness Tool Kit includes useful resources to help those in the tourism industry prepare for weather-related emergencies: [www.bit.ly/tourism-prep](http://bit.ly/tourism-prep)

- Accommodations Availability & Information Hotline (800) 317-5050 www.visitstpeteclearwater.com/storm (Active prior to and after named storms)
- Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) industry partner information and hotline: (727) 464-7200
- [https://partners.visitstpeteclearwater.com](http://partners.visitstpeteclearwater.com)
- Updates to storm accommodations inventory: <http://data.visitstpeteclearwater.com>

Note: Industry partners will need a property username and password from Visit St. Pete/Clearwater to enter the site, which is active prior to and after a named storm. Contact PR@VisitSPC.com to receive your username and password.

After the storm Report damage or economic injury

The Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey is an important first step in alerting the State of Florida that our community has suffered a significant loss due to a disaster. The state uses the surveys to determine scale of the disaster and assign resources to help businesses and communities recover after a disaster. All businesses in Pinellas that have sustained damage or economic injury due to a disaster are asked to visit www.PCED.org/damage to complete the Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey.

Disaster loan assistance to get back to business

SBA disaster loans

Once a disaster has been declared, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides low-interest disaster loans to businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations and even homeowners and renters. SBA disaster loans can be used to repair or replace real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, inventory and business assets. For more information, visit disasterloan.sba.gov

Florida small business emergency bridge loans

Should disaster strike, Pinellas County Economic Development will help businesses apply for Florida's Emergency Bridge Loan program. This program provides a source of cash flow to businesses impacted by a catastrophe so that they can begin repairs and replace inventory to help bridge the gap between the time the economic impact occurred and when a business secures other financial resources. For more information, visit [https://www.floridadisaster.biz/](http://www.floridadisaster.biz/).

Helping the community

Following a disaster, the business community is a valuable asset. Resources such as transportation, housing for out-of-town responders and supplies are valuable at a time of great need. To find out more about how you can help, call Pinellas County Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800.

Build an Emergency Preparedness Kit



Basic Supplies

- Sanitation—wipes, antibacterial hand gel, soap, toilet paper, hygiene supplies, feminine supplies, diapers. Cloth face covering- enough for each family member.
 - Water—at least one gallon of water per person per day for drinking, and one gallon per person per day for hygiene and cooking
 - One-week supply of non-perishable food that does not require cooking, for example: dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc. Remember comfort foods.
 - Non-electric can opener
 - Medications and copies of prescriptions (Ask your pharmacist for a printout).
 - Rain gear
 - Flashlight or lantern
 - Battery-operated or hand-crank radio
 - Extra batteries
 - First aid supplies—over-the-counter pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medicine/laxative, anti-histamine, anti-itch cream, antiseptic
 - Insect repellent
 - Extra batteries for medical devices such as hearing aids, etc.
 - Eyeglasses and extra contact lenses
 - Extra bottled oxygen if dependent on it
 - Small generator for electrically dependent equipment like an oxygen concentrator or nebulizer
 - Cash for when ATMs are out of service—small bills will make purchasing easier
 - Emergency Access Permit (for beaches)
 - Books, cards, board games for entertainment
 - Full tank of gas in vehicle
 - Cell phone with charger, extra battery backup, solar charger
 - Emergency contacts in mobile device and in print for backup
 - Information downloaded to your mobile device (contacts, maps)
 - A paper map
 - Paper and pencil
 - Sunscreen

If You Go

Host Home or Hotel Go Kit

In addition to basic supplies:

- Pillow and blankets
 - Air mattress, sleeping bag, floor mat or other as needed
 - Food and water. Find out from the host what you can bring, including the perishable food you have left.
 - Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils
 - Complete change of clothing for several days
 - Check with your host to see what they need.
 - Public Shelter Go Kit – General
 - Wearable medical alert tag
 - Blanket, pillow, cot, folding chair or twin-size air mattress
 - Complete change of clothing for several days
 - Special dietary Items (sugar-free, low sodium, gluten-free, etc.) with can opener if required (common food and water is supplied)

Special Needs Shelter Go Kit

In addition to basic supplies:

- Any durable medical equipment or supplies you may need such as:
 - Portable oxygen
 - Wheelchair, walker or cane
 - Oxygen concentrator
 - Nebulizer
 - Medications in the original container
(2-week supply)
 - Blanket, pillow, cot, folding chair or air mattress
(available cots are limited in number)
 - Complete change of clothing for several days
 - Personal hygiene (toothbrush, wipes, soap, hairbrush, adult diapers)
 - Earplugs, headphones, sleep mask
 - Written instructions or orders regarding your care
 - Pet Go Kit (Pets do not stay with you—
see page 7)

If You Stay or When You Return

A Kit for Home

Even if you are evacuating, these supplies will be needed when you return:

- Two weeks of fluids to drink and non-perishable food that does not require cooking, for example: dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc. Remember comfort foods
 - Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils
 - Cooler with ice (*Make extra ice in plastic bags and plastic food storage containers and keep it in the freezer to keep food cold longer.*)
 - Insect repellent
 - Sunscreen
 - Tarps
 - Rope or elastic cord (for tarps if necessary)
 - Whistle to signal for help
 - Tools, including wrench to shut off water, utility knife for sheeting and duct tape, hammer and nails to make temporary repairs

- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air
 - Sheets of plastic and duct tape to seal windows and doors if ordered to do so
 - Matches or lighter in waterproof container
 - Large garbage bags
 - Portable toilet—use one from a boat or camper, or make one using a 5-gallon bucket with lid, trash bags, chlorine bleach
 - Household chlorine bleach with medicine dropper to disinfect or treat water. (*Do not use scented, color safe or bleach with added cleaners.*)
 - Extra gas if you have a generator and somewhere safe to store it
 - Extra propane or charcoal for outside grill
 - Battery-powered fan
 - Camera to take photos/video of damage
 - Disinfectant to prevent mold growing from floodwaters

Important Documents

Take photos of your documents for backup.

