

PINELLAS COUNTY

# ALL-HAZARD GUIDE



*Surviving the Storm —  
It's Everyone's Responsibility*

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# 5 STEPS to prepare for all hazards



In Pinellas County, we enjoy year-round sunshine and warm weather with abundant water surrounding us on three sides. But, living in paradise comes with its share of hazards.



Each year, from June 1 to Nov. 30, catastrophic hurricanes can develop within a matter of days with enough destructive wind and waves to put much of our peninsula underwater. During any season, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods and other perils can strike any corner of our community.

Your county government works with municipal, state and federal partners to ensure residents and visitors are warned of life-threatening hazards; preparing for these dangers is everyone’s responsibility. In daily life, we all rely on basic services such as electricity, running water and safe roadways to access food, medical care and other necessities. Imagine living for days or even weeks without these essentials as emergency crews work to clean up after a hurricane or other disaster.

The risk of these hazards should not make you fearful about what could happen to you or your family. With a few basic preparations, you can be ready to survive any peril that may arise.

The first section of this guide will take you through **5 Steps** for getting prepared for any type of hazard you may face here:

- 1. **CONNECT** to vital emergency information about dangerous weather and other hazards.
- 2. **BUILD** a survival kit with the things you’ll need to survive without everyday necessities.
- 3. **ASSESS** your risk from storms and other perils or emergencies.
- 4. **PLAN** where you’ll go and what you’ll do in an emergency.
- 5. **RECOVER** after a disaster by taking safety precautions and requesting help.

The remaining sections of the guide offer advice to get ready for specific natural and man-made hazards.

On page 8, you’ll find a **Family Disaster Plan**. After you’ve answered the questions in this plan, you should be ready to face most of the hazards we may encounter here in Pinellas County.

Share this guide with your family and neighbors as we work together to make Pinellas County a safe and resilient place to live, work and play. Free copies of the guide are available year-round at local government offices, libraries, community centers and online at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency).

## CONNECT to emergency information

in this section

- Sign up for Alert Pinellas
- Weather alerts by radio or phone
- What if you lose power?

The single most important step you can take to get prepared is to know when a hazard is coming. You may expect to hear about a hurricane or other severe weather on the news, but what if a tornado unexpectedly strikes near your house and you only have a few minutes to act?



### ALERT PINELLAS

The *Alert Pinellas* emergency notification service allows Pinellas County to send urgent messages by voice or text to landlines, mobile devices and via email.

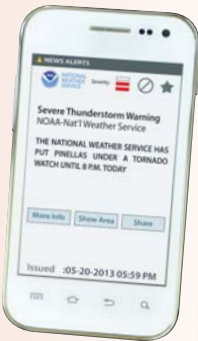
**SIGN UP** at [www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas). No internet access? Call (866) 484-3264.

**FREE** registration for multiple phone lines and devices. Register each address where you live and work to get alerts for multiple locations.

**ADVISORIES** may include severe weather, emergency road closures, boil water notices and other urgent messages.

### ALERTS BY RADIO OR PHONE

**NOAA Weather Alert Radio** – A battery-operated radio that emits a loud alert signal when dangerous weather is in your area.



**Wireless Emergency Alerts** – Newer mobile devices are equipped for local, state and federal authorities to send alerts about dangerous weather and other emergencies. Check with your carrier.

Visit [www.ready.gov/alerts](http://www.ready.gov/alerts) to learn more.

### Social Media

Get emergency information on Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor. For details see page 15.

### WHAT IF YOU LOSE POWER?

How to get emergency information when both power and cell service are down:

**Battery-Operated Radio** – Tune in to National Weather Service advisories.

**Mobile Text Messaging** – If your phone’s digital clock works, you can send and receive texts.

**Keeping Charged** – Keep your phone charged and always keep spare batteries on hand for your radio, flashlight and other emergency items.

**Emergency Updates** – If the county’s Emergency Operations Center is activated during a disaster, residents can find updates on the Emergency Management website,

[www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency), or call the Citizens Information Center

at (727) 464-4333 or TDD (727) 464-3075.

**Knowledge is power.**



## BUILD a survival kit

in this section

- Survival kit checklist
- If you must evacuate
- Document checklist
- Medications in emergencies
- Special considerations

Imagine life without power, water or safe roads to take you to the grocery store. Think through what you and your family members would need in a disaster to get by for an extended period of time. You don’t have to be a “Doomsday Prepper” to build a basic survival supply kit.

A large plastic storage bin in your garage can hold most of the things you’ll need.



### SURVIVAL KIT CHECKLIST

#### Basic Necessities

- One-week supply of fluids to drink and non-perishable food that doesn’t require cooking, e.g. dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc.
- Water – at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for drinking/hygiene

- Non-electric can opener
- Medications and copies of prescriptions
- Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils
- Cooler with ice
- Utility knife
- Clothing/Bedding
- One change of clothes and shoes per person
- Rain gear
- Sturdy work shoes
- Blankets and sleeping bags
- Flashlight or lantern
- Battery-operated or hand-cranked radio
- Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger
- Contacts in mobile device and in print for backup
- Extra batteries
- Matches or lighter in waterproof container
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Rope or elastic cord



- Whistle to signal for help
- Tools, including wrench to shut off water
- Map with shelter locations
- Paper and pencil
- Tarps
- Dust mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape to help filter contaminated air

#### Health and Sanitation

- First aid supplies – antibacterial hand gel, soap, over-the-counter pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medicine/laxative, anti-itch cream, antiseptic
- Sanitation – toilet paper, hygiene supplies, e.g. towlettes, feminine supplies
- Portable toilet – 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

#### Other

- Cash or travelers checks
- Books, cards, board games for entertainment
- Full tank of gas in vehicle

ASSESS your risks

in this section

- Evacuation zones vs. flood zones
- Insurance
- Mobile homes are not safe havens
- Sandbags



The highest point in Pinellas County is 110 feet above sea level, but much of our landscape on the coast and inland is vulnerable to flooding. It's estimated that **60 percent of the county's households may receive storm surge flooding in a major hurricane.** A storm-hardened home could withstand a Category 5 storm if it's located on high ground.

It's crucial to understand the specific risks your home faces from hazards such as flooding, storm surge and powerful winds and what you can do to protect yourself.

EVACUATION ZONES VS. FLOOD ZONES

EVACUATON ZONES	FLOOD ZONES
Wind-driven hurricane	Rising waters from heavy rain
Based on ground elevation and proximity to water	Based on flood risk over period of years for insurance purposes
Determined by the National Hurricane Center	Set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

Interactive Maps:

Find your **Evacuation Zone** and **Flood Zone** at [www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm).

INSURANCE

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. What is my standard deductible?
2. What is my hurricane deductible?
3. Do I need flood insurance?
4. Do I have enough coverage to replace my home and belongings?
5. Do I have loss-of-use coverage for temporary housing expenses?

Not all insurance policies are created equal. Check your policy or talk to your agent to make sure you've got sufficient coverage and to determine if any home improvements would qualify for a discount on premiums. Information on insurance policies can be found through the Insurance Information Institute at [www.iii.org](http://www.iii.org).

Flood Insurance

Homeowner Insurance policies **DO NOT** cover damage from rising flood waters. If you own a home in a flood zone, your mortgage company will require you to carry a separate flood policy. Even if you don't live in a flood zone, consider the additional coverage. Learn more about the National Flood Insurance

Program at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov). **Remember: a new policy takes 30 days to take effect.**

Home Hardening

Adding storm shutters, garage door braces and hurricane straps to the roof will make your home safer from wind damage and could lower your insurance costs. For more advice on home hardening, see page 14.

Renters

- Do I know my rental property's risk of flood or storm surge? Do I know my evacuation zone?
- Do I need flood insurance and renter's insurance to cover damage to my personal property?
- Will my landlord protect the windows in a storm? If not, where would I go during a hurricane?

