



# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE





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### **TAMPA READY TIP**

Look out for Tampa Ready Tips throughout this guide. These tips will help you in preparing for hurricane season.





Dear Tampa,

We are proud to introduce the 2026 Hurricane Preparedness Guide, a resource designed to help every resident and business prepare for the potential impacts of severe weather.

We proved after Hurricane Helene, and again after Milton, that Tampa does not flinch. Two storms in the same 2024 season, back to back, and this city kept moving. That kind of resolve is built over years, but it has to be renewed every single hurricane season, starting now, before a storm has a name.

This is my final hurricane season as your mayor, and I want to be direct with you: Tampa is a bigger, more complex city than it was when I took office in 2019. We have more residents, more businesses, and more at stake. The investments we have made in infrastructure, emergency response, and preparedness training matter, but none of it works without you doing your part at home and at your business before a storm is anywhere near the Gulf.

We want you to get Tampa Ready. Check your evacuation zone. Build your kit. Make your plan. Talk to your neighbors. Checking each of these boxes is the difference between a hard few days and a devastating few weeks if a storm impacts our city.

Tampa has shown it can take a punch. What this guide asks of you is simple: be ready to throw one back.

Stay Safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Castor". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jane Castor  
Mayor, City of Tampa

Dear Tampa Residents and Business Owners,

Tampa Fire Rescue operates year-round to ensure this city is protected. We train extensively, coordinate closely with emergency management, and position resources strategically so that when a storm hits, we are already ahead of it.

What makes that effort most effective is a prepared community behind it. A city that prepares well responds well. Tampa Fire Rescue is committed to this community before, during, and after any storm. We ask that you meet us there by knowing your evacuation zone, having supplies on hand before the storm, and establishing a communication plan your family can execute without a cell signal. If you own a business, ensure your employees know the protocol before a watch is ever issued.

When residents and business owners prepare well, our crews can focus on the emergencies that preparation cannot prevent. We hope this guide serves as a helpful resource to you this hurricane season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Tripp". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Barbara Tripp  
Fire Chief, Tampa Fire Rescue



# What is a Hurricane?

A hurricane, also known as a tropical cyclone, is a powerful, rotating storm that forms over warm ocean waters. Warm water fuels the storm, helping it grow and organize as winds begin to spin counterclockwise. As it strengthens, the storm develops a calm center called the eye, surrounded by intense winds and heavy rain. These massive systems can produce dangerous wind damage, flooding, storm surge, and even tornadoes, making them one of the most impactful weather threats we face.

The Atlantic hurricane season occurs every year from June 1 – November 30. For residents in Tampa, it's important to stay alert by: making a plan, building a kit, and staying informed of local warnings from the City of Tampa when a storm is approaching.

## Hurricane Categories

Saffir-Simpson Scale



### 74-95mph

- › Roof damage
- › Snapped/fallen branches/trees
- › Potential damage to power lines



### 96-110mph

- › Major roof damage
- › Snapped/uprooted trees
- › Near-total power loss is expected



### 111-129mph

- › Household structure damage
- › Snapped/uprooted trees
- › Power outages (days-weeks)



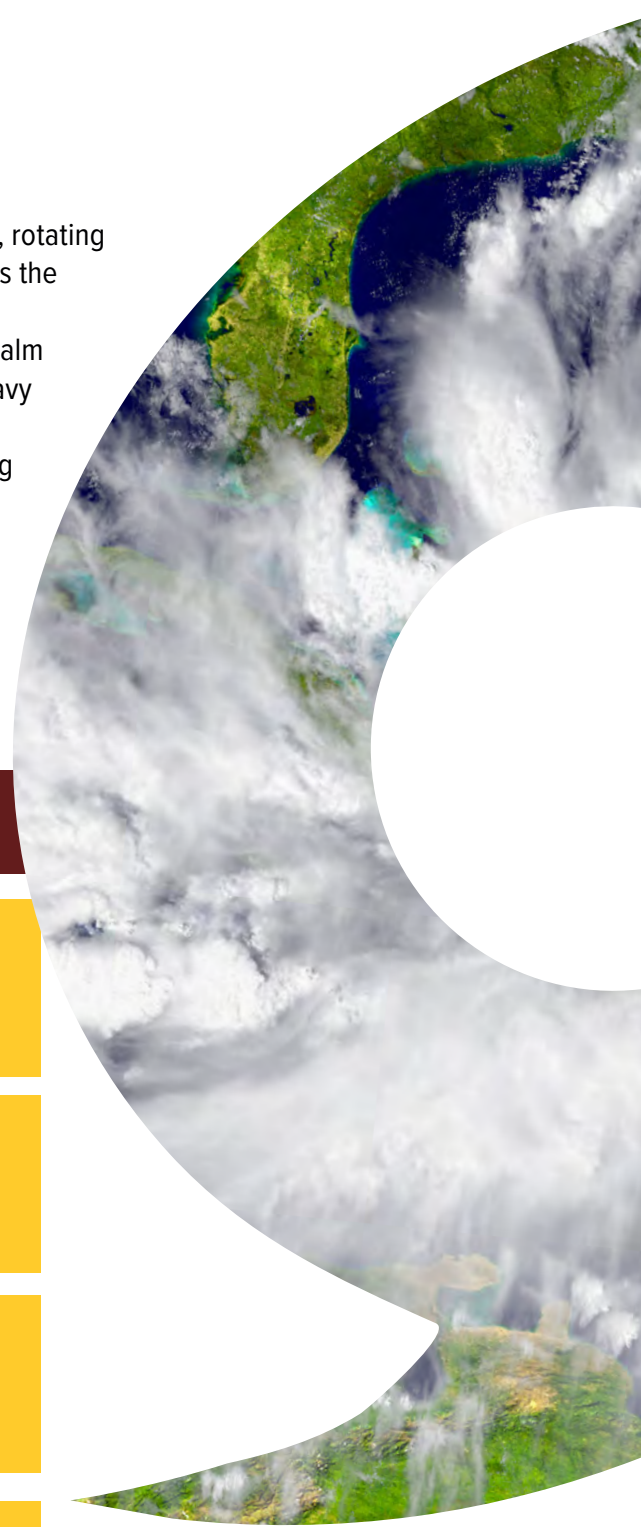
### 130-156mph

- › Severe household structure damage
- › Snapped/uprooted trees
- › Power outages (weeks-months)



### 157+ mph

- › Extreme household structure damage
- › Fallen trees will isolate residential areas
- › Power outages (weeks-months)



# Understanding the Hazards

## Extreme Wind

The winds from a hurricane can destroy buildings and manufactured homes. Items like signs, roofing materials, and even patio furniture can become flying projectiles during a hurricane.