- Put paper copies together in a sealed plastic bag.
 - Driver license or ID card
 - Emergency Access Permit for barrier island residents/businesses
 - Social Security card
 - Important numbers and emergency contacts
 - Medical records – pharmacy prescription record, doctors, medications, dosages, blood type
 - Insurance policies for home, health, flood, auto, renters

- Titles to house, cars
 - Pay stubs for disaster assistance eligibility
 - Household inventory for insurance claims – photo or video documentation stored online
 - Other irreplaceable papers, such as birth, marriage, divorce, death and adoption certificates; passports; military records; wills; trust documents
 - Account numbers for bank, credit cards, savings and investments.
 - This Hurricane Preparedness Guide for reference, which you can also download from www.pinellascounty.org/emergency.

Basic Supplies for Pets

Enough pet food and water for two weeks

- Identification/chip (remember to update)
 - License
 - Immunization records
 - Photo
 - Collar and leash
 - Medications for two weeks with instructions

- Toys/blanket
 - Cat litter, pan, scoop
 - Plastic waste bags
 - Disinfectant
 - Paper towels
 - Carrier or crate
 - Newspaper or other lining



The storm is coming. What does "in the cone" mean?

The National Hurricane Center uses a graphic of a cone to show the probable track of the center of a storm. The effects of the storm may be felt far outside of the cone. You can use it as a guide for the type of preparations you should make.

The closer the hurricane is, the more accurate the forecast. But be aware that hurricanes often shift direction at the last minute, so you need to be prepared if you are anywhere near the cone. Do not let your guard down.

Check the Pinellas County website for updates and special instructions at www.pinellascounty.org

5-day cone

If Pinellas is in the 5-day cone, it means a storm could impact our area in five days.

Implement your plan.

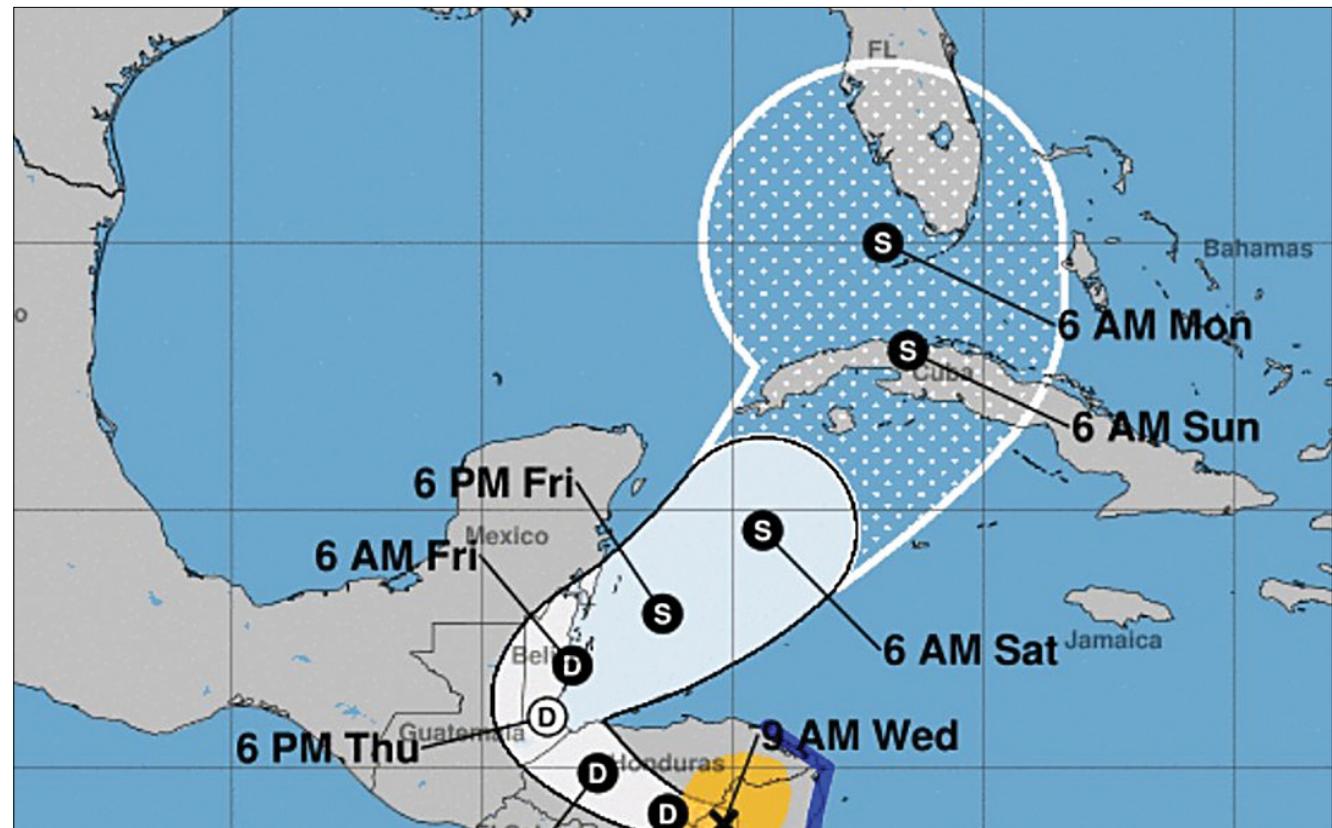
- Know your zone. If you do not already know your zone, look it up. (www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone)
- Review your emergency preparedness plan.
- Get your emergency preparedness kit with important papers ready.
- Begin to prepare your home and yard.
- If you have special needs, have your caregiver begin to implement your plan. If needed, be sure you are registered for a special needs shelter.
- You do not need to wait for an evacuation order. Just remember, if you plan to evacuate to somewhere else in Florida, there is no way to tell this many days ahead exactly where the storm will hit, or how far the effects will be felt.
- If you will be using a public shelter, check opening times before going there.