MOBILE HOMES ARE NOT SAFE HAVENS

**90 percent** of mobile homes in Miami-Dade County were destroyed during Category 5 Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Even newly built manufactured homes are vulnerable to hurricane force winds or tornadoes. Any time Pinellas County is under threat of a hurricane, mobile home residents **MUST EVACUATE.**

Most mobile home park recreation centers are also not built to withstand high winds, so ask your park's management what plans they have for sheltering and evacuation notices.

Annual Maintenance

- Look for rusting of anchors and connections.
- Tighten the straps if necessary.
- Add anchors and straps where possible.
- Check for wood rot and termite damage at connections, joists and trusses.



SANDBAGS

Sandbags are made available by the county and municipalities for certain types of emergencies, such as localized flooding events. They are also available at local home improvement stores. Updates about sandbag availability will be provided during an emergency at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency).

Note

Residents should not rely on sandbags to save their home from major flooding, especially fast-moving hurricane storm surge flooding. Consider the severity of flood conditions before deciding whether sandbags would be an effective means to protect your home. If properly used, sandbags can create an adequate barrier to keep slowly rising floodwaters out of your home during a heavy rain event. If flood levels are expected to be high, or the water is rising fast, it could take a substantial amount of sandbags to protect your property and this may not be a good option. During a direct hit from a hurricane, storm surge would be pushed ashore quickly at heights anywhere from 4 feet to more than 20 feet, which could easily overtake a sandbag barrier.

For more detailed information on the use of sandbags, see the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommendations available online at [www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/EmergencyOperations/Sandbaginformation](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/EmergencyOperations/Sandbaginformation).



Survival kit (continued)

IF YOU MUST EVACUATE...

If you're staying in a public shelter, picture yourself sleeping every night in a room full of people in a space that only measures about 2.5 feet by 7 feet and pack accordingly. If you are evacuating to stay with friends or relatives in a host home, take a "go bag" and ask in advance what supplies you can bring and what kind of space you'll have for possessions and vehicles.

"Go Bag" Suggestions:

- Vital papers & ID
- Cash
- Phone number list
- Medications and copies of prescription paperwork
- Eyeglasses
- Non-perishable food/snacks
- Bedding
- Hygiene items
- Change of clothes, rain gear
- Kids' supplies and entertainment

Do I need to evacuate?

Find out on page 6.

Prepare your home:

See page 14 for details on how to prepare your home to evacuate.

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

If you had to leave your home in a hurry, do you have backup copies of your personal documents? Are they stored in a safe place?

- Driver license or ID card
- Important numbers and emergency contacts
- Medical records – pharmacy prescription record, doctors, medications, dosages, blood type
- Insurance policy numbers – home, health, flood, auto, renters
- Household inventory for insurance claims – photo documentation stored on backup drive



- Other irreplaceable papers – e.g. birth, marriage, divorce, death and adoption certificates, passports, military records, wills, trust documents, titles to house or cars
- Account numbers for bank, credit cards, savings and investments

MEDICATIONS IN EMERGENCIES

Restrictions on refilling medications early are suspended by state law during hurricane warnings, when the Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center is activated or when the governor has declared a state of emergency. Make sure you get a refill immediately if you know a hurricane is coming.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

To find out what extra items you may need to pack, see the following sections:

- Residents with Special Needs:** Page 12
- Pets:** Page 13
- Kids:** Page 12

# PLAN what you'll do

## in this section

- Who will you contact?
- Where will you go?
- How will you get there?



During the chaos of an approaching storm, you may not have time to think through what you and your family members must do to get to a safe place together. While you can't plan for every possibility, it's important to answer **three questions** before a disaster...

### 1. WHO WILL I CONTACT?

- How would I reach my loved ones if my phone did not work in an emergency?
- Do I have important numbers written down and stored in a safe place?
- Has my family talked about how we would reconnect if an evacuation was called while we were separated?

### 2. WHERE WILL I GO?

- If there's a tornado warning in your area, have you identified a "safe room" in your home where you can hunker down?
- If you had to evacuate for a hurricane, would you try to drive out of town or to a friend's house in a safer area?
- In what situations would it be safe to stay home instead of trying to leave?

Find details about planning for specific emergencies in the **Hazards** section of this guide starting on page 9.

### 3. HOW WILL I GET THERE?

- If you have to leave your home in a hurry, is your car ready for a long trip?
- Do you have emergency supplies in your vehicle?
- Can you take public transportation to a shelter?

**DRIVERS:** Be aware that during a large-scale disaster, such as a hurricane, you may encounter heavy traffic on the limited routes out of Pinellas County. Fill up your gas tank and keep emergency supplies in your car.



#### BUS RIDERS:

In an emergency, PSTA will run nearly all routes until it is no longer safe. **All rides are free during a hurricane evacuation.** Buses will also

run from transfer stations to local shelters during an evacuation. Call the PSTA InfoLine at **(727) 540-1900**. Route information during a storm will also be posted at [www.psta.net](http://www.psta.net).

**NO TRANSPORTATION:** The county offers transportation for special needs residents (see page 12). If you don't qualify and can't ride the bus, contact your local fire department or Emergency Management in advance for help. **Don't stay in a dangerous situation just because you don't have transportation!**

#### DISASTER PLAN

Fill out your own plan on page 8 of this guide.

# RECOVER after an emergency

## in this section

- Utility outages
- Safe driving
- Getting help
- Price gouging
- Who to call

When power and water goes out, numerous hazards can arise in your home, such as rotting food in the refrigerator, loss of safe drinking water and toilets that won't flush.

### UTILITY OUTAGES

#### Power Outages

Electricity powers your lights, air conditioning, refrigerator and possibly even your stove.

#### Food Safety

**TWO DAYS** – The time frozen items can be stored safely if you keep the freezer door shut.

**SIX HOURS** – If the power is out for longer than this time, 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. For more food safety information, contact the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County at **(727) 824-6900** or [www.pinellashealth.com](http://www.pinellashealth.com).



#### Water Outages

If the drinking water supply is compromised by a disaster, stay tuned for a boil water notice, which means there's a possibility of contamination.

**BOIL** – Bring a pot of water to a **rolling boil for 1 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**, but will work if there's no way to boil water. Bleach can also be used as a disinfectant by mixing - use nine parts water to one part bleach.

#### 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 back-up in your home.

#### Emergency toilets

Use a chemical toilet or create an emergency toilet by one of the following methods:

- **5-GAL 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 kitty 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 household commode. Thoroughly **sanitize**

your emergency toilet with bleach before storing or disposal.



### SAFE DRIVING

After a storm, roads may be littered with debris and many routes may be flooded.

Avoid unnecessary travel and, if you must venture out, always obey "road closed" signs. **NEVER** drive through standing water. Treat any intersection with non-working traffic signals as an "all way" stop. Be prepared to stop at every intersection.

- 6 inches of water can sweep you off your feet
- 12 inches of water can float a car or small SUV
- 18 inches of water can carry away a large vehicle



### GETTING HELP

Emergency crews will be dispatched as soon as conditions are safe to clear major roads of debris and open up routes to reach places that have been severely damaged. **Be patient and stay home if it's safe.**

Visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for post-disaster health advice.

### PRICE GOUGING

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** to report it.

### WHO TO CALL

**9-1-1** for life-threatening emergencies

**Citizen Information Center, (727) 464-4333** or **TDD (727) 464-3075** – During and immediately after an emergency, county staff is available to answer residents' questions.

**Duke Energy Outage Line, (800) 228-8485** for power outages or downed power lines.

**Pinellas County Utilities** customers can call **(727) 464-4000**, or call your city's utility department for water or sewer issues or questions.

**Public Works** – Residents in unincorporated Pinellas County can call Public Works Operations at **(727) 464-8900**, or call your city's public works department.