## Storm Surge

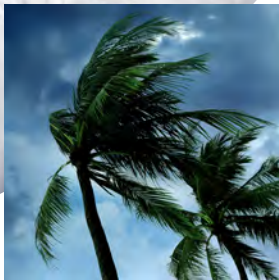
Storm Surge is the abnormal rise of seawater during a storm. Storm surge levels are measured as the height above normal predicted tide levels. The surge is generated by the strong winds of a hurricane pushing the water onshore.

## Inland Flooding

Widespread torrential rains associated with tropical cyclones can cause flooding hundreds of miles inland. The flooding from these heavy rains is the second leading cause of injuries from a tropical cyclone.

## Tornadoes

Tropical cyclones can produce tornadoes. Typically, these tornadoes are relatively weak, but they still pose a significant threat. Tornadoes will most often form in the rainbands of the storm, in the right front quadrant of the system.



## TAMPA READY TIP

Create an Emergency Preparedness Plan for your home or business at [FloridaDisaster.org/Family-Plan](https://FloridaDisaster.org/Family-Plan) or [Ready.gov/Plan](https://Ready.gov/Plan). Business resources are also available at [FloridaDisaster.biz](https://FloridaDisaster.biz).





## 01.

## BEFORE THE STORM

## Make a Plan

It's never too early to start preparing for a hurricane. Being prepared starts by having a plan. Below are some tips to follow to help you build your emergency plan.

- › **Hold a family meeting and create a communication plan:** Make a plan to secure your home and assist family members who need assistance with shutters, removing patio furniture and other items. Assign tasks to each family member so everyone knows their responsibilities. Make an Emergency Communication Plan, so that all family members know where to go and who to contact should you become separated.
- › **Assess your home for vulnerable areas:** Evaluate your roof, windows, garage door, landscaping, etc. and determine what actions can be taken now to help secure your home prior to a storm threatening our area.
- › **Make a plan to protect your vehicles:** Decide where you will store your vehicle, boat or recreational vehicles.
- › **Secure your home:** Decide what actions you will need to take to protect your home and property (shutters, generator, trim trees) once a storm watch is issued.
- › **Ensure your assets are protected:** Inventory (and photograph) your home possessions, review insurance policies to ensure for adequate coverage. Keep important records in a waterproof and fire-proof container.
- › **Determine if anyone in your home needs special assistance:** Discuss whether anyone in your home is elderly or has special medical needs and, if so, register with Hillsborough County to be on the Special Needs registry.
- › **Know Your Zone:** Understand the difference between an evacuation zone and a flood zone, so you can build a better plan.
- › **Discuss shelter options:** Determine where you will go if a storm threatens our area. A shelter should be your last resort. General Population Shelters provide only basic needs. To learn about our specialty shelters, see page 18.
- › **Make a plan for your pet:** Determine how you will address your pet's needs and plan for your pet in case you have to evacuate. Be sure to plan for large animals such as horses.
- › **Build your Kit:** Determine your family's food, water and medical needs and assemble your family's Emergency Supply Kit.

### Household Information

.....  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### School, Childcare, Caregiver, and Workplace Plans

.....  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### In Case of Emergency Contact

.....  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Out-of-Town Contact

.....  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Meeting Places

Indoor: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Out-of-Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Out-of-Town: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Important Numbers or Information

.....  
Pediatrician #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dentist #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Insurance #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Insurance Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital/Clinic #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pharmacy #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Homeowner/Rental Insurance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Flood Insurance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Veterinarian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Electric Company #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Water Company #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alternate/Accessible  
Transportation #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### STAY INFORMED WITH ALERT TAMPA

Text TAMPAREADY to 888 777

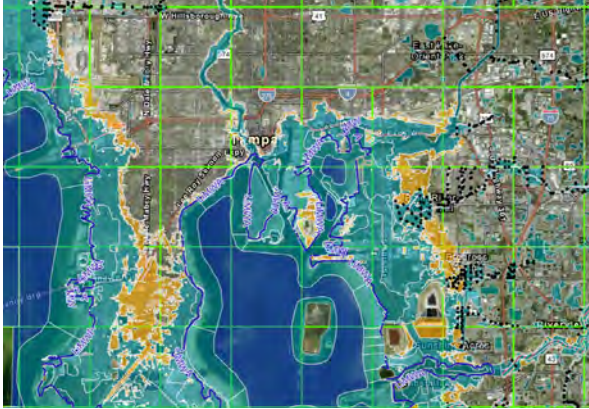
Follow @AlertTampa on X

Register at [tampa.gov/AlertTampa](http://tampa.gov/AlertTampa)



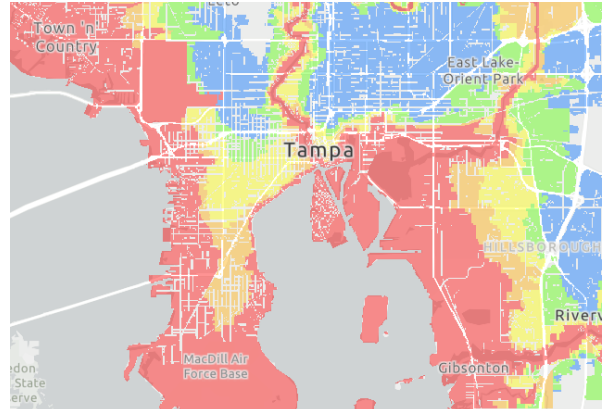
# Know Your Zone

Though often mistaken for each other, flood zones and evacuation zones are not one in the same. They are two very different things that measure very different conditions. So, what makes them unique? And when do you use them?



## Flood Zone

These federally identified zones indicate a property's risk for flooding at any time of the year, including as a result of heavy or steady rain. This zone has nothing to do with hurricanes or other emergencies, and everything to do with your property insurance and building requirements. Nationally, these zones are classified as Zones A (Special Flood Hazard Area), B, C, D, V and X. Every property is in a flood zone.



## Evacuation Zone

Evacuation zones are areas officials may order evacuated during a hurricane. Mapped by the National Hurricane Center, these zones show where storm surge could flood communities. Hillsborough County zones range from A to E.

If you live in an evacuation zone, you may be told to leave during an emergency. All mobile and manufactured home residents in the county must evacuate when orders are issued.