3-day cone

If Pinellas is in the 3-day cone it means a storm may impact our area in three days.

Step up your preparations.

- Double-check your emergency preparedness kit and make any last necessary purchases.
- Gather special supplies for infants, children, seniors and pets.
- Be sure you have all materials and tools necessary to shutter windows.
- If your plans are to evacuate, make arrangements, book reservations and pack what you can in your vehicle.
- Refill medications. (If the governor has declared a state of emergency that includes Pinellas County, you can get a 30-day refill without the insurance company's usual restrictions.)
- You do not need to wait for an evacuation order. Just remember, if you plan to evacuate to somewhere else in Florida there is no way to tell this many days ahead exactly where the storm will hit or how far the effects will be felt.



Hurricane watch

(48 hours ahead)

Prepare as if the storm is headed directly for your home. Be ready for a Hurricane Warning within a few hours if the storm remains on track and continue implementing your emergency preparedness.

- Fill vehicle gas tank.
- Get cash, secure papers and valuables.
- If you could not refill your medications in the 3-day cone timeframe try again now.
- Fill containers and tubs with water, even if evacuating—you may need the water when you return.
- Secure yard equipment and furniture.
- Shutter your windows.
- In case an evacuation is ordered for your area, secure your home so you can leave as soon as the order is issued.
- If you are registered for a special needs shelter and will be getting transportation, be sure you have everything you need for your emergency preparedness kit.
- You do not need to wait for an evacuation order. Just remember: if you plan to evacuate to somewhere else in Florida, there is no guarantee that area will not be hit by the storm if its path changes.
- Be prepared for an evacuation order to be issued at any time.
- Check news sites and the Pinellas County website at www.pinellascounty.org for updates to evacuation zones and shelter information.

Hurricane warning

(36 hours ahead)

- Stay tuned to local news and get your weather radio ready.
- Complete final preparations to evacuate or to shelter in your home.
- If your plan is to travel out of the local area and you can leave at this point, go. You can expect traffic to get heavier as the hurricane nears.
- If you are registered for a special needs shelter and will be getting transportation, be ready to leave. Rescue workers will begin pick-ups shortly after an evacuation order is issued.
- If you are going to a host home, assist with home preparations and bring emergency supplies there.
- You do not need to wait for an evacuation order. Just remember: if you plan to evacuate to somewhere else in Florida, there is no guarantee that area will not be hit by the storm if the forecast changes.
- Be prepared for an evacuation order to be issued at anytime.

Evacuation order

Listen carefully to the evacuation order. Which zone is being told to evacuate?

Are you in that zone?

YES I live in a mobile or manufactured home, and must evacuate if an order is issued for any part of the county.

YES I live in an evacuation zone that is being ordered to evacuate.

If you answered YES, you must evacuate.

NO I do NOT live in an evacuation zone that is included in the evacuation order.

If you do not live in the evacuation zone that is being told to evacuate, and you do not live in a mobile or manufactured home, you do not have to leave your home. Review your plan and your decision on whether you will stay or go.

Steps before you evacuate

- Turn off the water and gas utilities at the main valve.
- Lock all windows.
- Close all doors.
- Tell friends and neighbors where you are going. If you are evacuating locally, get to your shelter location within a few hours of the order.
- Be aware of your evacuation time range. Evacuations will be issued with beginning and end times. The end time means that sustained tropical storm force winds are expected to arrive by that time and all evacuations should be complete.
- Consider turning on SMS notifications for social media apps. If service is interrupted, texting may work when other services do not.



Sandbags

Sandbags may be made available by Pinellas County and local municipalities at certain times prior to flooding emergencies. Sandbags are not shown to be effective to protect property against storm surge although they could be helpful in certain flooding when used correctly.

- Check the county website at www.pinellascounty.org for updates on sandbag supply, or contact your municipality for sandbag availability in your city.
- As an option to sandbags, there are flood barrier options available. The County does not recommend one option over another or guarantee their success. But we want to make sure our citizens are aware that there are newer methods and systems available that might fit their particular home flooding protection needs.

The storm is here. What should I expect?