During the North Atlantic Hurricane Season from June 1 to Nov. 30, powerful tropical storms can form in the ocean with only a few days warning before bringing catastrophic winds and storm surge to coastal communities. These storms cause the most widespread destruction of all natural disasters in Florida.

STORM SURGE

The **greatest killer** of people during hurricanes is storm surge. This is the primary reason evacuations are ordered prior to hurricanes. To stay safe, residents must run from the water and hide from the wind. You may not have to go far to escape evacuation zones – think 10 miles, not 100.



**JUST TWO FEET OF WATER can float a large vehicle.** Hurricanes push a dome of water ashore called storm surge that rushes in and sweeps anything that’s not attached to the ground out to sea – including people. Pinellas County is extremely vulnerable to storm surge due to its coastal and low-lying geography. A cubic yard of water weighs nearly 1,800 pounds – almost a ton – so the rushing storm surge water can easily cause catastrophic damage quickly.

If you live in a zone that’s ordered to evacuate before a hurricane, get out. Do not plan to escape to higher floors or wait until the last minute. Leave for higher ground immediately and survive.

Storm Surge Protector App

Want to see how high that wall of water would get at your home during a major hurricane? Plug in your address and see a 3-D depiction of your home or business. Find the app here: [egis.pinellascounty.org/apps/stormsurgeprotector/](http://egis.pinellascounty.org/apps/stormsurgeprotector/)



Know your zone

Look on page 6 to learn your evacuation zone and where to go in a storm, or use the online application “Know Your Zone” to obtain this information:

<http://egis.pinellascounty.org/apps/knowyourzone/>

DANGEROUS WIND

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale

Category	Sustained Winds	Wind Damage
1	74-95 mph	<b>Very dangerous winds:</b> Damage to roofs, shingles, siding, gutters, snapped tree branches, trees with shallow roots toppled.
2	96-110 mph	<b>Extensive damage:</b> Major damage to roof and siding. Shallow rooted trees toppled causing road blocks.
3 (major)	111-129 mph	<b>Devastating damage:</b> Major damage to roof decking and gable ends. Trees snapped or uprooted, blocking roads.
4 (major)	130-156 mph	<b>Catastrophic damage:</b> Severe damage including loss of roof structure and/or some exterior walls.
5 (major)	157 mph or higher	<b>Catastrophic damage:</b> Many framed homes destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles with widespread outages. Most of the area uninhabitable for weeks or months.

DO I STAY OR DO I GO?

in this section • Making the decision • Understanding the forecast • Evacuation order

MAKING THE DECISION

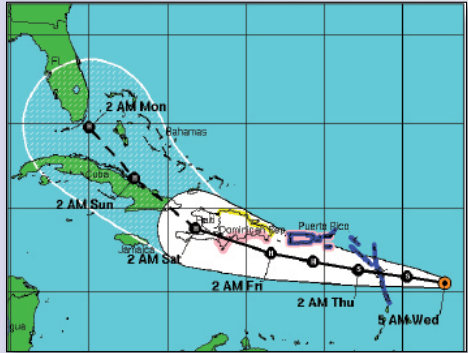
When a hurricane is approaching, will you stay in Pinellas County or drive miles away to an out-of-town location? You can find high ground on the peninsula that won’t be touched by storm surge flooding. Even in a Category 5 storm, sturdy buildings in these areas can provide safe shelter provided they are hardened to withstand high winds. Evacuating to safe shelter locally or in a neighboring county has advantages; you will avoid traffic jams and highways crowded with people from other counties joining the evacuation. Even if you leave the area, the storm could shift and still put you in harm’s way.

The next section will guide you through the steps you should take as a storm is approaching and the choices you’ll have to make during an evacuation.

UNDERSTANDING THE FORECAST

The National Hurricane Center uses a graphic forecast cone to show the probable track of the center of a storm that you see on weather forecasts in local media and on the center’s website: [www.nhc.gov](http://www.nhc.gov)

5-DAY CONE ACTIONS

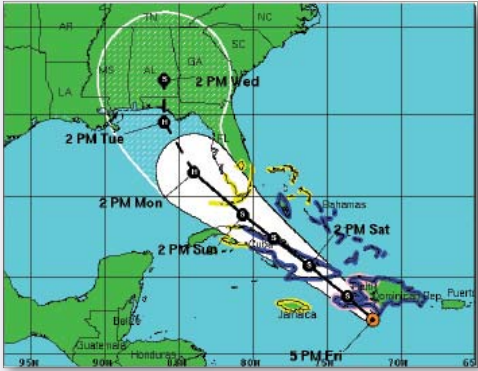


When the Tampa Bay area is in a 5-day cone, it’s time to implement your plan and preparations. A hurricane is on a probable path to reach our area in five days.

- Know your zone. If you live in an evacuation zone, decide where to go and how to get there.

- Review your family disaster plan.
- Get your survival kit and important papers ready.
- Begin work to prepare your home and yard.
- If you have special needs, be sure your caregiver begins to implement your plan and, if needed, you are registered for a special needs shelter.

3-DAY CONE ACTIONS



As a storm moves closer to land, the accuracy of the forecast increases and residents should step up their preparation with the following actions:

- Double check your survival kit and make 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.

HURRICANE WATCH ACTIONS (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 disaster plan.
- Fill vehicle gas tank.
- Get cash, secure papers and valuables.

- Refill medications.
- 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.
- If your plans are to evacuate the area, secure your home so you can leave as soon as an evacuation order is issued.
- If you are registered for transportation to a public shelter, be sure you have everything you need for your “go bag.”

HURRICANE WARNING ACTIONS (36 hours ahead)

- Be prepared for an evacuation order to be issued and know which zone you’re in so you can follow those orders.
- 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.
- If you are registered for transportation to a public shelter, be ready to leave. Rescue workers will begin pick-ups shortly after an evacuation order is issued.

EVACUATION ORDER

- Determine if your residence is affected by the evacuation order - does it include your evacuation zone or do you live in a mobile or manufactured home?
- If you are evacuating locally, get to your shelter location within a few hours of the order.
- If you are traveling out of the local area, leave immediately to avoid traffic jams.
- Be aware of your evacuation time range. Evacuations will be issued with beginning and end times.
- Stay safe during the storm.

# PINELLAS COUNTY EVACUATION ZONE MAP

- Recommended or mandatory evacuation?
- Find your evacuation zone



## RECOMMENDED OR MANDATORY EVACUATION?

**Recommended Evacuation:** If a tropical storm is approaching or a hurricane is expected to cross Florida and exit over Pinellas County, the danger from storm surge may be lower. Emergency managers may recommend residents in mobile homes or flood prone areas evacuate to higher ground or sturdier shelter.

**Mandatory Evacuation:** The probability of storm surge is high and could be deadly for residents who don't leave. It is **illegal** to stay in a home under a mandatory evacuation order. Mobile homes must always evacuate during a mandatory order and all residents should pay attention to which letter zone is being ordered to leave.

## WAYS TO FIND YOUR EVACUATION ZONE

High winds, heavy rains or possible tornadoes are not the deadliest hazard during a hurricane. The deadliest hazard is the storm surge – a dome of water pushed ashore by high winds. In a worst case scenario, this can mean a surge of 29 feet above the normal water level, causing tremendous damage and danger of drowning.

While those residents who can see the gulf or the bay have a visual reminder of how vulnerable they are to the water, residents who live miles from these bodies of water can still be vulnerable to storm surge. That's why it's critical to identify your evacuation level and act appropriately should an order go into effect.

Even if you have lived in Pinellas County for a long time, it's more important than ever to check your home's evacuation level.

### To find your level:



- Visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency), click on Know Your Zone.

- Look up Know Your Zone on the Pinellas County "Doing Things for You" app.



- Call (727) 453-3150 and enter your 10-digit home phone number (does not work for cell phone numbers).
- Look on your Pinellas County water bill.
- Look on your Truth in Millage (TRIM) notice.
- Call (727) 464-3800 and speak with Emergency Management staff.