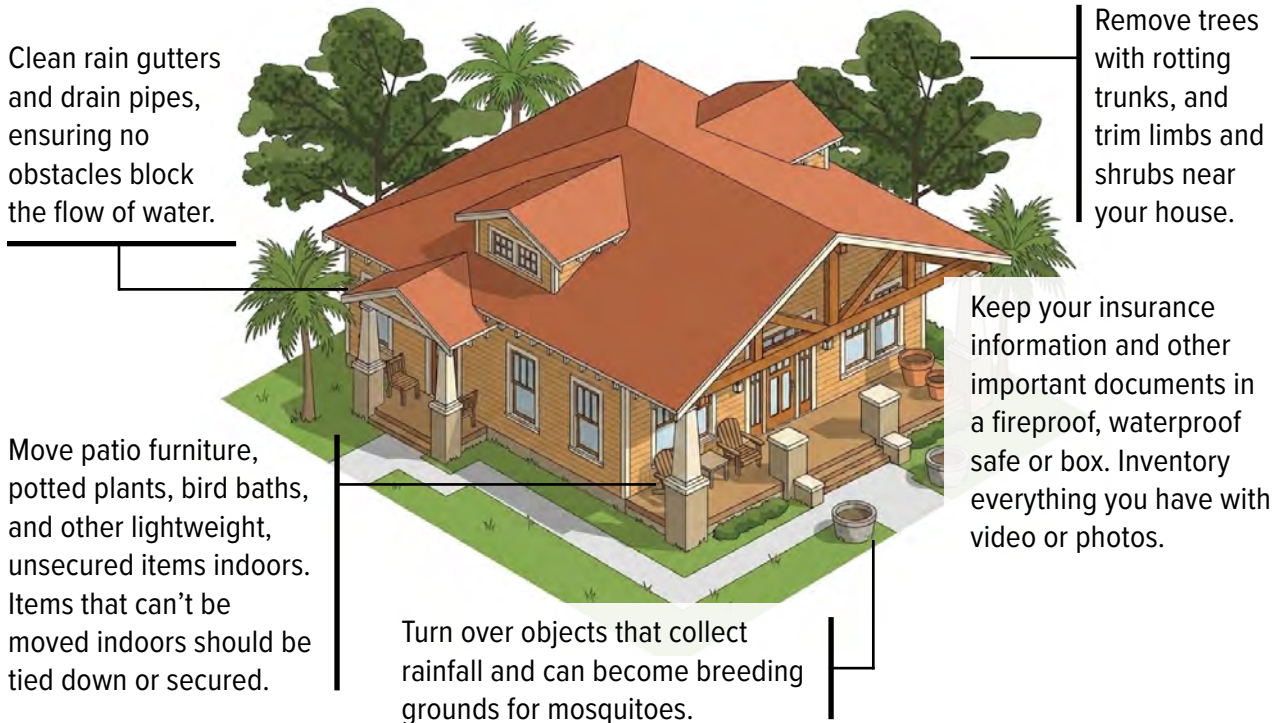
## TAMPA READY TIP

Did you know that it can take up to 30 days to insure your home and contents from flood damage? Visit [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) to learn more about flood insurance.



# Prepare Your Property

Hurricanes, tropical systems, and even intense afternoon thunderstorms can cause serious damage. Here are steps you can take to get your property disaster ready:



Renters should also be prepared to weather a storm. Renters should consider getting insurance to protect their belongings. Landlords should make sure tenants know if there are any responsibilities that the tenants must take care of on the property. Both parties should consider exchanging emergency information in case it's needed.

Mobile and manufactured home residents should know that, if an evacuation is called, they must evacuate - no matter where their home is located in the County. All mobile and manufactured homes are considered to be in Evacuation Zone A.

## TAMPA READY TIP

The City of Tampa Hurricane Re-Entry Program is for residents and businesses in the areas most likely to be evacuated during a hurricane event. Learn more at [tampa.gov/hangtag](http://tampa.gov/hangtag)

### When planning to evacuate:

- › Decide where you will go.
- › Expect delays and multiple stops; keep your gas tank full.
- › Carry cash for transportation needs.
- › Plan to travel tens of miles, not hundreds.
- › Know State Evacuation Routes (marked with white and blue "Evacuation Route" signs).
- › Check the Hillsborough County Hurricane Evacuation Area Tool on [HCFL.gov/StaySafe](http://HCFL.gov/StaySafe) for real-time shelter locations and routes.

# Build a Kit

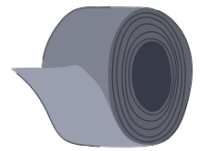
One of the most important tools for emergency preparedness is your Disaster Supplies Kit. Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency, having enough food, water, and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours.

A basic emergency supply kit could include:

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers

Additional Emergency Supplies:

- Soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications (pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives)
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents (copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container)
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children



## TAMPA READY TIP

When you go shopping, toss a few extra items in the cart to build your emergency kit. Keep it simple, keep it steady, and soon you'll have your kit ready.



Maintain your Kit by:

- › Keep canned food in a cool, dry place.
- › Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.
- › Replace expired items as needed.
- › Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

Places to keep your Kit:

- › **Home:** Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.
- › **Work:** Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes, stored in a "grab and go" case.
- › **Car:** In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.

## Stay Informed

### Stay Connected

Sign up for AlertTampa to receive emergency notifications before, during, and after the storm. The AlertTampa system enables the city to provide residents with critical information quickly for a variety of situations like severe weather, law enforcement activity, missing persons, evacuations for buildings or neighborhoods, and boil water notices. Emergency notifications can be sent to home phones, cell phones, and email.

Sign up by texting TampaReady to 888-777 or sign up at [tampa.gov/alert-tampa](https://tampa.gov/alert-tampa)

You can also stay connected by following AlertTampa (@AlertTampa) and the City of Tampa (@cityoftampa) on Instagram, Facebook, and X.

### Get Involved

When disaster strikes, local, state, and national emergency management professionals engage and respond, but more help is often necessary. Volunteer opportunities exist for residents to assist before, during, or after a disaster.



### Tampa CERT

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a program that trains citizens to be prepared for and respond to emergencies that may arise in their community. In the event of a major disaster such as a hurricane, emergency services personnel can initially become overwhelmed leaving citizens on their own. CERT training enables citizens to help themselves and their neighbors by applying the basic response and organizational skills during an emergency. CERT members can also serve as first responders to an emergency until professional emergency services arrive.

To become a CERT volunteer, you will need to complete the CERT Basic Training. To enroll, complete our volunteer application at [tampa.gov/CERT](https://tampa.gov/CERT).



## Preparing Your Home

It's important to strengthen your home and prepare your property ahead of a hurricane. The following guidance can help reduce damage and keep your family safer during severe weather.

### Secure Outdoor Items

- › Bring in patio furniture, grills, and outdoor décor.
- › Tie down or store trash bins, potted plants, and any other loose items that could become airborne.
- › Remember: If you can move it, the wind can too.

### Protect Windows and Doors

- › Install storm shutters on impact-rated windows.
- › For non-impact-rated windows, board them up with plywood for added protection.

### Check Your Roof and Drainage

- › Clean gutters and downspouts to prevent water backup and reduce the risk of leaks or water damage.
- › Clear storm drains around your home so water can flow freely.

### Trim Trees and Landscaping

- › Remove dead or weak branches, especially those close to your home.
- › Secure landscaping features that could shift or blow away during high winds.
- › If you have an automatic sprinkler system, make sure you turn “OFF” your irrigation before the storm.

