



## BULLETIN

### Weather Warnings

The National Weather Service will issue a Severe Weather Outlook at 3 p.m. or 8 p.m. when there is a 10 percent or greater chance of significant overnight tornadoes, but you may only have minutes to respond to a fast-moving winter storm. **Consider these weather alert options:**

### NOAA Weather Alert Radio

When a warning is issued, these radios will emit a loud tone that will awaken you to take protective cover.

Purchase one online or at local retailers.



### Mobile Weather Emergency Alerts

Many mobile networks provide free Wireless Emergency Alerts that will send a text alert in the event of an emergency.

Learn more:

[www.ready.gov/alerts](http://www.ready.gov/alerts).



Hurricane season is June to November, but Pinellas County can experience **severe weather any time of year.**

In the winter months, Florida's weather can fluctuate drastically, bringing **thunderstorms, flooding, cold temperatures and tornadoes.** Winter hazards can be significantly worse during El Niño seasons. **El Niño** is the name climate scientists use for the occasional periods of warming in the Pacific Ocean that create havoc on global weather patterns.

Meteorologists expect a strong El Niño in winter 2016.

During the deadly 1998 El Niño season, an outbreak of 12 tornadoes killed 42 people and injured 259 others across Central Florida, and the state experienced widespread flooding.

The National Weather Service issues a Hurricane Warning 36 hours before a storm is expected to make landfall. **The average warning time before a tornado is only 12 minutes!**

**Be prepared for the unexpected.**

See Pinellas County's El Niño web page for detailed information: [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/el-nino.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/el-nino.htm)



### Winter Weather Hazards

**Flooding:** Strong thunderstorms can bring several inches of rain in a short period of time causing low-lying areas to flood.

**Tornadoes:** Some of the deadliest tornadoes in Florida's history have occurred from December to April. **Many tornado-related deaths happen overnight**, between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., while people are asleep.

**Cold weather:** High winds or abnormally heavy electrical demand can cause power outages that worsen cold weather impacts.

**Severe thunderstorms:** Storms that can be strong enough to produce hail and damaging winds.

### Safety Tips Tornadoes

**Tornado Watch:** Issued two to six hours before a tornado, a watch means tornadoes are possible in your area, so stay alert and carefully monitor radio or TV reports.

**Tornado Warning:** Issued 10 to 20 minutes before a tornado, a warning means a tornado has been sighted in your area, proceed to safe shelter immediately.

- Designate a Safe Room in your home's **lowest floor with no windows.**
- Conduct an annual tornado drill with your family so they know where to go.
- **Mobile homes are not safe in a tornado** – seek shelter elsewhere.
- For a full list of tornado tips, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/tornado](http://www.pinellascounty.org/tornado).



## Alert Pinellas

Pinellas County's emergency notification service allows us to send an automated message to your phone when there's an emergency in your area. Register online at [www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas) or call (866) 484-3264.



## All-Hazard Guide

Pick up Pinellas County's All-Hazard Guide at libraries, city halls and other public buildings or view online at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hurricaneguide.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hurricaneguide.htm)



## Floods

**Flood Advisory:** *Be Aware* – Weather conditions may become a nuisance, but flooding is not expected.

**Flood Watch:** *Be Prepared* – Conditions are favorable for flooding, but this does not mean flooding will occur.

**Flood Warning:** *Take Action* – Flooding is imminent or occurring.

**Flash Flood Warning:** *Take Action* – A flash flood is imminent or occurring. If you are in a flood prone area, move immediately to high ground.

- Know your home's risk by finding out your flood zone (*see flood website listed below*).
- Most homeowner's insurance doesn't cover flood damage, so consider getting additional flood insurance.
- **Turn Around, Don't Drown!** It only takes 6 inches of moving water to sweep you off your feet or 12 inches to float a small car.
- For more flood preparation tips, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/flooding](http://www.pinellascounty.org/flooding).



## Cold Weather

- Create a disaster supply kit in case of a power outage. For details, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency) and click "Prepare Ahead."
- Use a generator only in a well-ventilated outdoor location. Store fuel outside of living areas.
- Never keep portable heaters on overnight or unattended and keep them away from flammable material such as beds and curtains.



## Sandbags

Sandbags are made available by the county and municipalities at certain times of emergency. They are also available at local home improvement stores. Updates about sandbag availability will be provided during an emergency.

## Evacuations

Prolonged rainfall may prompt evacuations in flooded communities. Shelters may be opened at various locations during a flood event. Sign up for **Alert Pinellas** for updates on whether evacuations are being ordered in your area.

Shelter list: [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/shelters.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/shelters.htm)

## Stay Connected

**For all emergencies, call 911.**

### Non-emergency contacts:

Pinellas County Emergency Management ( <i>preparedness information</i> ).....	<a href="http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency">www.pinellascounty.org/emergency</a> or (727) 464-3800
Citizen Information Center ( <i>only during emergencies</i> ) .....	(727) 464-4333 or TDD (727) 464-3075
Pinellas County Sheriff.....	(727) 582-6200
NOAA National Weather Service Southern Region .....	<a href="http://www.srh.noaa.gov">www.srh.noaa.gov</a>
National Weather Service Forecast Hotline ( <i>Tampa Bay</i> ) .....	(813) 645-2506
Duke Energy ( <i>power outages</i> ) .....	1-800-228-8485
American Red Cross.....	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a> or 1-800-733-2767
Mobile Weather Alerts.....	<a href="http://www.ready.gov/alerts">www.ready.gov/alerts</a>
Alert Pinellas.....	<a href="http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas">www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas</a> or (866) 484-3264
El Niño Preparedness .....	<a href="http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/el-nino.htm">www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/el-nino.htm</a>
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