## EVACUATION GUIDELINES (mobile homes MUST always evacuate)

Potential Surge Heights (in feet)

EVACUATION ZONES	A	4' to 8'	Evacuate red areas and all mobile homes
	B	8' to 14'	Evacuate red and orange areas and all mobile homes
	C	14' to 19'	Evacuate red, orange and yellow areas and all mobile homes
	D	19' to 26'	Evacuate red, orange, yellow and green areas and all mobile homes
	E	26' to 29'	Evacuate red, orange, yellow, green and purple areas and all mobile homes

Areas shown in white are non-evacuation zones.

SHELTER OPTIONS

in this section

- When to pack
- Where to go
- If you stay home



NORTH COUNTY	1	Tarpon Springs Middle School	501 N. Florida Ave. • Tarpon Springs	🏠
	2	Brooker Creek Elementary School	3130 Forelock Road • Tarpon Springs	🏠
	3	East Lake High School	1300 Silver Eagle Drive • Tarpon Springs	🏠
	4	Carwise Middle School	3301 Bentley Drive • Palm Harbor	🏠
	5	Palm Harbor University High School	1900 Omaha St. • Palm Harbor	🏠
	6	Palm Harbor Middle School	1800 Tampa Road • Palm Harbor	🏠
	7	Dunedin Community Center	1920 Pinehurst Road • Dunedin	🏠
	8	Dunedin Highland Middle School	70 Patricia Ave. • Dunedin	♿🐕
	9	Dunedin Elementary School	900 Union St. • Dunedin	🏠
	10	McMullen-Booth Elementary School	3025 Union St. • Clearwater	🏠
	11	Safety Harbor Middle School	901 First Ave. N. • Safety Harbor	🏠
	12	Clearwater Fundamental Middle School	1660 Palmetto St. • Clearwater	🏠
	13	Skycrest Elementary School	10 N. Corona Ave. • Clearwater	🏠
	14	Belleair Elementary School	1156 Lakeview Road • Clearwater	🏠
	15	Ross Norton Recreation Center	1426 S. MLK Jr. Ave. • Clearwater	🏠
	16	Oak Grove Middle School	1370 S. Belcher Road • Clearwater	♿🐕
SOUTH COUNTY	17	Largo High School	410 Missouri Ave. N. • Largo	🏠
	18	High Point Elementary School	5921 150th Ave. N. • Clearwater	🏠
	19	Pinellas Park High School	6305 118th Ave. N. • Pinellas Park	🏠
	20	Bauder Elementary School	12755 86th Ave. N. • Seminole	🏠
	21	John Sexton Elementary School	1997 54th Ave. N. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	22	Lealman Intermediate School	4900 28th St. N. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	23	New Heights Elementary School	3901 37th St. N. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	24	Northside Baptist Church	6000 38th Ave. N. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	25	St. Petersburg High School	2501 Fifth Ave. N. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	26	Fairmount Park Elementary School	575 41st St. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	27	Boca Ciega High School	924 58th St. S. • Gulfport	🏠
	28	Gibbs High School	850 34th St. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	29	John Hopkins Middle School	701 16th St. S. • St. Petersburg	♿🐕
	30	Campbell Park Elementary School	1051 Seventh Ave. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	31	Jamerson Elementary School	1200 37th St. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	32	St. Petersburg College Midtown Campus	1300 22nd St. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	33	Gulfport Elementary School	2014 52nd St. S. • Gulfport	🏠
	34	Thurgood Marshall Middle School	3901 22nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠
	35	James Sanderlin Elementary School	2350 22nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg	🏠

Not every shelter will open for every evacuation. Please check [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency) or call the Citizens Information Center at (727) 464-4333 or TDD (727) 464-3075.

Follow these steps to determine whether it's safe to stay home or if you need to find a secure place to go:



- PACK YOUR BAGS IF...**
- You live in a mobile or manufactured home.
  - You live in an evacuation zone.
  - You have special medical needs or need help evacuating.

**SPECIAL NEEDS – REGISTER NOW**

- Call Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800, your local fire department or your home healthcare provider.
- Register online [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency).
- For more details, see page 12.

WHERE CAN YOU GO?

**HOST HOME** – A safe, secure home in a zone not being ordered to evacuate.  
**HOTEL** – Identify hotels in a zone not being ordered to evacuate. Book early!  
**LEAVE** – Make sure your vehicle is ready for a long ride with traffic. Also, remember the storm could change paths and still put you in harm's way in another part of the state.



**LAST RESORT: PUBLIC SHELTER** – Expect crowded quarters with few comforts at shelters located in local schools or church buildings. Pinellas County has limited shelter space so this should be your last resort.  
**Do you have a pet?** See page 13.  
**Do you need public transportation?** See page 4.

DO YOU HAVE A HOST HOME?

A Category 3 hurricane would drive about 391,000 people from their homes, but the county currently has approximately 61,000 public shelter spaces so alternative options are needed. While many people may stay at a safe hotel or relative's house or even leave the county, others – especially the elderly and pet owners – need a local place to stay. Groups that provide Host Homes can help.

Do you or the social groups you participate in have a safe home or building that's outside the evacuation zone? Would you be willing to open that space for individuals and families that need a secure space to ride out a storm? Consider organizing a group Host Home program.

Host Homes is not a government program; it's a voluntary program for employers, places of worship or civic organizations that want to help their own employees or members. Keeping the host-guest matches within the organization takes away anxiety associated with helping strangers. It also allows the group the freedom to run the program according to the needs of its members. Learn about organizing a Host Home at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hosthomes.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hosthomes.htm).



IF YOU STAY HOME...

Make sure your home is safe and your family is prepared.



- Consider:**
- Survival kit
  - Battery-operated radio with extra batteries
  - Hurricane shutters
  - Garage door braced
  - A safe room inside the house – ground floor interior room with no windows
  - Plastic tarps for leaks
- For more information on preparing your home, see page 14.

- 🏠 General Shelters
- 🐕 Pet-Friendly Shelters  
*Must register pets in advance*
- ♿ Special Needs Shelters

A catastrophic hurricane could make portions of Pinellas County virtually uninhabitable for weeks or even months. Utility outages could be long-lasting and widespread.

STAY SAFE DURING THE STORM

- Stay tuned to local news for updates.
- Close interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.
- If power goes out, use your weather radio for alerts. For light, use flashlights, battery-operated lanterns or chemical light sticks.
- Stay indoors and stay calm. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm and winds may pick up again.



- Parents should be patient with children struggling to cope with the situation. For more suggestions for children, see page 12.

If your home is breached...

- Take refuge in your safe room, an interior room, closet or hallway on the lowest level of your home. Remember, 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.
- Consider leaving your home ONLY if remaining poses an imminent threat to your life.
- Wait until the storm has passed to tend to any damage.



SURVIVE AFTER THE STORM

The RECOVER section of this guide has valuable advice for living without power and other utilities in the aftermath of a disaster. It may take awhile for emergency crews to clear roads of debris and restore basic services. Heed any advisories issued by local authorities and make use of your survival kit to meet your everyday needs.

RE-ENTRY

After an evacuation, many parts of Pinellas County may be inaccessible due to damage, flooding or debris blocking major roadways. Coming home is not a guarantee. Get the latest news for information on damage before heading home.

Considerations:

- Be prepared with proper ID that identifies you and the address of your residential or business property for re-entry after a storm.
- Barrier island residents need a special emergency access permit.
- Call your municipality.
- Call the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Public Relations Bureau at (727) 582-6221.
- Visit: [www.pcsoweb.com/emergency-access-permit](http://www.pcsoweb.com/emergency-access-permit)
- Pinellas County's Re-Entry Plan: [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/PDF/Re-entry-Plan.pdf](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/PDF/Re-entry-Plan.pdf)

Get help

The Citizens Information Center is activated during times of emergency. Staff will be available to answer questions. Call (727) 464-4333.

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN



Fill out the information in this plan and share it with your family and loved ones.  
An online version is available at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/familydisasterplan.pdf](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/familydisasterplan.pdf)

ALL-HAZARDS DISASTER INFORMATION

Central Family Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

School(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Day Care: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Important Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do I have everything I need for my survival kit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have I signed up to receive Alert Pinellas emergency notifications? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do I have a battery-powered radio for emergencies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does my family have a central meeting place if we're separated in an emergency?

☐ Yes ☐ No Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Are important papers – and copies – stored with valuables in a waterproof, safe place?

Originals: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies: \_\_\_\_\_

**Insurance Policy Information**

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Health: \_\_\_\_\_

Flood: \_\_\_\_\_

Auto: \_\_\_\_\_

Renters: \_\_\_\_\_

HURRICANE PREPARATION

Evacuation Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we'll go if/when we need to evacuate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Evacuation location, address and phone (host home, hotel, shelter):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does my employer provide a special shelter for me and my family?

☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, list address and phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does my evacuation location allow pets? ☐ Yes ☐ No

My pet(s) name/type of pet(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What will I do with my pet(s) if I evacuate? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If required, have I registered for Special Needs Evacuation Assistance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Can I be a host home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how many/who will I host? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What preventative measures will I take to safeguard my home?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are my windows and doors protected? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where is my safe room? \_\_\_\_\_

How will I secure my boat? \_\_\_\_\_

# OTHER HAZARDS



While hurricanes pose a major threat to Pinellas County, there are any number of other potential disasters that threaten lives and property. From violent tornadoes to hazardous chemical spills, it is critical to know what to do when warnings are issued.

**Steps to take for all hazards:**

- Develop an emergency communications plan.
- Sign up to receive emergency information from the county through *Alert Pinellas*.
- Identify a meeting location should an incident prevent you from getting home.

- Build a survival kit for all potential disasters.
- Locate a safe room you can retreat to in the event of severe weather events such as thunderstorms and tornadoes.



# THUNDERSTORMS & LIGHTNING

in this section

- **Seek shelter**
- **Avoid electrical conductors**
- **If you're stuck outdoors...**



Thunderstorms are a common occurrence in Florida, especially during the summertime. The Sunshine State sees about 1.4 million lightning strikes in an average year and we lead the nation in lightning-related deaths. About 10 percent of thunderstorms are severe, with winds 58 mph or stronger and quarter-sized hail. Keep an eye on the weather forecast before you venture outdoors and heed nature's warning when you hear the sky start to rumble.



## SEEK SHELTER

Every thunderstorm produces lightning. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike. Go inside or find shelter immediately.

If you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear thunder: every five seconds means lightning is 1 mile away.

**When thunder roars, go indoors!**

**Safe Rooms:** Severe thunderstorms could produce wind strong enough to down trees and damage your home. Learn more in the TORNADO section about how to locate your home's safe room.

## AVOID ELECTRIC CONDUCTORS

If you're indoors during a thunderstorm, stay away from anything that conducts electricity, such as corded phones, electrical appliances, computers, plumbing, metal doors and windows.

## IF YOU'RE STUCK OUTDOORS...

- Get off any elevated areas.
- Do not lie flat on the ground.
- Do not shelter under an isolated tree.
- Get as far away from water as possible.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity.

## If someone is struck by lightning...

Immediate medical attention can save a lightning victim's life. Call 9-1-1 and start CPR until medical crews arrive.



# TORNADOES

in this section

- **Weather alerts**
- **Watches vs. Warnings**
- **Safe rooms**



Tornadoes can form quickly during thunderstorms any time of year creating high velocity wind and blowing dangerous debris. In Florida, the average warning time before a tornado hits is only 12 minutes. You may only have moments to make a life-or-death decision.



## WEATHER ALERTS

A NOAA Weather Alert Radio and Wireless Emergency Alerts on your mobile device are especially critical for tornado warnings, which could be issued in the middle of the night.

**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.

**Wireless 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)

**Alert Pinellas:** Dangerous weather warnings can also be sent to any phone lines or devices you register with Pinellas County's *Alert Pinellas* emergency notification service: [www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas)

## WATCHES vs. WARNINGS

**Tornado Watch:** Tornadoes are possible in your area; monitor radio or TV reports for further developments.

**Tornado Warning:** A tornado has been sighted in your area. Proceed to safe shelter immediately.

## SAFE ROOMS

Designate a safe room where you can stay during a tornado in your home, office or other places you go frequently. Bathrooms or interior hallways are often good options.

- **Center of the building**
- **No windows**
- **Ground floor**



## Mobile Homes

Mobile homes are not safe from the violent winds of a tornado. Identify a safe place you can go now, such as a clubhouse, or plan to leave your home when tornadoes are possible.

## Vehicles

Vehicles are easily overturned in a tornado, so get out and seek shelter in a sturdy building. Do not try to outrun or outmaneuver a tornado!



# FLOODS

in this section

- Know your flood risk
- Stay out of the water
- Evacuations



Hurricane storm surge can cause rapid flooding in a matter of hours. The rising floodwaters from heavy rainfall can endanger waterways as well as low-lying or poorly-drained parts of the county any time of year.



## KNOW YOUR FLOOD RISK

- For your FEMA Flood Zone, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm) or call your city for information. Residents in unincorporated Pinellas County, call (727) 464-3471.
- If you live in an area prone to flooding, consider sandbags or another type of barrier to keep water out of your home in minor flood events.
- **Remember:** Homeowner's insurance policies don't cover flood damage. Consider extra flood coverage.
- A new flood policy takes **30 days** to take effect.

## STAY OUT OF THE WATER

- Do not drive through standing water and obey "road closed" signs. It only takes a foot of water to float many vehicles. **Turn Around, Don't Drown!**
- Do not walk through flood waters. It only takes 6 inches of water to knock you off your feet.
- Don't go into any room if water has submerged electrical outlets or cords.
- After a flood, stay out of standing water or structures until authorities advise it's safe. Standing water could contain toxins, chemicals, dangerous debris and wildlife.

## EVACUATIONS

If heavy rain is expected to begin flooding a neighborhood, emergency managers may announce an evacuation. If you live in a flood prone area, pay attention to emergency advisories and be ready to leave. If you wait too long, you run the risk of being trapped if rising waters cut off roads in your area.

Flood evacuations and shelter openings will be announced through local media, *Alert Pinellas* and other channels.

### Learn more about floods:

Pinellas County has a comprehensive website on our area's flood hazards and how residents can become more prepared: [www.pinellascounty.org/flooding](http://www.pinellascounty.org/flooding).



# MAN-MADE & BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

in this section

- Terrorism & active shooters
- Pandemic
- Hazardous materials



Tune in to world news on any given week and you will hear about any number of deadly hazards ranging from pandemic diseases to acts of terrorism. During an unexpected large-scale emergency, your best decision may be simply to stay tuned to local media, stay indoors and wait for help or further information.

In certain types of emergencies, there are

active steps you can take to protect yourself. For more detailed information on these hazards and others, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/other\\_hazards.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/other_hazards.htm).

## TERRORISM & ACTIVE SHOOTERS

Unlike a hurricane, there may be no warning for a terrorist attack, but you can plan ahead by taking the steps referenced earlier: emergency contacts, emergency alerts, a meeting place and a disaster supply kit. Be alert and aware of your surroundings. If you see something – report it to law enforcement.



### Active shooter tips

Active shooter situations happen quickly, often before law enforcement arrives on the scene.

- Be aware of your environment and possible dangers.
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit – escape should be your first choice.
- If you cannot escape, stay where you are and secure the door.
- If you are in a hallway and can't escape, get into a room and secure the door.
- As a last resort, attempt to take the active shooter down. When the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her.
- **Lastly, call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so.**

### When law enforcement arrives...

Remain calm, follow instructions, put down any items in your hands and raise your hands to make them visible. Avoid making quick movements toward officers, pointing or yelling.

Source: "Active Shooter - How to Respond" and "Active Shooter Pocket Card," U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

## PANDEMIC

In our global society, infectious diseases can spread quickly by human contact, animals, insects or food. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control is the agency responsible for warning the public about pandemic health hazards. The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County may also issue warnings and advice. CDC: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) Florida Dept. of Health: [www.pinellashealth.com](http://www.pinellashealth.com)

### General tips to stop the spread of infectious disease:

- **WASH** your hands often with soap and water and alcohol-based sanitizer.
- **AVOID** close contact with sick people and touching eyes, nose or mouth – that's how germs spread.
- **COVER** your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- **STAY** home if you feel sick until you recover.



If advised by authorities, use a face mask or other protective equipment.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials are part of daily life. They are in the chlorine that keeps pools clear or tanker trucks that deliver chemicals commercially. Should a chemical spill or other hazardous material release occur, there are a few basic steps you can take to protect yourself:

- Shelter-in-place if local authorities ask you to do so.
- Turn off the air conditioning/ventilation system and seal windows and doors to prevent outside air from coming in. Plastic sheeting can help seal cracks around doors and windows.
- Remain indoors and wait for instructions through the local media and emergency notification systems, such as *Alert Pinellas*.



Even in densely-populated Pinellas County, the threat of wildfires is present. Take a few minutes to discuss with your family what actions you will take if there is a fire in your neighborhood or your home.

FIRE PLAN

- Make sure all family members have contact numbers to reach each other.
- Identify at least two escape routes from your home and neighborhood.
- Practice fire drills so everyone knows what to do.
- Don't forget to include pets in your plan.

WILDFIRE HAZARDS

Drought and freezes create an ideal situation for wildfires. A cigarette butt or a lightning strike can ignite a flame that could consume hundreds of acres and prove deadly.

When a wildfire is threatening...

- Call 9-1-1 to report a fire.
- If advised, evacuate immediately.
- Be ready to leave by parking in the direction of escape.
- Move pets to one room while you prepare to evacuate.



If you know there's time, get your home ready:

- Close all windows, vents, doors and any non-flammable window coverings and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight curtains and flammable drapes.
- Close gas valves and turn off pilot lights.
- Move flammable furniture to center of home away from openings.
- Put sprinklers on the roof and close to any fuel tanks. Wet the roof.
- Wet shrubs around home.
- Move flammable patio furniture inside.



BUSINESSES



A hurricane or other major disaster could shut down your business for weeks. It's critical to plan ahead for a possible evacuation and determine how your business would recover in the aftermath of a catastrophe.

SIGN UP FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

- Sign up for emergency notifications and other news from Pinellas County Economic Development at [www.pced.org/subscribe](http://www.pced.org/subscribe).
- Make sure members of your workplace are signed up for Alert Pinellas, [www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas).

BUSINESS DISASTER PLAN HELP

You can get help preparing a 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](http://www.pced.org/sbdc).

The Florida Virtual Business Emergency Operations Center provides businesses with information on government operations, a place to report business damages, a resource sharing site between businesses and a portal for businesses with multi-county operations to coordinate re-entry information. Pinellas County will utilize FLVBEOC during emergencies. For more info or to register for an account, visit <http://flvbEOC.org>.

STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS



- Assess your risk – internally and externally – especially your business' evacuation zone. See page 6.
- Analyze your critical business functions.

- Plan for an alternate location; expect to be able to work with limited or no water, sewer or power for at least two weeks.
- Communicate your disaster plan to employees; specifically, when will you shut down operations and send them home?
- Consider supply chain preparedness.
- Back up your data and practice restoring your technology.
- Create an employee, vendor and key client communication plan; share this plan and test it with your employees.
- Assemble an emergency kit.
- Review your business insurance coverage.
- Keep cash on hand in the event you must work without electricity.
- Secure your building as a storm is approaching.
- Turn off electricity, water and gas if you are evacuated.
- Consider making your business a host home shelter for employees if you are located outside the evacuation zone. See page 7.



GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS

Business Interruption Insurance

Think about what you'd do if your building or other business assets were damaged or completely unusable after a storm. Business Interruption Insurance will compensate you for lost income if your company must leave the site because of disaster-related damage. Talk to an agent about whether this coverage is a good option for you.

TYPES OF LOAN ASSISTANCE

SBA Disaster Loans

The U.S. Small Business Administration 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 these items in a declared disaster: real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, and inventory and business assets. For more information, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).

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 expedient cash flow to businesses impacted by a catastrophe so they can begin repairs and replace inventory. For more information, visit [www.floridadisasterloan.org](http://www.floridadisasterloan.org).

ID for re-entry

Business owners and critical employees may need identification such as an employer-issued photo ID or corporate placard to gain access to their facilities in a disaster area.

- Business owners should also be prepared to show a license, utility bill or lease document with the property's address.
- Provide staff with a personnel list on company letterhead, including contact information. State the need for early access and the forms of identification your company has provided to key personnel.
- Barrier island business owners need an Emergency Access Permit to re-enter after a mandatory evacuation. See page 8.

BUSINESS "GO BOX"

- Key contact list – employees, key customers and clients
- Insurance policies and agent contact information

# SPECIAL NEEDS

in this section

- Register for shelter
- Know before you go
- Supply checklist
- Help for seniors



## REGISTER FOR SHELTER

- Call Pinellas County Emergency Management at **(727) 464-3800**.
- Call your nearest fire department or home health care provider.
- Submit a registration form online at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency).

Once registered, a medical needs review will determine your eligibility for a special needs shelter. If you don't qualify, other options will be discussed. If you have your own transportation, registration is NOT required but is strongly recommended. If you make other arrangements after registration, you are not obligated to go to the shelter.

Keep in mind that the shelter will be inside a school and will likely be crowded and noisy. It will be safe, but it's not for everyone.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Important things to know when going to a public shelter:
- It's recommended to bring family or a caregiver to a shelter.

- Service animals that are trained to assist a person with a disability are allowed in any shelter, hotel or motel – no registration required. Don't forget to pack their supplies too - see page 13. Pets that are not service animals must go to pet-friendly shelters.
- Personnel from Pinellas County Schools and Florida Department of Health staff special needs shelters.
- Assistance is limited to medical monitoring, oxygen and some backup electricity.
- Oxygen is available, but the shelter could lose air conditioning in a power outage.
- Bedding is not provided. Residents who are unable to sleep on a cot or the floor should consider a hotel or a host home. See page 7.
- Have your "go bag" ready and let an out-of-town contact know where you are going.
- Wear comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes.

## SUPPLY CHECKLIST

In addition to the suggestions for evacuations on page 2, consider adding these items:

- Medical contacts list – phone numbers, medical records, medications list
- Wearable medical alert tag
- Special written instructions for emergency personnel
- Two-week supply of medication and any special medical materials you need
- Cooler for refrigerated medications
- Special dietary foods, non-perishable
- Air mattress and bedding

### Wheelchairs

- Patch kit
- Extra battery or converter for charging battery

### Visual Impairment

- Talking or Braille clock
- Extra cane, magnifier and glasses

### Hearing or Speech Impairments

- Extra hearing aid batteries
- Pen and paper for communicating emergency information
- Preprinted key phrases for use in an emergency

## HELP FOR SENIORS

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.

- Sign up for *Alert Pinellas*. If you can't sign up online, you can call **(866) 484-3264**.
- Build a phone tree with your group to coordinate plans if there's a Hurricane Warning.
- If you live in a nursing home or assisted living facility, contact the administrator about emergency plans – let friends/family know the plan and share important contacts with them.
- 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 help. You may save a life.**



# KIDS

in this section

- Make plans with the whole family
- Supplies for your kids
- Talk to your kids
- Learn with your kids



Hurricane season can be a scary time for kids. It's confusing to evacuate and leave personal belongings behind. Adults may be stressed out by the weather updates. How can you help younger family members work their way through these stressful times?