### Swimming Pool Preparation

- › Lower the water level no more than two feet to prevent overflow.
- › Add extra chlorine to reduce contamination.
- › Do not drain your pool completely, and do not place outdoor furniture in the pool—this can cause damage to both the pool and the furniture.

## TAMPA READY TIP

Make Sure your emergency kit is ready to go and easily accessible.



# Protect Your Vehicles

## Motor Vehicles

- › Fill your gas tank before the storm arrives.
- › Store important documents—registration, insurance, and photos of the vehicle—in a sealed plastic bag.
- › Take interior and exterior photos for insurance purposes in case damage occurs.

## Marine Vessels

- › If possible, remove your boat from the water and store it on a trailer in a secure, elevated location away from trees.
- › If it must remain in the water, double all mooring lines and add extra fenders.
- › Remove loose gear, including sails, biminis, cushions, and electronics.



## Electric Vehicles (EVs)

Florida is home to more than 200,000 electric vehicles, and that number continues to grow. EV owners should take a few extra precautions during hurricane season, especially in flood-prone areas.

- › Evacuation Planning
  - › Keep your EV charged fully throughout hurricane season.
  - › Understand your vehicle’s range (typically 150–400 miles) and plan accordingly.
  - › Do not rely on public charging stations during evacuations (may be unavailable or overcrowded).
- › Flood Safety
  - › Never drive through floodwaters.
  - › Saltwater exposure can damage the battery and cause fire risk (immediate or delayed).
  - › Do not drive or charge an EV that has been flooded or submerged.

- › If Leaving Your EV Behind
  - › Park at least 50 feet away from buildings or other vehicles.
  - › If possible, park your EV on higher ground or inside a City of Tampa parking garage at level 3 or greater.
  - › Reduce battery charge to approximately 30%.
  - › Do not leave the vehicle plugged into a charger.

Planning ahead helps protect both your safety and your vehicle.



# Stay or go? Evacuating for a storm

## 1. Has Hillsborough County ordered an evacuation?

### No

You can safely shelter in place.

### Yes

See question 2.

## 2. Do you live in a mobile or manufactured home?

### No

See question 3.

### Yes

GO! Mobile and Manufactured homes are considered zone A and have a mandatory evacuation.

## 3. Do you live in an evacuation zone?

### No

You will not be ordered to evacuate. Shelter in place and consider hosting friends and family that may need to evacuate.

### I don't know

Find your evacuation zone at [hcfll.gov/staysafe](http://hcfll.gov/staysafe)

### Yes

See question 4.

## 4. Was your zone ordered to evacuate?

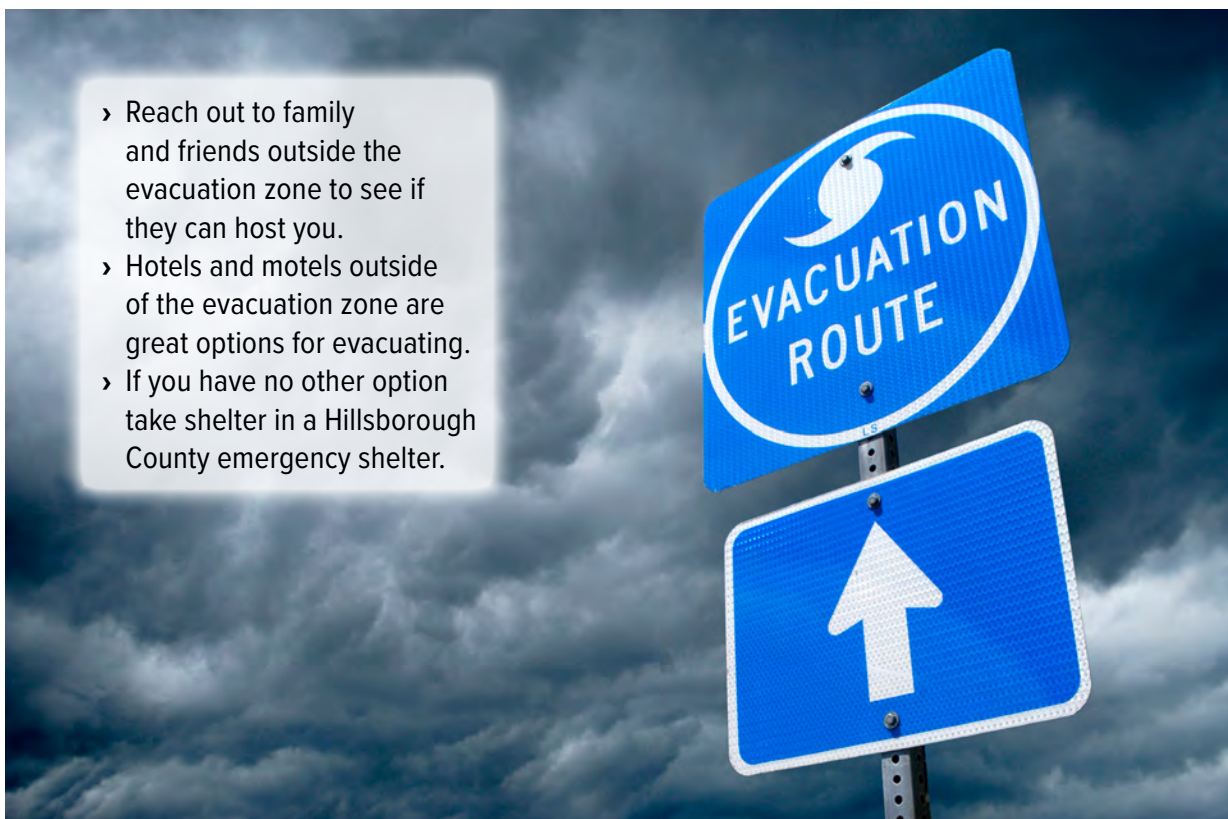
### No

Shelter in place and consider hosting friends and family that may need to evacuate.

### Yes

It's time to go! When evacuating, it's important to have a plan. Consider the following options when setting your plan.

- › Reach out to family and friends outside the evacuation zone to see if they can host you.
- › Hotels and motels outside of the evacuation zone are great options for evacuating.
- › If you have no other option take shelter in a Hillsborough County emergency shelter.



# Emergency Shelters

In the event of an emergency, Hillsborough County has emergency shelters for residents and visitors. Shelters are a last resort and should be used only if you have no other options for evacuation. Residents should evacuate with friends or family or to a hotel/motel outside of the evacuation zone if possible.

If you must evacuate to a shelter, be advised:

- › Shelters are opened on an as-needed basis.
- › Shelter openings may vary with each emergency.
- › Never go to a shelter unless Hillsborough County officials have announced it is open.

## General Population Shelters

These shelters are intended to provide immediate protection and save the lives of those in the path of a catastrophic and deadly storm.