If...	Then...
The power goes out	You will need a battery-powered radio, flashlight, batteries, cell phone and battery charger, non-perishable food, water. Check your emergency kits to make sure you can make it at least a week without power. You will need ways to cook or boil water in the weeks to follow, like an outside grill or camp stove. If you can find an open store you will need cash. You also will want items to keep you occupied: books, board games, etc.
The power stays out for six hours	If there is food in the refrigerator, move perishable foods into an ice-filled cooler. Put a thermometer in the cooler to make sure it stays below 40°F. Meats and other perishable foods can stay above 40°F without spoiling for two hours.
The power stays out for two days	If there is food in the freezer, it can be stored safely for two days if you keep the freezer door shut. Once the storm passes, cook any unspoiled food outside and consider sharing with your neighbors. From this point forward you will need non-perishable food. (When you know a hurricane is coming, if you have a lot of frozen food, use it to prepare your meals. Otherwise you risk having it spoil in a power outage.)
The water supply is affected	It is always possible that the drinking water supply could be affected during a disaster. Monitor the news for boil water notices, which means there is a possibility of contamination. In this case you should be prepared to disinfect the water. Boil—Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil for one minute to ensure bacteria, viruses or parasites are gone. Bleach—Add 1/8 tsp. of unscented bleach per gallon of water and let stand for 30 minutes; bleach should contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. This is less effective than boiling, but will work if there is no way to boil water. Bleach can also be used as a disinfectant for cleaning by mixing nine parts of water to one part bleach. If water is out, use your emergency supplies.
There is a sewer outage	If a sewer outage is announced, DO NOT flush your toilet. Powered sewer lift stations may be down, which could cause a sewage backup in your home. Use a portable toilet, like one used on a boat or camper, or set one up by using one of the following methods: 5-gallon bucket—Line with heavy-duty trash bag and use household bleach as disinfectant. Make sure it has a tight lid. Toilet bowl—Turn off your outside water supply first and flush once to empty before lining with a trash bag. Do not use cat litter. It cannot be flushed after the sewer system is running. Once given the OK by officials, dispose of the emergency toilet's contents into your household commode. Thoroughly sanitize your emergency toilet with bleach before storing or disposal.
Phone, cable & cell service is down	Use a battery- or crank-powered radio. Radio broadcasts are usually the last communication source to go down. Get a portable radio and lots of batteries. Tune in to National Weather Service advisories. Severe weather alerts are transmitted through the NOAA Weather Alert Radio. Local radio stations usually report on emergency situations and AM stations can broadcast longer than FM stations. Pinellas County FM HAR 96.3—Use your radio to tune in to the county station for information on local traffic. Mobile Text Messaging—Texting often works when other services do not. If your phone's digital clock works, then you can send and receive texts. Chargers and batteries—Keep your phone and other devices charged. Make sure you have the connection you need to plug into a vehicle, even if you do not own your own car. Invest in a backup battery charger. There are many models, including solar-powered. Do not forget the basic spare batteries for your radio, flashlight and other emergency items. Make sure your extra batteries have not expired. Apps—Mobile apps are invaluable during hurricanes. In addition to Pinellas County apps, know which others could be useful, like GasBuddy to find open gas stations or local weather apps. If you have WiFi even if your phone's data is down, check www.pinellascounty.org for information on new county apps.
Your home is damaged by the Storm	Take refuge in your safe room —an interior room, closet or hallway on the lowest level of your home. The center of your house is the safest. Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object if you cannot make it to a safe room. If flood water starts coming into your home, do not go outside, and do not wade through the water. Flood water and storm surge can move very quickly, and live power lines could be in the water outside. Remain inside and stand or sit on something that is elevated off the floor, such as a bed or table. Wait until the storm has passed to tend to any damage.

The storm has passed. Now what? Can I start driving once a storm passes?



- Do not attempt to travel after the storm passes until officials say it is safe to do so.
- There will be trees, electrical wires and other dangers on the roads.
- It is highly likely that your workplace, schools, daycares, schools and stores will be closed. Many roads and bridges are likely to be closed or blocked.
- Emergency crews will be dispatched as soon as conditions are safe to begin clearing major roads of debris and open up routes to reach hospitals, fire stations, police stations and other critical facilities.
- Be patient and stay home until it is safe to travel.
- Traffic lights may be out even if power has been restored. Treat all intersections and locations where there is usually a traffic light as an all-way stop sign.
- Roads may still be littered with debris.
- Many routes may be flooded. NEVER drive through standing water. Remember: **Turn around. Don't drown.**
- Once officials say you can drive, you should still be very careful.

Will I be able to get back home?



After an evacuation, many parts of Pinellas County may be inaccessible due to damage, flooding or debris blocking roadways. Access into the county may be closed. Coming home immediately is not a guarantee.

- Stay tuned to social media and local news for updates on flooded areas, road closures and re-entry points before attempting to return to the county, your home or your business.
- Be prepared with proper ID that identifies you and the address of your residential or business property for re-entry after a storm.

If you live or own a business on a barrier island, an Emergency Access Permit will make accessing the island after a mandatory evacuation faster and easier. You can get a permit from your City Hall, or at www.pcsoweb.com/emergency-access-permit. If you do not have an Emergency Access Permit, you will be required to wait in line at the law enforcement checkpoint to show identification or other proof of residency, ownership, or employment every time you want to access the island.

Post-storm recovery

What should I do when I return home?

- Avoid downed lines; there is no way to tell if they are electrical and if they are still live wires. Be sure to report downed lines to the power company if you are able to make calls.
- Avoid flooded areas and standing water.
- Standing water may be contaminated or electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Floodwaters can contain raw sewage, bacteria, viruses and other germs that can cause disease.
- Use caution in areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have been weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Do not enter a home that has major damage to the roof and/or walls. There is no way to know if it is safe.
- Watch for snakes, raccoons, possums and other animals, as well as insects that may have moved into your evacuated home.
- Prevent mosquitoes from breeding in standing water and try to protect yourself from bites. Use the 3 Ds: Drain water when possible; Dress in light colors and cover all parts of the body; and Defend with DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus repellants. To report mosquito problems, call **(727) 464-8900**.
- Keep kids and pets with you. There could be dangerous conditions in the neighborhood, such as power lines, fallen trees and debris.
- Photograph and list all damaged or lost items including their age and value where possible. Take photos of how high the water was in the house. Adjusters need evidence of the damage to prepare your estimate.
- Contact your insurance agent before repairing damages.
- Remove wet contents immediately to prevent mold. Wet carpeting, furniture, bedding and other items holding moisture can develop mold within 24 to 48 hours. Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals. For information on cleaning up after a flood, go to www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/safety.htm
- Get required permits before you start any home repair, improvement or construction. Hire a licensed contractor. Do not sign an Assignment of Benefits contract as a condition of having your home repaired
- File your insurance claim as soon as possible.

- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are a serious health hazard.
- Officials will be making initial damage assessments as soon as the storm passes. These officials will always carry proper identification. Report blocked ditches, swales and canals at www.pinellascounty.org/reportanissue.
- If your home has major damage it may be declared uninhabitable, and you will not be able to stay there.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may come to a storm-ravaged area to give tarps to people who are eligible. Listen to updates from officials to learn about these and other possible services.
- There may be food distribution sites and cooling centers set up as soon as it is safe. Check for updates on the news or for community notices that will be distributed. Sign up for Alert Pinellas to have these notices texted to your phone, as texts will sometimes work when other services do not. Go to www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas.

