

On Track With Transportation

For those who need to evacuate, but don't have their own transportation, a hurricane can cause anxiety. Pinellas County officials want to make sure that everyone can get to safe shelter.

If you sign up for the special needs registry, you will be asked about your transportation plans. If you need a ride to a shelter, your local fire department will be in contact with you to make arrangements when the time comes to evacuate.

If you don't require special needs transport, PSTA buses will run nearly all their routes until it's no longer safe to travel. During an evacuation, buses will also run from transfer stations to local shelters. **All rides are free during an evacuation.** Prepare in advance by locating your nearest bus stop.

Some people may not qualify for special needs transport, cannot ride the bus and have no other means of transportation to evacuate. If you are in that situation, contact your local fire department or the Department of Emergency Management, in advance, for special assistance. Take advantage of the help that is there for you. Don't stay in a dangerous situation just because you don't have transportation. Call the PSTA InfoLine (727) 540-1900.

For current route information during a storm, go to www.psta.net/hurricanerideralert.htm.



Helping Seniors

Older adults, especially those living alone, have unique concerns that should be addressed before a storm nears Pinellas County. Increased stress and anxiety can be a factor leading to more incidents of illness, particularly for those seniors with heart disease or respiratory troubles.

If you are an older adult who doesn't require special needs assistance, you don't have to ride out the storm alone. Many senior communities are in non-evacuation zones, so start a hurricane club with other people from your neighborhood, social group or place of worship. Meet to discuss preparations such as who might serve as a host home and make a list to divide up supplies to gather before a storm.

Sign up for the free community notification service to get up-to-date storm information. (See page 2) This news can be passed along through a phone tree to friends and neighbors. If a Hurricane Warning should be issued, the phone tree would then advise all members to meet at the host home and remind them to bring emergency supplies.

It bears repeating that, regardless of age, if you live in a mobile or manufactured home, you must leave when the evacuation order is given. A clubhouse is likely not a safe place to weather a storm. Get together with others in your neighborhood to find host homes.

If you are an older adult living in a nursing home, assisted living facility or boarding home, contact the administrator to learn about emergency preparations. Let your friends and family members know about the facility's plans and give them important contact information before a hurricane threatens the area.

If you are homebound, discuss your plan with your caregiver.

Look around.

If you know an elderly person, don't assume he or she has a plan. Ask.

Offer assistance. You might be saving a life.

Special Needs Supply List

Some additional items to be considered:

Wheelchairs:

- A patch kit and extra inner tubes
- Gloves in case of broken glass or debris
- An extra battery and/or a converter for charging the battery

Visual impairments:

- Talking or Braille clock
- An extra white cane, magnifier and glasses
- Mark your disaster supplies with fluorescent tape

Hearing or speech impairments:

- Extra batteries for hearing aids
- Pencil and paper for communicating emergency information
- Power converter for your laptop
- Preprinted key phrases you would use in an emergency

Personal supplies:

- Two-week supply of dressing materials, nasal cannulas or suction catheters
- Two-week supply of prescriptions
- Cooler for refrigerated medications
- Special dietary foods

Things to Know and Do

- Learn how local authorities will warn you of a pending disaster.
- Build a support network of friends, family and neighbors. Let them know your needs in an emergency situation and how they can assist you with your plan.
- Connect with a local neighborhood group such as CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), neighborhood watch, neighborhood association or a nearby place of worship.
- Make sure your local fire department knows your needs. Pre-register if you need transportation or a spot in a special needs shelter.
- A NOAA Weather Alert Radio can wake you when severe weather is threatening.
- Carefully monitor weather conditions throughout hurricane season.
- If you are going to a public shelter, wear comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes. Have your "go bag" ready and let an out-of-town contact know where you are going.
- Take at least two-weeks worth of medication with you. (See page 5)
- Be sure to get your prescriptions refilled.
- Have a list of contact numbers and a copy of your personal medical information.
- If you stay home, never use candles when the electricity goes out. Stick to flashlights and lanterns.
- Help your friends and neighbors by sharing this information!