If you need to shelter in a County evacuation shelter, keep in mind:

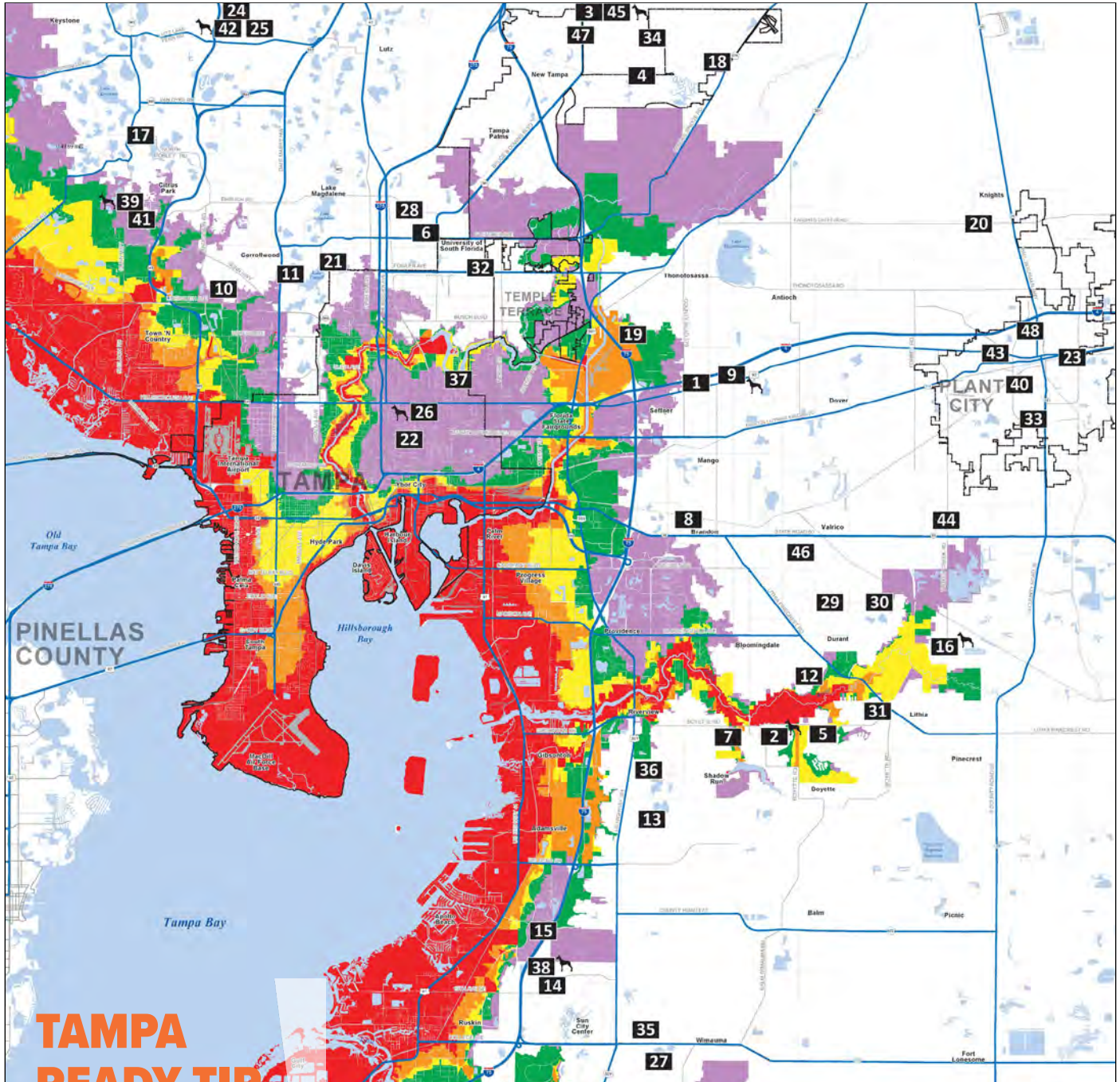
- › Evacuation shelters will not have cots, blankets, or supplies like face masks and hand sanitizer.
- › Each resident may only have space the size of approximately one sleeping bag or 20 square feet.
- › Bring your disaster kit with bedding, medications, hygiene items, and any other specific items you might need for your family. If you have specific comfort needs (i.e. special dietary or snacks), plan to bring those.
- › Alcohol, illegal drugs, and weapons are not permitted.
- › Plan for delays; transportation could take 90 minutes or longer with multiple stops.
- › Sheltering in place is a practical option to consider if you live in a sound structure outside of the evacuation area (especially if built since 2002 and not located in a flood prone area).
- › Evacuate tens of miles instead of hundreds of miles.

## TAMPA READY TIP

Stay informed on shelter locations and openings by signing up for AlertTampa emergency notifications at [tampa.gov/alert-tampa](http://tampa.gov/alert-tampa)



# Hillsborough County Evacuation Zones



## TAMPA READY TIP

Scan the QR code to find your evacuation zone.



### Legend

Evacuation Level	Wind Velocity (MPH)	Potential Tide Heights (FT)	Areas To Be Evacuated
A	74 to 85	To 11'	Red areas plus all mobile home residents.
B	96 to 110	To 17'	Red and Orange areas plus all mobile home residents.
C	111 to 130	To 22'	Red, Orange, and Yellow areas plus all mobile home residents.
D	131 to 155	To 31'	Red, Orange, Yellow, and Green areas plus all mobile home residents.
E	156 and over	To 38'	Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, and Purple areas plus all mobile home residents.

# Shelters

Number	Shelter Name & Address	Pets
1	Armwood High 12000 E US Highway 92	No
2	Barrington Middle 5925 Village Center Dr	Yes
3	Bartels Middle 9020 Imperial Oak Blvd	No
4	Benito Middle 10101 Cross Creek Blvd	No
5	Bevis Elementary 5720 Osprey Ridge Dr	No
6	Bowers-Whitley 13609 N 22nd St	No
7	Boyette Springs Elementary 10141 Sedgebrook Dr	No
8	Brandon High 1101 Victoria St	No
9	Burnett Middle 1010 N Kingsway Rd	Yes
10	Cannella Elementary 10707 Nixon Rd	No
11	Carrollwood Elementary 3516 McFarland Rd	No
12	Cimino Elementary 4329 Culbreath Rd	No
13	Collins Elementary 12424 Summerfield Blvd	No
14	Cypress Creek Elementary 4040 19th Ave NE	No
15	Dorothy York K-8 5995 Covington Garden Dr	No
16	Durant Senior High 4748 Cougar Path	Yes
17	Hammond Elementary 8008 N Mobley Rd	No
18	Heritage Elementary 18201 E Meadow Rd	No
19	Jennings Middle 9325 Governors Run Dr	No
20	Knights Elementary 4815 Keene Rd	No
21	Lake Magdalene Elementary 2002 Pine Lake Dr	No
22	Lockhart Elementary 3719 N 17th St	No
23	Marshall Middle 18 S Maryland Ave	No
24	Martinez Middle 5601 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd	No

Number	Shelter Name & Address	Pets
25	Mckitrick Elementary 5503 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd	No
26	Middleton High 4801 N 22nd St	Yes
27	Morgan High 1712 West Lake Dr	No
28	Mort Elementary 1806 E Bearss Ave	No
29	Mulrennan Middle 4215 Durant Rd	No
30	Nelson Elementary 5413 Durant Rd	No
31	Newsome High 16550 Fishhawk Blvd	No
32	Pizzo Elementary K8 11701 Ust Bull Run Dr	No
33	Plant City High 1 Raider Pl, Plant City	No
34	Pride Elementary 10310 Lions Den Dr	No
35	Reddick Elementary 325 W Lake Dr	No
36	Sessums Elementary 11525 Ramble Creek Dr	No
37	Sheehy Elementary 6402 N 40th St	No
38	Shields Middle 15732 Beth Shields Way	Yes
39	Sickles High 7950 Gunn Hwy	Yes
40	Simmons Career Center 1202 W Grant St	No
41	Smith Middle 14303 Citrus Pointe Dr	No
42	Steinbrenner High 5575 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd	Yes
43	Tomlin Middle 501 N Woodrow Wilson St	No
44	Turkey Creek Middle 5005 Turkey Creek Rd	No
45	Turner Elementary 9190 Imperial Oak Blvd	Yes
46	Valrico Elementary 609 S Miller Rd	No
47	Wharton High 20150 Bruce B Downs Blvd	No
48	Wilson Elementary 702 W English St	No

## Pet-Friendly Emergency Shelters

Hillsborough County offers limited pet-friendly shelters. To use a pet-friendly shelter you must:

- › Bring proof of current rabies vaccination and license for dogs and cats.
- › Place pet on a leash or in a crate.
- › Bring a crate large enough for your pet to stand up and turn around. Cats need a crate large enough to contain litter and food/water.
- › Bring pet supplies, including: food, water, litter, treats, cleaning supplies, medications, etc. You are responsible for the care of your pet while in the shelter. Cohabitation of pets and owners is not permitted.

## Service Animals

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Service animals are working animals, not pets.

For additional information concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act email the ADA officer at TampaADA@tampagov.net or call (813) 274-3964.

## Special Needs Shelters

Hillsborough County residents with special needs can register for special needs shelters through the Florida Health Department in Hillsborough County by visiting [hillsborough.floridahealth.gov](http://hillsborough.floridahealth.gov)

Those with special needs include:

- › Someone with a medical condition that requires periodic observation, assessment, or maintenance.
- › Someone who depends on electricity for medical equipment, such as an oxygen machine or feeding tube.
- › Someone who, in a health expert's opinion, might not fare well in a general population shelter.

Registration before a storm expedites entry at the special needs shelter and assists shelters with planning. Residents not registered prior to a storm will be triaged onsite to determine if they meet eligibility.

Instructions for registration and more information is available at [HCFL.gov/StaySafe](http://HCFL.gov/StaySafe).

It is important to pre-register for special needs shelters.

- › Special needs shelters are for residents whose medical condition may require the use of electrical equipment, oxygen, or dialysis, or individuals with physical, cognitive, or medical conditions that may require assistance from medical professionals.
- › Please be ready when your transportation arrives; they will not return for you.
- › If you have a pet, please ensure you have all supplies prepared and that you have a carrier.
- › Bring a caregiver.
- › Remember only 60 square feet of space is available in Special Needs Shelters.

## TAMPA READY TIP

Special needs shelter registrations requires 30 days notice. Scan the QR code or call (813) 307-8063 to register.



# Sandbags

When a storm threatens the Tampa Bay area, the City activates sandbag distribution to help residents protect homes and property from flooding. Parks and Recreation teams operate sandbag machines at designated sites, with locations and hours adjusted based on storm conditions.

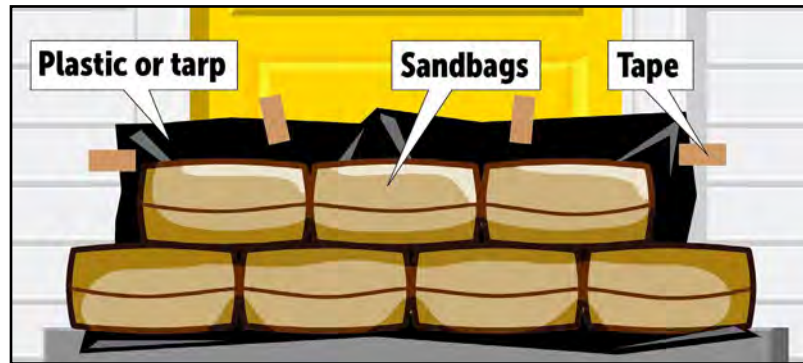
## Primary Distribution Sites:

- › Al Lopez Park, 4810 N. Himes Ave.
- › Himes Avenue Sports Complex, 4411 S. Himes Ave.
- › Al Barnes Park, 2902 N. 32nd St.

Additional self-service or temporary locations may be activated depending on demand.

## How to Use Sandbags:

- › Place sandbags at doorways, garage entrances, and low points where water may enter.
- › Stack in a staggered, brick-like pattern for better sealing.
- › Use plastic sheeting behind sandbags for added protection when possible.



## What to Know:

- › Residents may receive **up to 10 sandbags per address**.
- › **City of Tampa residency is required** (bring ID or proof of address).
- › Pre-register to save time: [tampa.gov/sandbags](http://tampa.gov/sandbags)
- › Distribution begins after a storm is declared a threat and may expand as conditions worsen.

Stay updated on openings, hours, and additional sites through AlertTampa and City of Tampa social media channels.

## After the Storm:

- › **Clean sandbags (no floodwater contact):** Allow to dry, store for future use, or reuse sand in landscaping.
- › **Contaminated sandbags (contact with floodwater):** Do not reuse; dispose of properly at:
  - › McKay Bay Scale House, 114 S. 34th St.
- › Do **not** place sandbags in regular trash or City-issued containers.

Planning ahead and knowing where to get sandbags can make a significant difference in protecting your home during heavy rain and storm events.