Consumer alert

In a declared state of emergency, it is illegal to sell necessary goods or services at increased prices.

- If you believe a business or individual is price gouging, call Pinellas County Consumer Protection at **(727) 464-6200** or report it to the Florida Attorney General's Office at **(866) 966-7226** or through www.myfloridalegal.com. If you do not have phone service, document the activities of the worker and report it as soon as you can.
- Make sure the professional you are hiring is a licensed contractor at county's web site at: <http://www.pcclb.com/>

When will the debris be picked up?

Pinellas County (for unincorporated areas) and each municipality have different procedures for debris pickup. That's why residents may have different directions about dealing with yard debris, regular trash and bulk items.

- Be patient. Road debris will be first. Debris clearance will start by opening up one lane of traffic to allow emergency vehicles and responders to help our community. Removing debris from other areas may take time depending upon the amount of debris.
- Normal daily schedules and processes will likely vary after a storm.

- For information and instructions after the storm, you can check the website of your city or the County, follow them on social media or stay tuned to local news.
- Those who live on private roads may need to make additional plans for a location to dispose of debris.
- Contractors that you hire to do work such as cutting a tree down, fence work, flooding repair or removal of household items are responsible for debris removal. That is included in your fee so be sure that they are licensed and that they fulfill their responsibilities.

When will power be restored?

Power companies focus on restoring power in a sequence:

- Public safety situations
- Transmission, substation equipment and main distribution lines
- Essential facilities
- Distribution lines

For more details, see the diagram below.

TECO suggests preparing your home for power outages:

- Remove any flammable items on the stove.
- Make sure there are no irons left on or other potentially dangerous situations.
- Turn off appliances and turn them on one by one once power is restored.
- To report an outage or view current outages:
 - Duke Energy customers: www.duke-energy.com/outages
 - TECO customers: www.tampaelectric.com/residential/outages/outagemap

What is my responsibility during recovery?

Be prepared to take care of yourself and each other for at least a week. If a hurricane were to devastate the county, it could be a week before roads are opened and rescue workers can deliver water and basic food to the area. It will likely be weeks before grocery stores can reopen. It could take weeks to restore basic services.

In other words, you may be on your own for quite a while, and you should prepare for this.

It is your responsibility to arrange for loans, insurance, contractors and the other items of business that you will need to get back on your feet.

How Duke Energy Restores Power Restoration Diagram

- (1) Generation sources (power plants)
- (2) Transmission lines (supply large number of customers and large geographic areas)
- (3) Substation (where voltage is lowered)
- (4) Main distribution lines (deliver electricity to large subdivisions and commercial areas)
- (5) Power pole (showing underground service to hospital)
- (6) Local distribution or tap line (the type of line that runs along neighborhood streets)
- (7) Transformer (reduces service voltage to individual households and businesses – may also be padmounted on the ground)
- (8) Service lines (to individual homes)

Duke Energy focuses on restoring power in a sequence that enables power restoration to public health and safety facilities and to the greatest number of customers as safely and quickly as possible.

A typical sequence of activities, many of which occur simultaneously, is as follows:

- 1. Public safety situations**—locate downed power lines and make sure electricity is no longer flowing through the wires.
- 2. Transmission, substation equipment and main distribution lines**—these serve large numbers of customers and large geographic areas, and must be restored first to keep electricity flowing from power plants to neighborhoods.
- 3. Essential facilities**—emergency service and critical infrastructure such as hospitals, law enforcement, fire departments and water treatment facilities.
- 4. Distribution lines**—we work to get the largest number of customers back on as quickly as possible.

A safer and stronger community

Disaster assistance

After a disaster, if a Presidential Disaster Declaration is issued for the county, residents may be eligible for assistance. Disaster assistance is NOT meant to get people back to where they were before the storm. It is meant to get people through the disaster. It is your responsibility to arrange for loans, insurance, contractors and the other items of business that you will need to get back on your feet.

Residents must register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) if they feel they need help from any of the FEMA disaster assistance programs. Applicants must apply for a Small Business Administration Loan first, even if they are not a small business.

- If the loan is approved, then a low-interest loan is available to help you pay for repairs.
- If the loan is not approved, then you are referred back to FEMA, which determines your eligibility for additional disaster help.
- Since this is a process, it is important to sign up for assistance as soon as possible at www.disasterassistance.gov, call **(800) 621-3362** or download the mobile app at <https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>.

Reduce your risk

Severe weather and other hazards are realities that we often face even when it's not Hurricane Season. Tornadoes that cause damage in neighborhoods and flooding that makes homes uninhabitable are examples of the local disasters we in Pinellas County have encountered.

In addition to learning what to do to better protect ourselves and our families, we must work together as a community to make the county and region better equipped to weather the storm and recover personally and communitywide. It is important that we place a greater emphasis on mitigation, planning projects that make our structures safer and stronger and decrease the damage and loss incurred from flooding and wind events.

For property owners, building new construction above the Base Flood Elevation is cost effective. Pinellas County requires that new or substantially improved building be built at least one foot above the Base Flood Elevation. Building above that may discount your flood insurance premiums as well. Find out what the Base Flood and Design Flood Elevations are before you develop your plans.

Build responsibly:

- Hire a Licensed Contractor - To find a contractor or confirm a contractor's license is legitimate and current, visit Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board at www.bit.ly/find-contractor
- Find out your Base Flood and Design Flood Elevations.
- Find out what permits are required.
- Get required permits before you start any home repair, improvement, or construction.
- Plan for proper drainage.
- Be aware of the substantial improvement rules.
- Consider elevating equipment and electrical when you are replacing or repairing them.
- Consider installing sewer check valves.

Get more information about building stronger and smarter at www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/buildsmart.htm

Make improvements

Even small improvements can help prevent damage from flooding and wind.

