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

**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 15, 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.

**5 STEPS to prepare for all hazards**

1. **CONNECT** to emergency information
2. **BUILD** a survival kit
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

**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, or call the Citizens Information Center at (727) 444-4333 or TDD (727) 444-3075.

**Knowledge is power.**

**CONNECT to emergency information**

**in this section**

- **Wi-Fi**
- **Wireless Emergency Alerts**
- **NOAA Weather Alert Radio**
- **Social Media**

**Build a survival kit**

**in this section**

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

**Survival kit checklist**

**Basic Necessities**
- One-week supply of fluids to drink and non-penetrable 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
- Toilet paper, hygiene supplies, e.g. antibacterial hand gel, soap, non-scented, color-safe bleach, anti-itch cream, antiseptic
- Over-the-counter pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medicine/laxative
- Batteries, medicine dropper to help filter contaminated air
- First aid supplies – antiseptic hand gel, soap, over-the-counter pain reliever, anti-diabetes medicine/insulin, anti-itch cream, antiseptic
- Sanitation – toilet paper, hygiene supplies, e.g. towelettes, 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
- Cash or travelers checks
- Books, cards, board games for entertainment
- Full tank of gas in vehicle
**Survival kit (continued)**

**ASSESS your risks**

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVACUATION ZONES</th>
<th>FLOOD ZONES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wind-driven hurricane</td>
<td>Rising waters from heavy rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on ground elevation and proximity to water</td>
<td>Based on flood risk over period of years for insurance purposes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interactive Maps:** Find your Evacuation Zone and Flood Zone at 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.

**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. 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 closed at the threat of a hurricane, so you 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, joints 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.

**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/AnnualMaintenance/Sandbaginformation.

**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 13
- **Pets:** Page 13
- **Kids:** Page 12

**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 irreparable 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

**Evacuation zones vs. flood zones**

- Mobile homes are not safe havens
- Sandbags

**Get more information**

- www.pinellascounty.org/emergency
- www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/maps.htm
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.

### RECOVER after an emergency

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.pinelashhealth.com.

**Generators**
- A gas-powered generator can keep your appliances going after a disaster, but it comes with several dangers:
  - **CARBON MONOXIDE**: Use generators outdoors and away from windows and doors to avoid exposure to this deadly, colorless, odorless gas. NEVER operate a generator indoors.
  - **FIRE**: Make sure the generator is cool when refilling the tank and store flammable fuel away from fuel-burning appliances.
  - **ELECTRICAL SHOCK**: An electrical shock from your generator can also kill you.

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:

- **S-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.

### 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.

#### 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.

### 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 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 time to far to escape evacuation zones – think 10 miles, not 100.

4-6 feet above sea level

3 feet 

2 feet 

1 foot 

8-14 feet above sea level

14-19 feet above sea level

19-26 feet above sea level

26-29 feet above sea level

DO I STAY OR DO I GO?

MAKING THE DECISION

When a hurricane is on a probable path to reach our area in five days, your family must prepare their plan with the following actions:

• 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 preparations with the following actions:

• Double check your survival kit and make necessary purchases.
• Gather special supplies for infants, children, 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 WARNING 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 and doors.
• 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.

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/
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, 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 Zones

Potential Surge Heights (in feet)