# HART Transport

Evacuation Assistance Available with HART: [GoHART.org](http://GoHART.org)

If you have no way to evacuate when an evacuation is ordered:

- › Contact HART Customer Service at (813) 254-4278 and follow the prompts for information.
- › Gather your family and pets, your necessary belongings, and go to the nearest HART bus stop.
- › County bus transportation (HART/ Hillsborough County Sunshine Line/ School District) will provide free emergency evacuation bus services to all HART bus stops.
- › County bus transportation will bring passengers from any HART bus stop to a HART transportation center.
- › From the HART transportation center, Hillsborough County School District buses will pick up passengers and take them to the nearest, available county shelter.
- › The State Evacuation Routes are available for people utilizing their cars to evacuate on an interstate. State Evacuation Routes signs are typically located along state thoroughfares. The signs are white and blue, including arrows, and read: Evacuation Route.

## TAMPA READY TIP

If you do not evacuate when transportation is made available, the storm may prevent additional vehicles from coming to pick you up. During an evacuation, county bus transportation will not run at night.



# Businesses

## Ready Your Business

Disasters come in many forms and can cause a business to close for days, weeks, or more. Revenue loss, damage to buildings and inventory, loss of electricity, staff shortages, and more may be likely. Here are a few tips to prepare a business to be ready for a disaster:

1. Employees are the backbone to most businesses. Have a plan to communicate with employees during an emergency. It is important to make employees aware of business hours or closures, and employees should know the evacuation and flood zones of the business and of their personal residence. To ensure that employees and their families are safe, it is important for business owners to communicate the business's disaster plan and provide employees with disaster planning resources such as this hurricane preparedness guide or FEMA's Ready Business website.
2. Customers will want to know when a business is closed and when their doors are open. How will a business communicate with customers during and after a disaster? How will customers know whether a business is open or closed and the safety of the area?
3. Shoring up physical space is crucial to brick-and-mortar businesses. If there is time to prepare a business's physical space, what is the plan? Renting? Find out if the landlord has a disaster plan for the building.
4. Now is a good time to check insurance policies to find out what is covered and ensure the policy is up to date. Take pictures of inventory, equipment, and other business assets. This will come in handy with your insurance company if a disaster occurs.
5. Business equipment could be damaged in a disaster. Does the business have a back-up generator to keep equipment running? Are business records stored electronically or in a file cabinet? Consider how important documents might be backed up now, prior to a disaster.
6. If a business uses local suppliers, the supply chain may be affected in a disaster. Having a list of alternative suppliers and a contingency plan will be useful.



# 03.

## AFTER THE STORM

### What to expect: Hazards After the Storm

For those impacted by a storm, getting life back to normal will take time and resources. Local, state, and federal partners will be available to assist with recovery. After a large-scale disaster, it could be weeks before roads are safe and reopened, and rescue workers can deliver water and food to the area. Grocery stores and other basic services may remain closed for a long time. This is why it's important to stay informed. Look for critical information from the City of Tampa on local television stations, radio, tampa.gov website, or city social media platforms.

When authorities say it's safe to return:

- › Take photos of your property damage for insurance claims.
- › Contact your insurance claims agent as soon as possible.
- › Check your electric or gas utilities
- › If you experienced flooding, turn off the electrical power.
- › Be aware of animals like snakes, racoons, or insects that were driven to higher ground due to habitat loss and flooding.
- › Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- › Dispose of any spoiled food.
- › Do not use candles or open flames indoors.



## Utility Safety

### Powerline Safety

- › If you see a downed power line, do not touch it. Do not touch tree limbs or other objects touching a power line.
- › Do not attempt to tie generators to the house circuit. This can be dangerous to you, your neighbors, and to linemen. This should only be done by a certified electrician. Plug appliances directly into the generator.

- › Should the power go out while you are cooking, remember to turn the stove off and remove any cookware from the cooking surfaces and oven.
- › Do not open refrigerators or freezer during an outage unless absolutely necessary. Repeated openings cause the cold air to escape and food to thaw more quickly.
- › If you smell gas, leave your home immediately and call the power company.

### **Leaking gas lines or tanks (natural and propane gas).**

- › Do not attempt to occupy a home or business if you smell or suspect leaking gas from your gas appliances, equipment or tanks.
- › Call TECO Peoples Gas, a qualified gas dealer or contractor to have the problem corrected.
- › Before making any gas repairs, please make sure to obtain a gas permit by contacting Construction Services at 813-274-3100.
- › Customers can contact a qualified gas appliance dealer if they experience difficulty relighting the pilot lights on appliances after a valve shut off. TECO Peoples Gas can provide a list of qualified dealers to help. Call toll free 1-877-TECO-PGS (1-877-832-6747).

### **Generators**

- › Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas at least 20 feet from all doors, windows, and vent openings. Measure the 20-foot distance from the generator to the building.
- › Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- › Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building. The exhaust must be directed away from the building.
- › Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- › Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.
- › Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.



## **Water**

### **Checking for Leaks**

Inspect your home for any water leaks caused by storm damage. For common household leaks and tips on identifying them, visit [tampa.gov/FixaLeak](http://tampa.gov/FixaLeak).

### **Irrigation System Checklist**

If you have an automatic sprinkler system, make sure to:

- › Confirm the clock on your irrigation controller is accurate. Outages may reset it, causing watering at the wrong time.
- › Check the system for leaks.
- › Ensure your rain sensor is working. If it's broken or damaged, request a replacement at [tampaconnect.com](http://tampaconnect.com)

### **Water Quality Precautions**

If you're concerned about water quality after a hurricane, boil your water as a precaution. Bring it to a rolling boil for one minute. To improve taste afterward, aerate the water by pouring it between clean containers several times, then refrigerate.

### **Reminder**

Response times may vary depending on the severity of storm damage.

# Debris pickup

## Debris and Waste Collection After the Storm

Following a storm, waste and debris operations may change as crews focus on restoring essential services. Please use the guidance below to understand what to expect and how to prepare.

### Service Resumption

Garbage and commercial collection will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

### Temporary Suspensions

Yard waste and SWEEP services are suspended until further notice.

### Debris Disposal

Drop-off locations will be announced.

### Curbside Debris Guidelines

Separate debris into the following piles:

- › Vegetative debris
- › Household debris
- › Electronics and appliances

### Stay Informed

Check the debris collection map and webpage for the latest updates.



### Damage Assessment:

Residents can self-report damages to help prioritize the City of Tampa’s damage assessment operations using the Resident Damage Self Reporting Form. If it is an emergency situation, residents should always call 9-1-1, but for other non-life-threatening damages, residents can enter the information in the form. Go to [tampa.gov/SelfReport](http://tampa.gov/SelfReport) to access the form.

**Post-Disaster Pick Up**  
**Separating Your Debris**

Debris should be placed curbside without blocking the roadway or storm drains. **Separate into the categories shown below, with 3-ft clearance on all sides.** Household hazardous waste, such as paint, car batteries, and electronics **will not** be accepted.