- Floodproofing is one way to minimize property loss due to floods. This may involve building walls or levees, elevating or moving structures or sealing the structure.
- Homes can be strengthened to better withstand high winds with projects such as installing high-impact windows and shutters, replacing or repairing roofs and replacing the garage door.

For information on ways to strengthen your home, go to the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH) website at www.flash.org. The Florida Division of Emergency Management's Division of Mitigation offers an online guide to help property owners with ideas for retrofits or protective measures to help strengthen homes against wind and rain. It includes information on roofs, windows, doors, shutters, porches and more. Access the guide at www.floridadisaster.org/hrg/

Responsibility for preparing ourselves, our property and our community is the responsibility of the public and private sector. We must all do our part - we're in this together.

How else you can help

When disaster strikes, our community comes together. With planning, residents and businesses can join with faith and community-based organizations to assist with emergency notification, outreach and disaster response. Here are some ways you can help make our community more prepared:



Neighbors helping neighbors

Help a neighbor assess their risk, make a plan and stay informed. Not everyone has the resources to purchase supplies, look up their evacuation and flood zone, register for special needs registration or reinforce their homes. After a disaster, you can help with the application process for disaster assistance, contacting insurance agents and contractors, or simply helping to clean up debris in the yard. There are many ways to be a good neighbor and make a difference.

Be a BEAS partner

If your business or House of Worship maintains an electronic billboard you can sign up to be a partner with the Billboard, Emergency Alert System (BEAS). Pinellas County Emergency Management will email and text you with urgent messaging when appropriate. Share your message sign and help our community stay informed. Sign up online at www.pinellascounty.org/beas

Adopt a shelter

You can volunteer to help staff an Emergency Evacuation Shelter. The shelters need assistance once an evacuation is called and the shelters open, as well as during the storm and possibly weeks afterward, depending on the damage to personal property. Volunteers are trained to help with registration, monitoring and food service. A group from a faith-based organization or other community group could volunteer together to officially adopt a shelter on behalf of their organization. Join us to become a Volunteer in Disasters. For more information on this and other opportunities, please contact Pinellas County Emergency Management at **(727) 464-3800**.

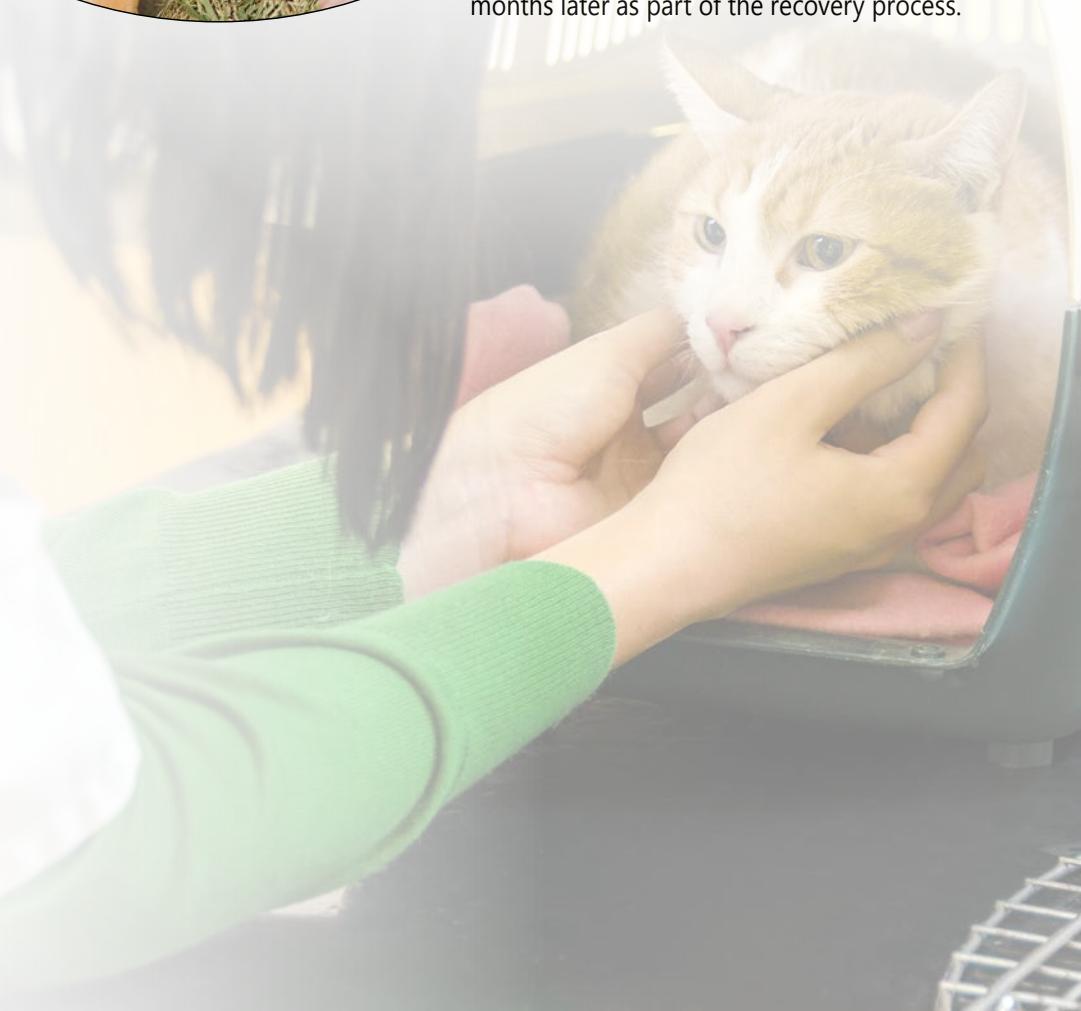


Pet transport

For pet lovers, there are opportunities to volunteer at Pinellas County Animal Services, where the pets of people staying in special needs shelters are cared for until their owners return home. If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please call Pinellas County Animal Services at **(727) 582-2600**.