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

**SHELTER OPTIONS**

**ALL-HAZARD GUIDE PAGE 7**

**Shelters**

**General**

**1. Tarpon Springs Middle School**
501 N. Florida Ave. • Tarpon Springs

**2. Brooker Creek Elementary School**
1310 Forelock Road • Tarpon Springs

**3. East Lake High School**
1300 Silver Eagle Drive • Tarpon Springs

**4. Carwise Middle School**
3001 Bentley Drive • Palm Harbor

**5. Palm Harbor University High School**
1900 Omega St. • Palm Harbor

**6. Palm Harbor Middle School**
1600 Tampa Road • Palm Harbor

**7. Dunedin Community Center**
1620 Pinehurst Road • Dunedin

**8. Dunedin Highland Middle School**
70 Patricia Ave. • Dunedin

**9. Dunedin Elementary School**
350 Union St. • Dunedin

**10. McHullen-Booth Elementary School**
3025 Union St. • Clearwater

**11. Safety Harbor Middle School**
301 First Ave. N. • Safety Harbor

**12. Clearwater Fundamental Middle School**
1650 Palmetto St. • Clearwater

**13. Skycrest Elementary School**
10 N. Corona Ave. • Clearwater

**14. Belleair Elementary School**
1192 Lakeway Road • Clearwater

**15. Ross Norton Recreation Center**
1426 S. MLK Jr. Ave. • Clearwater

**16. Oak Grove Middle School**
1370 S. Belcher Road • Clearwater

**Pet-Friendly Shelters**

**17. Large High School**
410 Missouri Ave. N. • Largo

**18. High Point Elementary School**
1621-1650 Ave. N. • Clearwater

**19. Pinellas Park High School**
6305 118th Ave. N. • Pinellas Park

**20. Bauder Elementary School**
12755 66th Ave. N. • Seminole

**21. John Sexton Elementary School**
1997 54th Ave. N. • St. Petersburg

**22. Leavitt 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**
624 58th St. S. • Gulfport

**28. Gibbs High School**
850 24th 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**
2016 52nd St. S. • Gulfport

**34. Thurgood Marshall Middle School**
3901 22nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg

**35. James Sanderlin Elementary School**
2300 22nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg

**Special Needs Shelters**

**36. Pinellas County**

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

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**SOUTH COUNTY**

**17. Large High School**
410 Missouri Ave. N. • Largo

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**DO YOU HAVE A HOST HOME?**

- 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.

**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 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 need public transportation?

**IF YOU STAY HOME**

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

**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.
- For more details, see page 12.

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**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.

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**NOT EVERY SHELTER WILL OPEN FOR EVERY EVACUATION.**

Please check 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:

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**ALL-HAZARD GUIDE**

PAGE 7
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.

**SURVIVE AFTERTHE 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.

**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-HAZARD 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

**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): ____________________________

**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.
ALL-HAZARD GUIDE PAGE 9

THUNDERSTORMS & LIGHTNING

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.

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.

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.

TORNADOES

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

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

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

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 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.

MAN-MADE & BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

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.

General tips to stop the spread of infectious disease:

- WASH your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizers.
- 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.

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.

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
Florida Dept. of Health: www.pinellashealth.com

EVCUATIONS

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.

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

Don’t Drown!

Turn Around, don’t drown!

STAY home if you feel sick until you recover.

- Know your flood risk
- Stay out of the water
- Evacuations
- Terrorism & active shooters
- Pandemic
- Hazardous materials

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ALL-HAZARD GUIDE
****ALL-HAZARD GUIDE PAGE 11****

**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.pinellascountycity.org/alertpinellas](http://www.pinellascountycity.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://flyvbec.org](http://flyvbec.org).

**STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS**

- 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.

**WILDFIRES**

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.

**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.

**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.

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.

**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).

**BUSINESS “GO BOX”**

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

**IN THIS SECTION**

- Emergency notifications  
- Business disaster plan  
- Steps to prepare your business  
- Business “Go Box”  
- Getting back to business  
- Fire plan  
- Wildfire hazards
Pinellas County’s special needs program is intended for those who need transportation or require minimal medical assistance. The county has three special needs shelters for residents; registration is generally required. Plan ahead and communicate with friends, family or caregivers if you’ll need extra help evacuating and sheltering during a storm.

**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.**

**REGISTER FOR SHELTER**

- Call Pinellas County Emergency Management at (727) 444-3800.
- 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.

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

Important things to know when going to a 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

**TALK TO YOUR KIDS**

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.

**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.

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

**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 special needs 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**
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.

PETS

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.

REGISTER EARLY FOR SHELTER

Pinellas County operates three pet-friendly public shelters for dogs and cats only. Owners can stay in the same buildings 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/petspreparedness.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, tape this to your pet’s kennel if your pet will be sheltered apart from you.

PACK THESE THINGS:

Identification cards

Immunoization 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.

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!

BRIDGES & BRIDGES

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 – biminis, 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.

