



During an approaching storm, it can be very stressful if you have not taken the time to make plans for you and your family to be safe. And chances are, you won't have time to get everything together at the last minute. If you take basic steps and plan ahead now, you won't have to worry when a storm is coming. Pages 5 - 11 will help you plan for an emergency and pages 12 - 13 will help you prepare.

Replace panic with peace of mind and get a plan. Start by answering these questions:

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?

3. HOW WILL I GET THERE?

- If you plan on going out of town and you don't have a car, do you know the options of public transportation? (Remember, normal routes could change as a hurricane approaches.)
- Will you take public transportation to a shelter?
- 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?

DID YOU KNOW?

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.

SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION: The county offers transportation for special needs residents (see page 6). 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 "Personal Disaster Plan" on page 11 of this guide.

At A Storm's Approach

MAKING THE DECISION

Once you have assessed your risk, make your decision and make your plans. First, you must listen to the experts and figure out what the storm is forecast to do. Remember, forecasts are never exact. Always check for updates and be prepared for changes.

UNDERSTANDING THE FORECAST

The National Hurricane Center uses a graphic of a "cone" to show the probable track of a storm that you see on weather forecasts in local media and on the center's website: 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 personal 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, be sure 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. (If Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center is activated or the governor has declared a state of emergency, you can get a 30-day refill without the insurance company's usual restrictions).
- 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 pickups 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 so, you must evacuate.

- 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.
- Be aware of your evacuation time range. Evacuations will be issued with beginning and end times.

WHERE CAN YOU GO?

Hotel: Identify hotels in a zone not being ordered to evacuate. Book early!

Out of the area: 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.

- Register in advance for Special Needs and Pet-Friendly public shelters. Call Emergency Management at **(727) 464-3800**, your local fire department or your home healthcare provider, or register online: www.pinellascounty.org/emergency.

HOST HOME

A Category 3 hurricane would drive about 400,000 people from their homes, yet the county has approximately 50,000 shelter spaces available. While many people may stay at a safe hotel, leave the county, or stay with a friend or relative, there are many residents who will need a local place to stay.

Residents of non-evacuation zones can offer their homes to those in lower-lying areas. Host Homes work best when the two parties are compatible – families with children or pet owners for example. The guests can help to prepare the home and contribute supplies.

There are many residents who don't know anyone that they can ask. This is when an organization can do a great service by setting up a Host Home program for their members. For more information go to www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/hosthomes.