Sheltering

If your community- or faith-based organization is interested in serving as a public evacuation shelter, and you have the staff or volunteers to be trained and manage the shelter, contact Pinellas County Emergency Management at **(727) 464-3800**. Community shelters are not only needed during a hurricane, but weeks and even months later as part of the recovery process.



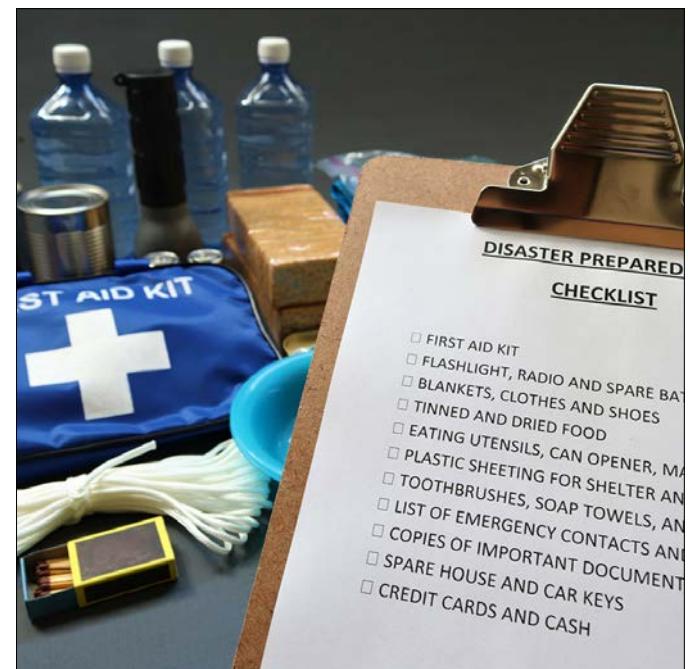
Year-round preparedness

Preparedness for any hazard, whether natural or manmade, is all about understanding the threats, planning ahead, and being ready to put that plan into action. Many hazards provide little or no warning or preparation time. If anyone is hurt or if you need immediate help, call 9-1-1.

Some things you should always have:

- A safe room inside your home, workplace, school and other locations where you spend time.
- At least two ways to get emergency notifications. Sign up with Alert Pinellas at www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas and know where to get reliable news.
- An emergency plan for home, business, school and other locations you frequent.
- A Go Kit in case of evacuation (see page 10).

- A Stay Kit in case you have to shelter in place. This should include plastic sheeting and duct tape.
- A safe meeting place in the neighborhood that your whole family knows.
- Emergency contacts (mobile and printed).
- Awareness of your surroundings. Even while doing outdoor activities, take note of locations that might be good for a safe shelter if needed.
- Good communications about emergency plans.
- A two-week supply of food and water at home in case you need to shelter in place.
- Nonprescription drugs such as pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes and vitamins.



Thunderstorms and lightning

When Thunder Roars Go Indoors

Florida has over a million lightning strikes per year. Pinellas County has regular storms—especially in the summer—that come up fast and can lead to grave danger for those not paying attention. To avoid getting hurt by lightning:

- Check the weather before you go and keep an eye on the sky.
- If you see dark clouds approaching and hear thunder, find a safe place to take cover, like restrooms in a park, a shelter on the beach or even a business near to you.
- Get off of any elevated structures.
- Avoid contact with the ground as much as possible.
- Do not stand under a tree.
- Get far away from water.
- Stay away from anything that conducts electricity.

Tornadoes

Duck and Cover

When you get a tornado warning on your emergency weather radio or from Alert Pinellas you will not have much time: about 12 minutes.

- Find your safe room now, and make sure everyone in your home or business knows it. Look for an internal room with no windows, as low in the building

as possible. Many use a bathroom or a closet. The safe room can also be used when a shelter in place order is given.

- If you are in a car, park safely, get out and seek shelter. Cars are easily overturned. Do not try to outrun a tornado.
- If you are in a mobile home, you must get to a safer place. Identify a safe place now, perhaps the community restrooms, laundry room or community center.
- If you find yourself out in the open, lie down in a ditch or culvert, or if all else fails, lie flat on the ground and cover your head.



House fire

Get Out, Stay Out, Call for Help

If a fire starts in your home, you may have as little as two minutes to escape.

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
- Test smoke alarms every month and change the batteries twice a year.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your home, and have it inspected and serviced regularly. Know how to use it — there are no second chances when you need it to put out a fire.
- Talk to your family about a fire escape plan and practice it. Have two ways to escape.

- Keep items at least 3 feet away from anything that gets hot.
- Do not smoke in the home.
- Turn heaters off when you leave the room.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- If a fire occurs, get out quickly and call for help. Never go back in for anything or anyone.



Wildfires

In Pinellas County, wildfires can occur in open spaces, parks, preserves and even in your backyard. Drought and freezes raise the chances of fire. Wildfires can be caused by lightning but usually they are started by humans—either by accident or intentionally.

- Maintain the outside of your home and keep it free of anything that will easily burn, such as firewood. Prune vegetation and clean gutters regularly.
- If you see a wildfire, call 9-1-1. Do not assume someone else has reported it.
- If you think you may have to evacuate, get your Go Kit, seal doors, cover vents, close gas valves and turn off pilot lights.
- If ordered to evacuate, do it immediately.
- Do not return home until officials say it is safe.



What if we're told to shelter in place?

A shelter in place order can be made as a result of many hazards. It is important to follow instructions and stay in the building where you are at the time, or get inside the closest building immediately. Under a shelter in place order, you must stay in the building you currently occupy and protect yourself there.

Make sure you are receiving your emergency notifications and tune in to local broadcasts for official instructions.



There are many reasons you might be told to shelter in place. It could be that there was a chemical spill in the area or that a violent act is suspected. It may only be a matter of hours, not days, that you will be asked to stay sheltered.