Yard Waste	Furniture and Construction Debris	Large Appliances
<p>Leaves • Tree Branches Logs • Plants</p>	<p>Furniture • Mattresses Drywall • Building Materials Carpet • Wood Fencing</p>	<p>Washers • Dryers • Stoves Refrigerators • Dishwashers Freezers • Water Heaters</p>

*City of Tampa Florida*

## Avoiding Common Post Storm Repair Mistakes

After a storm, property owners often rush to make repairs, which can lead to costly errors or unsafe work. Use the tips below to protect yourself and ensure repairs are done properly.

### Common Mistakes to Avoid

- › Emergency repairs for safety can be made without a construction permit, but permanent repairs often require one. Requirements vary based on factors like whether the property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area. For guidance, contact Construction Services at 813-274-3100 or visit [tampa.gov](http://tampa.gov)
- › Obtain insurance approval before starting any repairs.
- › Always verify a contractor's license at [MyFloridaLicense.com](http://MyFloridaLicense.com) and check references before hiring.
- › Get at least three written estimates for the work.
- › Be cautious of scams and unsolicited repair offers.
- › Avoid large upfront deposits.
- › Protect yourself from liens by requesting lien releases from subcontractors before making the final payment.

### Points of Distribution

Following a hurricane, grocery and convenience stores may not open for weeks or months. To ensure residents still have their basic needs met, the City may open Points of Distribution (PODs) to deliver vital supplies such as food and water.

Stay informed with the City of Tampa Social Media platforms and local news to know when and where distribution sites will be open.



## Community Partners

The City recommends the following organizations that provide resources to those in need:

- › Salvation Army
- › American Red Cross
- › Metropolitan Ministries
- › United Way Suncoast
- › Feeding Tampa Bay
- › Bay Area Legal Services
- › Samaritan's Purse

### Disaster Recovery Assistance:

After a storm impacts the community, the next step is to rebuild and recover. For those who have been impacted by a hurricane, getting life back to normal will take time and resources. When personal resources become overwhelmed, local, state, federal, and faith-based organizations will be available to assist.

### Hillsborough County Disaster Relief Fund

Residents are encouraged to help fellow residents in need after a disaster. To provide residents with a secure way to donate, Hillsborough County established the Hillsborough County Disaster Relief Fund with Lutheran Services Florida to fund recovery efforts for residents impacted by disasters. Funds collected will go directly to residents through nonprofit organizations such as the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. Donations will not be used for any governmental services or administrative costs. Donations can be made to the Hillsborough County Disaster Relief Fund by visiting [lsfnet.org/hcfl](http://lsfnet.org/hcfl) to make an online donation.

### State of Florida Division of Emergency Management Recovery Bureau:

The State of Florida Division of Emergency Management Recovery Bureau works to maximize disaster assistance to eligible public entities, individuals, and families through various state and federal disaster programs. Visit [floridadisaster.org/dem/recovery](http://floridadisaster.org/dem/recovery) for more information.

## State Assistance Information Line:

The State Assistance Information Line (SAIL) is a toll-free hotline activated at the time of an emergency to provide an additional resource for those in Florida to receive accurate and up-to-date information regarding an emergency or disaster situation impacting the State of Florida. The SAIL hotline is: 1-800-342-3557

## Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Funds

In the event of a Presidentially Declared Disaster, federal assistance may be available. FEMA Individuals and Households Program (IHP) provide financial and direct services to

## How to Start the FEMA Individual Application Process

Call the toll-free application number 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or register online at FEMA.gov. These are the ONLY ways to apply for assistance.

## FEMA Documentation Requirements

FEMA may request the following:

- › Proof of income, insurance coverage, residential damage, and housing needs.
- › A signed statement confirming that a member of the household was a U.S. citizen, non citizen national, or qualified alien at the time of the disaster, along with identification.

## After You Apply

- › FEMA will issue an application number. Write it down and keep it in a secure place.
- › A FEMA inspector will contact you to schedule a visit to assess disaster-related damages for the Individuals and Households Program.
- › If approved for assistance, you will receive funds by mail or direct deposit, along with a separate letter explaining how the assistance should be used.

## Check Your Status

Visit [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov) to review the status of your FEMA disaster assistance application.

## U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loans

The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) has disaster loans available to homeowners, renters, nonprofits, and businesses of all sizes that have been impacted by a federally declared disaster. To learn more about these loans, visit [sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance](https://sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance). To check on the status of an SBA loan or to make a payment, go to [lending.sba.gov](https://lending.sba.gov)



# Important numbers

## City of Tampa Emergency Contacts

- › Construction Services ..... 813-274-3100
- › Neighborhood Enhancement Customer Service Line ..... 813-274-5545
- › Fix-it-Fast (24 hours) ..... 813-274-3278
- › TPD Non-Emergency ..... 813-231-6130
- › Wastewater Emergency Repair / Sewer Backup (24 hours) ..... 813-898-1420
- › Water Department Emergency Services (24 hours) ..... 813-274-7400
- › Tree Hotline: Tree Removal and Right-of-Way Emergencies (24 hours) ..... 813-258-8733
- › Fallen Tree on city streets/sidewalks (Business hours 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM) ..... 813-274-5744
- › ADA Compliance and Accessibility ..... 813-274-3964

## County Numbers

- › Special Needs Shelter Registration ..... 813-307-8063
- › HC Customer Services Call Center ..... 813-272-5900
- › Hillsborough County Animal Control ..... 813-744-5660
- › Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center ..... 813-301-7387
- › Hillsborough County Development Services ..... 813-272-5600
- › Hillsborough County Solid Waste ..... 813-272-5680
- › Hillsborough County Economic Development ..... 813-272-7232
- › Florida Highway Patrol ..... 813-558-1800
- › Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office ..... 813-274-8000
- › Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency Line ..... 813-274-8200
- › Hillsborough County Public Works: ..... 813-635-5400
- › HART ..... 813-254-4278

## Partner Agencies

- › TECO ..... 877-588-1010 or Text OUT to 27079
- › People's Gas (24 hours) ..... 877-832-6747
- › FL Attorney General's Office Price Gouging Hotline ..... 866-966-7226
- › FL Attorney General's Tampa Office for Consumer Support ..... 813-287-7900
- › American Red Cross ..... 1-800-733-2767
- › American Red Cross (Tampa Bay Chapter) ..... 813-348-4820
- › Florida Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Hotline ..... 1-800-500-1119
- › National Domestic Violence Hotline ..... 1-800-799-7233
- › Florida Department of Children and Families ..... 850-300-4323
- › Florida Department of Elder Affairs and Elder Abuse ..... 1-800-96-ABUSE
- › Crisis Center of Tampa Bay ..... 211
- › Catholic Charities ..... 813-631-4370
- › Tampa Area Command Salvation Army ..... 813-226-0055
- › Business Disaster Hotline ..... 813-301-7458
- › Small Business Administration Customer Service Center ..... 800-659-2955
- › Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation ..... 850-487-1395





# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE



[tampa.gov/Hurricane](http://tampa.gov/Hurricane)