## MAKE PLANS WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY

- Involve children in emergency planning, e.g. checking supplies and writing a shopping list.
- 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.

## SUPPLIES FOR YOUR KIDS

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 accordingly.

### A few suggestions:

- Diapers and wipes
- Powdered milk
- Blanket and pacifier
- Stuffed animal or favorite toy
- Favorite non-perishable snacks

## TALK TO YOUR KIDS

Three major fears common in children during a storm are: death, darkness and abandonment. Emotional support from parents is critical, well after the storm is over.

- Listen to fears and reassure children often.
- Encourage them to talk and ask questions, but limit discussion to basic facts.
- Spend extra time before bedtime; leave a door open and night-light on.
- Maintain close contact. Hold and touch your child.
- Don't discipline for unusual signs of anxiety during a crisis, like bedwetting or thumb-sucking.



- Do not lie to children about the dangers. Reassure them that you are focused on their safety.
- Be cautious of permitting young children to watch or listen to news.
- Allow for mourning and grieving over the loss of meaningful items.

### If you must leave your child...

Children who have been through a disaster are afraid of being separated from family and left alone. Avoid separation, even to go to the store. If you must leave children with friends or relatives, reassure them:

- Let your child know how long you will be away and how often you will be in touch.
- Make sure your child's needs are being met.

## LEARN WITH YOUR KIDS

Learning the steps to preparedness with your kids will help both them and you get a better understanding of what's happening when a disaster strikes.

For educational resources, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/helpingchildrencope.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/helpingchildrencope.htm).



**Don't ever consider staying with your boat in a hurricane.** Make preparations early and evacuate for your safety. Monitor weather and sea conditions closely. If watches or warnings are issued, don't venture onto the water unless you are confident your vessel can be navigated safely under the conditions. Follow the tips below to minimize damage to your vessel during a hurricane.

PREPARE YOUR BOAT

- 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 storm – line should be about twice the diameter of normal line.
- When a storm is approaching, remove loose items on the deck – bimini tops, dinghies, etc. – and store them on land. Shut off fuel lines at the tank.
- Keep batteries charged; make sure bilge pumps are operating properly.
- Keep insurance up-to-date.



- HIGH AND DRY**
- Your best choice is to keep your boat high and dry on shore:
- Store boat and trailer in a secure covered building, such as a garage.
  - If left outside, secure using ground hooks and straps.
  - Fill boat partially with water for stability. Keep water away from engine/batteries.
  - Put wooden blocks between trailer frame and springs for extra support with added weight.

- MOORED AT DOCK**
- Secure hatches and doors.
  - Double up on mooring lines and spring lines to secure boat in its mooring.
  - Use several cleats to distribute the load on the boat.
  - Allow extra line for tide and storm surge.
  - Use chafing gear, such as reinforced radiator hose where lines will rub for protection – several feet on each side.
  - Disconnect electric, water and other dock connections.
  - Remove valuables.

- ANCHORED**
- 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.
  - Remember the boat's position may change drastically during the storm.

**Lastly... batten down the hatches!**

**BRIDGE OPERATION IN A STORM**

During the approach of a hurricane, Pinellas County's 10 bascule bridges – or drawbridges – will operate in a modified mode to give preference to evacuating vehicle traffic until the bridges go into lock-down position to ensure barrier islands are evacuated and to protect the bridges from wind damage.

The U.S. Coast Guard will coordinate with local and state agencies to issue a special marine advisory when the bascule bridge operations will be modified. NOAA weather radios, local media and marine broadcasts will announce these changes.

The 10 bascule bridges are located at: Pinellas Bayway, Tierra Verde, Corey Causeway, John's Pass, Tom Stuart Causeway, Indian Rocks, Dunedin Causeway, Beckett Bridge, Park Boulevard and Treasure Island.



Just like other members of the family, pets need to be part of your disaster plan. If you have to evacuate, do you know if pets are allowed where you're planning to stay? If you are staying home, what will your pet need if your family must survive without basic necessities after a storm?

**Pinellas County Animal Services:**  
(727) 582-2600

SHELTERING WITH YOUR PET

**Pet-friendly?** If you will evacuate during a storm, make sure the host home, hotel or shelter where you're going accepts your type of pet.

**Pet-friendly hotels:** Call *Visit St. Pete/Clearwater* at (727) 464-7200 for options or search the web for **pet-friendly hotels** in the area. Some hotels have emergency policies to take pets in an evacuation.

Pet-friendly hotel info is also available through the **Know Your Zone** feature on the "Doing Things For You" app during evacuations (accommodations feature), as hotels report their availability and emergency pet policies.

**Can I board my pet?** Don't assume a kennel or hotel will take your pet in an emergency. Call ahead to find kennels in non-evacuation zones that could take your pet. Kennels require proof of vaccinations.

**Can I take my pet to an animal shelter? NO** - Animal shelters, such as Pinellas County Animal Services or SPCA Tampa Bay, CANNOT accept your pets during an emergency.

**Can a family member outside the evacuation zone take my pet?** Ask them now.



**Horses, livestock and other animals:** Pinellas County provides no public areas to leave these animals during an evacuation, so it's important to make arrangements. Check the Sunshine State Horse Council website: [www.floridahorse.com](http://www.floridahorse.com).

REGISTER EARLY FOR SHELTER

Pinellas County operates three pet-friendly public shelters for dogs and cats only. Owners can stay in the same building as their pets. Space is limited at these shelters and they should be considered a last resort in your plan. Mobile home residents get first priority.

If you will need to stay at a pet-friendly shelter, you **must register** ahead of time: Call (727) 582-2600 or fill

out a form online at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/petpreparedness.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/petpreparedness.htm).

PET PLAN & SUPPLY LIST

- DO THESE THINGS:**
- Keep current vaccination records.
  - Take a photo of your pet to keep with you.
  - Download the county's pet identification form at [www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices](http://www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices); tape this to your pet's kennel if your pet will be sheltered apart from you.
- PACK THESE THINGS:**
- Identification
  - Immunization records
  - County rabies tag

- Food & water with bowls (two-week supply) – can opener if needed
- Carrier or portable kennel (with room to stand and turn around)
- Muzzle, collar and leash
- Medications
- Toys/blanket
- Cat litter, pan and scoop
- Plastic waste bags
- Disinfectant
- Paper towels

Remember, if you must evacuate, you may have to care for your pet for an extended period of time – plan accordingly.

Post-disaster animal collection

After a storm, stray animals will be collected and taken to temporary collection sites and then transferred to more permanent sites that will be announced to the public. If you lost your pet, look in the area around your home or call Animal Services.

Volunteer for pet pick-ups

Interested in helping the county transport pets for citizens with special needs during an evacuation? Call Animal Services for more information.



- Steps before you leave
- Long-term maintenance
- Protect your property from floods
- Tips to save your home



Bracing your home for high winds can make the difference between minor damage and a devastating loss in a hurricane. Homeowners should consider upgrading an old roof, windows or garage door to a higher standard of wind resistance when making improvements.

STEPS BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- Turn off the water and gas utilities.
- Lock windows and doors.
- Tell friends and neighbors where you’re going.

LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

Not sure if your home is storm ready? Roofs and windows on older homes, especially, may not be up to current code for wind resistance. Consider hiring a home inspector to review your home’s condition.

The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes has step-by-step instructions for reinforcing your home’s roof, gable ends and other areas: [www.flash.org](http://www.flash.org).

If you hire a contractor, make sure they’re fully licensed. Pinellas County Consumer Protection can verify this. Call (727) 464-6200 or visit [www.pinellascounty.org/consumer](http://www.pinellascounty.org/consumer).

