

What else should I prepare for?

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 other hazards provide little or no warning or preparation time. If anyone is hurt or if you need immediate help, call 9-1-1.

For more detailed information on these hazards and others visit www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/other_hazards.htm

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.
- 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 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.
- Do not lie flat on the ground.
- Do not stand under a tree.
- Get as far away from water as possible.
- 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 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.

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.
- 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.

Suspicious behavior

If You See Something; Say Something

While we may not be able to predict an act of terrorism or shooting, we can be alert to suspicious behavior and let officials know when we observe something we think could be a threat. If you see something that you think is suspicious, contact your local law enforcement agency.

Active shooter

If an active shooter is in your vicinity:

- 1) Run—If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the area.
- 2) Hide—If evacuation is not possible, find a place where the active shooter is less likely to find you.
- 3) Fight—As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter.

For additional resources visit: www.ready.gov/active-shooter

Pandemic disease

It is a small world and infectious diseases can spread quickly by human contact, animals, insects or food. You can help prevent the spread of infectious disease:

- Get routine and travel-related child and adult vaccines.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth – that is how germs spread.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Stay home if you feel ill.
- Use a face mask if advised to.
- For additional information visit: www.cdc.gov or www.pinellashealth.com.

What if we're told to shelter in place?

Shelter in place means to 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:

- Leave home, work or the building you currently occupy—for any reason, even to get your kids 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 get them.

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.