

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

Know your Risk and Make an Emergency Plan

In Florida, it's no secret that we are susceptible to hurricanes. While you can't prevent them, you can prepare by knowing what risks you face and having an emergency plan in place for your family or business. Learn more about emergency preparedness (alerts), including how to plan and [prepare for a disaster](#).

NOAA Radio Broadcast Channels and Alert Polk Registration

Communication is key in any emergency and knowing what information to pay attention to can make a difference.

- [Register for Alert Polk](#) to get local alerts via email, phone and/or text messages. It's a free service, but text messaging rates may apply.
- NOAA Weather Radio Frequencies for Polk: 162.500 and 162.550 MHz

Gather supplies and prepare your emergency kit

For hurricanes, it's recommended that you have a seven-day supply of food and water at the ready for everyone in your household (scroll down for example food and water lists). While that might seem like a daunting task, we've created a shopping list that can spread out that expense over several weeks.

[DOWNLOADABLE SHOPPING LIST](#)

Special Needs Shelter Pre-Registration

If you or a loved one needs accommodations in a special needs shelter, you must pre-register. Visit our [Special Needs page](#) for more information.

Pet-Friendly shelters

If you have a pet, don't forget to incorporate them into your emergency plan. Not all [shelters are pet friendly](#). You need to know ahead of time where you will go. Prepare a Hurricane Pet Plan.

Insurance documentation and other personal documents

Creating a digital document inventory will help you during and after a tropical storm or hurricane. Using your cell phone's built-in camera is an easy way to start the process. Don't forget identification cards and other important documents that you might need following a storm.

Prepare your home and yard

You don't want to wait until a hurricane is bearing down on your home to start removing unwanted vegetation. Check your [local yard waste](#) regulations. Do it before it's too late.

By waiting until the last minute to cut limbs and trim overgrown vegetation, you risk creating a larger hazard that might not be collected in time. Visit [Solid Waste](#) for more details.

Sheltering Options

Polk County does not have a mandatory evacuation policy.

Hurricanes typically bring heavy rains and high winds. Only you can decide the safest place for you and your family to be during a weather event like a hurricane. The following is a list of sheltering options to consider as you make your hurricane preparedness plan. Whichever option is selected, it is advised that a seven-day survival kit be assembled and ready, a course of action be planned and that the plans be executed prior to the weather event.

Stay Home – Before you choose this option, make sure you know the elevation of your home. Storms bring rains that could cause significant flooding to your home. If your dwelling lies in a low elevation area, it may be best to consider other options. Most manufactured and mobile homes are not built to withstand the high winds associated with tropical storms and hurricanes.

Stay With a Friend or Relative Who has a Safe Place – If this is your plan, make arrangements in advance. Make sure that where you are going is safe.

Relocate Out of the Area – If you decide to travel out of the area, go early. Traffic could be heavy if you leave at the last minute. Be sure to take a road map and make sure that your car is full of fuel. Make arrangements in advance if you can.

Hurricane Shelters – For more information on hurricane shelters, including special needs shelters and pet-friendly shelters, please visit the [Emergency Shelters](#) page.

Drinking Water Preparation and Safety

Hurricanes can damage structures that may impact water and sewer lines. Having a bathtub full of drinking water is a quick way to have clean water until services are restored. Plan for one gallon per person per 24 hours. Store at least a three-day supply and use bottled water that has not been exposed to flood waters if it is available.

Ways to ensure water is safe for drinking:

Boil

If you don't have bottled water, boiling water for one minute will kill most types of disease-causing organisms, such as cholera, typhoid, salmonella, giardia, E. coli and amoebas. Let the boiled water cool and store it in clean containers with covers.

Disinfect Using Bleach

If you can't boil water, disinfect it for drinking or other use by adding 1/8 teaspoon (or eight drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach per gallon of water. Stir it well and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before using it.

Filter Before Disinfecting

If the water is cloudy, filter it through layers of clean cloth or allow it to settle, then draw off the clear and use heat or bleach methods for disinfection.

Well Water Systems

If you have a well that has been flooded, the water should be tested and disinfected after flood waters recede. If you suspect that a well may be contaminated, contact your local or state health department or agriculture extension agent for specific advice.

Pre-register for Volunteer Opportunities

Following a natural emergency, volunteers are needed for many positions in local disaster response. If you would like to help others in your community, apply at [Volunteer Opportunities](#).