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM FLOODS

Depending on your property’s elevation, it may only take a few inches of rising water to infiltrate your home. Here are a few steps you can take to mitigate the impact of flooding:



- Elevate your utilities, such as water heaters, AC units, etc.
- Evaluate your property’s drainage and implement floodproofing measures.

For detailed information about flood risks, insurance and flood mitigation techniques, visit [www.pinellascounty.org/flooding](http://www.pinellascounty.org/flooding) or call Pinellas County Flood Information Services at (727) 464-7700.

MORE RESOURCES

Visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/prepareahead.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/prepareahead.htm) for more detailed steps and links to other resources to prepare your home.

TIPS TO SAVE YOUR HOME

**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.

**BRACE YOUR GABLE 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](http://www.floridadisaster.org/hrg).

**PREPARE YOUR YARD** – Rock mulch, sagging tree limbs and yard furniture 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...

- Dispose of any piles of loose tree limbs or debris.
- Bring in all large yard items; e.g. furniture, grills, bird baths.
- Do not drain your pool. Super chlorinate the water and turn off the electricity.

**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 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, map with shelter locations.

**CHECK SEALS** – Replace any worn out weather stripping or caulk around windows and doors.

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS



## Emergency Preparedness

**Pinellas County Emergency Management**  
(727) 464-3800..... [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency)  
**Pinellas County Citizens Information Center** (open only during emergencies)  
(727) 464-4333 / TDD (727) 464-3075  
**Find Your Evacuation Level**  
(727) 453-3150 (call from home phone) .... [www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone](http://www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone)  
**Alert Pinellas Emergency Notification Service**  
(866) 484-3264..... [www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas)

## County Agencies

**Pinellas County Information Line**  
(727) 464-3000 / V/TDD (727) 464-4062..... [www.pinellascounty.org](http://www.pinellascounty.org)  
**Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater**  
(Hotel/motel evac info inside county) ..... [www.visitstpeteclearwater.com](http://www.visitstpeteclearwater.com)  
**St. Pete- Clearwater International Airport**  
(727) 453-7800 ..... [www.fly2pie.com](http://www.fly2pie.com)  
**Pinellas County Animal Services**  
(727) 582-2600 ..... [www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices](http://www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices)  
**Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board** (contractor information)  
(727) 582-3100..... [www.pcclb.com](http://www.pcclb.com)  
**Pinellas County Consumer Protection**  
(727) 464-6200..... [www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/price\\_gouging.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/price_gouging.htm)  
**Pinellas County Economic Development**  
(727) 464-7332 ..... [www.pced.org](http://www.pced.org)  
**Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County**  
(727) 824-6900..... [www.pinellashealth.com](http://www.pinellashealth.com)  
**Pinellas County School Board**  
(727) 588-6000 / School Bus Info Line (727) 587-2020 ..... [www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org)  
**Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office (non-emergency)**  
(727) 582-6200..... [www.pcsoweb.com](http://www.pcsoweb.com)  
**Pinellas County Utilities**  
(727) 464-4000 ..... [www.pinellascounty.org/utilities](http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities)  
**Pinellas County Solid Waste**  
(727) 464-7500..... [www.pinellascounty.org/solidwaste](http://www.pinellascounty.org/solidwaste)  
**Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)**  
(727) 540-1900 ..... [www.psta.net](http://www.psta.net)

## State of Florida

**Florida Highway Patrol**  
\*FHP (mobile phone) / (727) 570-5010 ..... [www.flhsmv.gov/fhp](http://www.flhsmv.gov/fhp)  
**Florida Division of Emergency Management** (non-emergency)  
(850) 413-9969..... [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org)  
**Florida Attorney General’s Office** (price gouging)  
(866) 966-7226..... [www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com)

## Federal Agencies

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**  
(800) 621-3362 ..... [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)  
**NOAA Weather Alert Radio**.....SAME code for Pinellas County: 012103  
**National Hurricane Center** ..... [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)  
**National Weather Service/Tampa Bay Area**..... [www.weather.gov/tbw](http://www.weather.gov/tbw)

## Utility Companies

**Duke Energy** (report outages)  
(800) 228-8485..... [www.duke-energy.com](http://www.duke-energy.com)  
**Bright House Networks** (Charter Communications)  
(888) 289-8988..... [www.brighthouse.com/tampa-bay/default](http://www.brighthouse.com/tampa-bay/default)  
**Clearwater Gas**  
(727) 562-4980 ..... [www.clearwatergas.com](http://www.clearwatergas.com)  
**TECO Peoples Gas**  
(877) 832-6747 ..... [www.peoplesgas.com](http://www.peoplesgas.com)  
**TECO** (report outages)  
(877) 588-1010..... [www.tampaelectric.com](http://www.tampaelectric.com)  
**Frontier** (formerly Verizon)  
(800) 921-8101 ..... [www.frontier.com](http://www.frontier.com)  
**WOW!**  
(866) 745-3685 ..... [www.wowway.com](http://www.wowway.com)

## Other Agencies

**American Red Cross**  
(727) 898-3111 ..... [www.redcross.org/fl/tampa-bay](http://www.redcross.org/fl/tampa-bay)  
**United Way**  
(813) 274-0900 ..... [www.unitedwaysuncoast.org](http://www.unitedwaysuncoast.org)  
**Federal Alliance For Safe Homes (FLASH)**  
(877) 221-7233 ..... [www.flash.org](http://www.flash.org)  
**The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS)**  
(813) 286-3400 ..... [www.disastersafety.org](http://www.disastersafety.org)  
**Insurance Information Institute** ..... [www.iii.org](http://www.iii.org)  
**2-1-1 Referral Line - Tampa Bay Cares** ..... [www.211tampabay.org](http://www.211tampabay.org)

# STAY IN THE KNOW FOR ALL-HAZARD PREPAREDNESS



**Visit the website**  
[www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency) for hurricane news, evacuation maps, shelter information and more.



**Sign up for Alert Pinellas notifications**  
  Get FREE emergency notifications from Pinellas County by voice or text at [www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas).

**Subscribe to Pinellas County E-Lert**  
The free, award-winning Pinellas County E-Lert electronic newsletter comes out monthly during hurricane season with updates on the latest emergency news and preparedness tips. Sign up at [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency).



**Download the APP**  
  The Pinellas County “Doing Things For You” App for your Apple or Android device. Access the Know Your Zone web application, the latest county news, real-time PSTA bus information and report problems with roads, traffic signals and code enforcement issues.

**Watch PCC-TV**  
at [www.pinellascounty.org/tv](http://www.pinellascounty.org/tv) or on Bright House 637, WOW! 18 or Frontier 44 for hurricane programming and emergency operations center updates.



**Tune in on your weather alert radio**  
to receive emergency weather alerts from the local National Weather Service in Ruskin, Florida.



**Call the Citizen Information Center** at (727) 464-4333 for information before, during and after the storm; only open during emergencies.

**Request a speaker or information**  
for your organization, school or place of employment. Call the Pinellas County Speaker’s Bureau at (727) 464-4600, or download a request form at [www.pinellascounty.org/speak](http://www.pinellascounty.org/speak).

**Follow us on social media**  
  **Twitter** – @pinellasconews for general county information, breaking news, preparedness tips and real-time updates  
– @pinellasem for preparedness information and emergency updates  
– @pinellastraffic for real-time traffic updates  
Sign up on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) to receive tweets via text message.

**Facebook** – For general county information, breaking news, preparedness tips and emergency updates, visit [www.facebook.com/pinellascountynews](http://www.facebook.com/pinellascountynews).



  **Nextdoor** – For emergency notifications that directly impact your area through this new private social media network, visit [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com).

**YouTube** – For videos on how to prepare for emergencies and historical hurricane information, visit [www.youtube.com/pccctv1](http://www.youtube.com/pccctv1).





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