PETS

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.

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• When a storm is approaching, remove loose items on the deck – biminis, 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.
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:
- Protect natural floodplains by keeping lawn clippings, leaves and other debris out of streets and storm drains. Flood plains provide storage for floodwaters and buffer coastal areas from storm surge. Only rain down the drain!
- 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.

**Protect 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.

**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 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

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

Alert Pinellas Emergency Notification Service
(866) 484-3264 ............................................. www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas

County Agencies

Pinellas County Information Line
(727) 464-3000 / V TDD (727) 464-4062 ................. www.pinellascounty.org

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater
(Hotel/motel evac info inside county) ...................... www.visitstpeteclearwater.com

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport
(727) 453-7800 ............................................. www.fly2pie.com

Florida Attorney General's Office
(850) 413-9969 .......................... www.florida.gov/ag

Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board (contractor information)
(727) 582-3190 .......................... www.pcclb.com

Pinellas County Consumer Protection
(727) 464-6200 .......................... www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/price_gouging.htm

Pinellas County Economic Development
(727) 464-7132 .......................... www.pced.org

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County
(727) 824-6900 .......................... www.floridahealth.gov

Pinellas County School Board
(727) 586-6000 / School Bus Info Line (727) 587-2020 .... www.pcsb.org

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (non-emergency)
(727) 582-6200 .......................... www.pinellascounty.org/sheriff

Pinellas County Utilities
(727) 464-4000 .......................... www.pinellascounty.org/utilities

Pinellas County Solid Waste
(727) 464-7500 .......................... www.pinellascounty.org/solidwaste

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
(727) 540-1900 .......................... www.psta.net

State of Florida

Florida Highway Patrol
*FHP (mobile phone) / (727) 570-5010 ................. www.flhsmv.gov/fhp

Florida Division of Emergency Management (non-emergency)
(850) 413-9969 .......................... www.florida.gov

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (contractor information)
(727) 582-2600 .......................... www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices

Florida Attorney General's Office (price gouging)
(866) 966-7226 .......................... www.myfloridalegal.com

Federal Agencies

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
(800) 621-3362 .......................... www.fema.gov

NOAA Weather Alert Radio
.......................... SAME code for Pinellas County: 012103

National Hurricane Center
.......................... www.nhc.noaa.gov

National Weather Service/Tampa Bay Area
.......................... www.weather.gov/tbw

Utility Companies

Duke Energy (report outages)
(800) 228-8465 .......................... www.duke-energy.com

Bright House Networks (Charter Communications)
(888) 289-8989 .......................... www.brighthouse.com/tampa-bay/default

Clearwater Gas
(727) 562-4980 .......................... www.clearwatergas.com

TECO Peoples Gas
(877) 832-6747 .......................... www.peoplesgas.com

TECO (report outages)
(877) 588-1010 .......................... www.tecoenergy.com

Frontier (formerly Verizon)
(800) 921-8101 .......................... www.frontier.com

WOW!
(866) 745-3685 .......................... www.wowway.com

Other Agencies

American Red Cross
(727) 898-3111 .......................... www.redcross.org/fl/tampa-bay

United Way
(813) 274-0900 .......................... www.unitedwaytampa.org

Federal Alliance For Safe Homes (FLASH)
(877) 221-7233 .......................... www.flash.org

The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS)
(813) 286-3400 .......................... www.disastersafety.org

Insurance Information Institute
.......................... www.iini.org

2-1-1 Referral Line - Tampa Bay Cares
.......................... www.211tampabay.org

STAY IN THE KNOW FOR ALL-HAZARD PREPAREDNESS

Visit the website
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.

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.

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 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.

Follow us on social media
Twitter – @pinellasnews for general county information, breaking news, preparedness tips and real-time updates
 – @pinellazem for preparedness information and emergency updates
 – @pinellastraffic for real-time traffic updates
Sign up on 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.

Nextdoor – For emergency notifications that directly impact your area through this new private social media network, visit www.nextdoor.com.

YouTube – For videos on how to prepare for emergencies and historical hurricane information, visit www.youtube.com/pccctv.