If you are notified of an emergency and do not know what to do, play it safe and shelter in place. After a hurricane, shelter in place. Officials will let you know when it is safe.

What to do if you are home or at work

- Get everyone into the safe room (interior room with the least number of windows possible).

If instructed to do so:

- Seal all windows and doors with plastic and duct tape.
- Turn off air conditioning and other ventilation systems.
- Remain indoors until officials say it is safe.
- Stay updated and be sure you are signed up through Alert Pinellas: www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas

What NOT to do:

- Do not leave home, work or the building you currently occupy—for any reason, even to get your children from school. Schools have emergency plans and will keep your children safe until the danger passes. You may put them and yourself in great danger if you attempt to pick them up.

What if I am driving?

- Safely park your car as soon as possible and go inside the nearest public building.
- If there are no buildings in the area, park safely (preferably in shade), close your windows, and if instructed to do so, shut off your air conditioning/heat/fan and seal the vents if possible. Use only recirculated air. Listen for emergency notifications on your mobile device and listen to the radio for updates.

News & Updates

Alerts

- **Alert Pinellas** - Sign up to receive emergency notifications by phone, text or email. www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas
- **NOAA Weather Alert Radio** - Automatic alerts from the National Weather. Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) code for Pinellas County: 012103

Social media

Get county news and updates from Pinellas County Government's official Facebook and Twitter accounts.

- Facebook** for Pinellas County Government: www.facebook.com/pinellascountynews
- Twitter for Pinellas County Government: @PinellasCoNews
- Twitter** for Pinellas County Emergency Management: @PinellasEM
- Twitter for Pinellas Traffic: @pinellastraffic
- Nextdoor** - A private social network, where you can see news and updates from Pinellas County and other official agencies. www.nextdoor.com

Apps

- **Ready Pinellas** - A personalized planning tool. Look up your evacuation zone, create your own emergency plan, and access checklists to prepare before a storm. Download free on your mobile device.
- **News media** - Find news, weather and get alerts from the major news outlets.

Website

- **Pinellas County website** - Find tips on preparedness before the storm, updates throughout the storm and information after the storm. www.pinellascounty.org/emergency

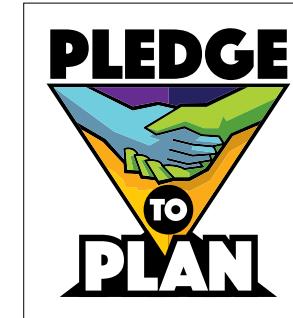
County television

- Pinellas County Connection Television (PCC-TV)
 - Information on county programs and services, general preparedness and live updates during emergencies from the Emergency Operations Center. Watch it on Spectrum 637, WOW! 18 or Frontier 44.
- **YouTube** for Pinellas County Government has videos on general hurricane information. www.youtube.com/pcctv1

Our contact information

- During emergencies, the County Information Center is open. Call **(727) 464-4333**.
- During non-emergency times, call Pinellas County Emergency Management at **(727) 464-3800** or email ema@pinellascounty.org.

The safety of your family, business and community depends on each of us taking responsibility by knowing your risk, making a plan and staying informed. Take the "Pledge to Plan" to show that you are committed to keeping all of us prepared by creating your own emergency plan or updating the one you already have.



Take the Pledge at www.pinellascounty.org/emergency, where you can access templates to make your own emergency preparedness plan.

Important Contacts

State agencies

- **Florida Attorney General's Office**
(price gouging)
(866) 966-7226
www.myfloridalegal.com
- **Florida Division of Emergency Management**
(non-emergency)
www.floridadisaster.org
- **Florida Highway Patrol**
*FHP (mobile phone) / (727) 570-5010
www.flhsmv.gov/florida-highway-patrol/about-fhp/

Federal agencies

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
(800) 621-3362
www.fema.gov
- **National Hurricane Center**
www.nhc.noaa.gov
- **National Weather Service/Tampa Bay Area**
www.weather.gov/tbw

Utility companies

- **Clearwater Gas**
(727) 562-4900 (general)
(727) 462-6633 (gas leaks)
www.clearwatergas.com
- **Duke Energy (report outages)**
(800) 228-8485
www.duke-energy.com
- **Frontier**
(800) 921-8101
www.frontier.com

- **Spectrum**
(855) 222-0102
www.spectrum.com/services/florida/pinellas-county
- **TECO Peoples Gas**
(877) 832-6747 (general leaks)
www.peoplesgas.com
- **TECO** (report outages)
(877) 588-1010
www.tampaelectric.com
- **WOW!**
(866) 745-3685
www.wowway.com

Hotlines

- **2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares**
(727) 210-4211
211tampabay.org
2-1-1 texting
Text your zip code to 898211
media@211tampabay.org
- **County Information Center**
(727) 464-4333
(During emergencies)
Call 9-1-1 for emergencies only.
Text 911 only if you are unable to call in an emergency.

Pinellas County Consumer Protection

(727) 464-6200
www.pinellascounty.org/consumer

Pinellas County Economic Development

(727) 464-7332
www.pced.org

Pinellas County Information Line

(727) 464-3000 / V/TDD (727) 464-4062
www.pinellascounty.org

Pinellas County Schools

Main (727) 588-6000
School Bus Info Line
(727) 587-2020
www.pcsb.org

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office

(non-emergency) (727) 582-6200
www.pcsoweb.com

Pinellas County Solid Waste

(727) 464-7500
www.pinellascounty.org/solidwaste

Pinellas County Utilities

(727) 464-4000
www.pinellascounty.org/utilities

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)

(727) 540-1900
www.psta.net

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport

(727) 453-7800
www.fly2pie.com

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater

(Hotel/motel evacuation info inside county)
www.visitstpeteclearwater.com

Other county numbers

- **Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County**
(727) 824-6900
www.pinellashealth.com
- **Pinellas County Animal Services**
(727) 582-2600
www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices