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# EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Available in English & Spanish

UF/IFAS Miami-Dade  
County Extension Resources

Disaster Series: What To Do to Prepare for Disasters

By Katherine Marin, M.Ed., MHFA

Resource Sheet  
Published: 2023



- Water.
- One gallon of water per person per day with a minimum three-day supply.
- Purifying agents, such as Iodine or Sodium Dichloroisocyanurate (NaDCC) tablets.



Food: store at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food for each person (e.g., canned meats, fruits and vegetables, soups, powdered milk, granola bars, peanut butter, juices).



Medications: prescription, including contact lenses and solutions.



Non-prescription, including vitamins, aspirin and other pain relievers, digestive medication, rubbing alcohol, eye wash, and hydrogen peroxide.



First aid kits: have at least two first aid kits on hand, one for your home and one to be kept in your car.



Bandages, cleansing agents, gauze, antiseptic spray, latex gloves, adhesive tape, tweezers, nonbreakable thermometer, and so forth.

Tools and supplies to have include mess kits, a battery- or hand crank-operated radio, cash and change, pliers, a compass, a signal flare, a shutoff wrench for gas and water, flashlights and extra batteries, can openers and utility knives, duct tape, waterproof matches, plastic storage containers, a metal whistle, a dust mask and work gloves, plastic sheeting, cellphone chargers, and safety light sticks.

Agency Normal  
BusinessEmergency Federal  
Emergency Management  
Agency

800-621-3362

800-462-7585

Florida Division of  
Emergency Management

850-413-9969

Miami-Dade Police  
Department For emergencies,

call 911



Sanitation items: toilet paper, feminine products, garbage bags, household bleach, soap, and personal hygiene items.



Clothing, bedding, and other gear: sturdy shoes or work boots, rain gear, blankets/sleeping bags, hats and gloves, a Mylar emergency blanket, and a plastic tarp.



Miscellaneous items: baby formula and diapers.



Entertainment.



Pet food and other pet supplies .

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# CREATE A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

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Publication date: 2023



- Determine the best option for you and your household.
- Evacuate, both short and long term.
- Determine the shelter options that are available to accommodate your needs.
- Stay in your home.

## Discuss what to do in an evacuation.



Establish multiple meeting places.



Find safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.



Plan for emergency pet care.



Practice evacuation drills.



Determine the best escape routes from your home. Identify two ways out of each room, if possible.

## Keep emergency telephone numbers easily accessible.

Teach children how and when to call their local emergency medical services number for help. Choose an **emergency contact and have everyone memorize the phone number.**

### Emergency Management Agency

800-621-3362  
800-462-7585

Florida Division of  
Emergency Management

850-413-9969

Miami-Dade Police  
Department - Emergencies

Call 911

### Know the common emergency telephone numbers

For example:



Fire  
Department



Police  
Station



Nearest  
Hospital

### Take a class



First Aid



CPR

For non-emergencies, call 305-4-POLICE (305-476-5423) in Miami-Dade County.  
Call 305-468-5900 to report problems, request services & for pet inquiries.

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# RESEARCH YOUR LOCAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

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The first step in preparing for a disaster is learning about the risks in your region and researching your community's existing response system. In addition, learn the difference between an advisory, a watch, and a warning. According to the National Weather Service Forecast Office:



An advisory is issued when a hazardous weather event is occurring, imminent, or likely.



A watch is issued when the risk of a hazardous weather event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so those who need to evacuate can do so.



A warning is issued when hazardous weather or an event is occurring, imminent, or likely. A warning means that weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People on the storm's path must take protective action (e.g., evacuate or find a safe house to shelter in). Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

## Ready.gov provides comprehensive guidance on how to prepare for emergencies and disasters. Specific resources include:

### Ready.gov: Be Informed



This resource helps you stay informed on what disasters can hit your area and helps you sign up for alerts.

### Ready.gov: Build a Kit



This checklist provides information on how to build a kit of emergency supplies needed in the event of an emergency.

### Ready.gov: Make a Plan



This template can be used to make a plan for your family, including communications and a family meeting place. Learn about your community's warning signals/emergency alert systems.

Sign up for local alert systems. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is available on television, radio, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are available on many smartphones. In addition, community emergency notification systems at the county or city level typically send messages to landline phones, cell phones, and email addresses.

- **Subscribe** to status updates about disasters provided via the local media, as well as **social media**, including **Twitter**, **Facebook**, and other **social media tools**.
- **Dial 211 (toll-free)** If you need information about where to donate or volunteer during a disaster, how to find transportation or evacuation routes, and where to meet basic needs such as food and shelter, **You can also text your ZIP code to 898211 or visit [www.211info.org](https://www.211info.org).**
- **Find** out about the disaster plans at places your household frequents (e.g., **workplace**, **children's schools**).

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# GATHER & DIGITIZE IMPORTANT HOUSEHOLD DOCUMENTS

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Publication date: 2023

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS



Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks/bonds, car titles, pay stubs, and tax forms



Bank account numbers



Passports, social security cards, and other ID cards



Immunization records



Inventory of household valuables



Checkbooks financial security during a disaster

T



### Keep an emergency fund

An emergency fund with three to six months' worth of savings is a key part of any household financial plan, but it is especially crucial in the wake of a disaster.

I



### Protect your credit

Include the contact information for your creditors in your financial preparedness kit. If you must evacuate, you can contact your creditors to request a temporary reprieve from payments.

P

S



### Review your insurance

Review your property, flood, life, and disability insurance policies once a year to ensure that you have the right coverage to recover financially if a disaster strikes.

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# KNOW YOUR UTILITIES

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Resource Sheet  
Publication date: 2023

## Gas

- Locate your gas meter shut off valve and learn how to turn the gas off.
- Call your utility company for a operational check of the gas valve, specially if you suspect that the shutoff valve may be corroded and not working properly.
- If you smell natural gas, get everyone out and away from the home immediately.
- Do not use matches, lighters, and open-flame appliances or operate electrical switches.
- Call the gas company from a phone outside of the home or building. If you can, shut off the gas at the main valve outside. Let the gas company turn the gas back on.
- Seek the assistance of a plumber to repair gas pipe damage.

## Electricity

- Locate your main electrical switch or fuse panel and learn how to turn off the electrical power.
- If you are using a generator as a backup power supply, remember to: Make sure the portable generator is properly grounded.
- Connect the portable generator directly to the appliances to be powered using approved and properly sized power cords – do not attach to existing house wiring.
- Operate portable generators outside the home or building, away from flammable materials, children, and pets.
- Never add fuel when a generator is running; turn it off and let it cool first.
- Have generators connected to a utility company's electrical system inspected by the utility and the state electrical inspector.

## Sewer

- Your sewer system could be damaged during a disaster. Make sure the system is functioning as designed before using it to prevent contamination of your home and possibly the drinking water supply.
- Have a bucket or portable toilet available for disposing of human waste. Plastic bags placed in the toilet bowl will also work.

### Sources:

- [HUD Exchange.](#)
- [Housing Counseling Disaster Recovery Tool Kit](#)
- [Ready.gov](#)
- [FEMA.gov](#)

## Water

- Label the water shutoff valve and learn to turn off the water supply to your home.
- If the shutoff valve is located outside of the home in buried housing, keep all debris out of the housing and keep the housing covered.
- Ensure that the valve can be fully turned off. If the water valve requires the use of a special tool, make sure the tool is readily available. The valve should be turned off and on several times a year to verify proper operation.

**Note: Renters may need to work with their landlord to shut off utilities.**

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# PREPARE FOR SPECIFIC DISASTERS - I

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## Fire Preparation



Install smoke detectors throughout your home. Clean them once a month and change the batteries when applicable.



Plan two escape routes out of each room, if possible. Contact your local fire department for help in planning for the safe escape of those with disabilities.



Make sure that windows are not nailed or painted shut. Ensure that any security grating on windows has a fire safety opening feature.



Pick a meeting place outside of your home in the event of a fire.



Store any flammable and combustible liquids in approved containers. Keep containers in the garage or an outside storage area.



Inspect electrical appliances and extension cords for bare wires, worn plugs, and loose connections annually\*.



Clean and inspect heating equipment annually.



Learn how to turn off the gas and electricity in an emergency.

\*[www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/housing-counseling-disaster-recovery-toolkit](http://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/housing-counseling-disaster-recovery-toolkit)

## During the event



Never open doors that are warm upon touch.



Exit your home immediately using your identified escape routes and call 911.



Learn more steps for what to do when a fire starts, including how to safely extinguish a fire, using these tips from the Red Cross\*\*

\*\*[www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire/if-a-fire-starts](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire/if-a-fire-starts)

## Flood Preparation



Determine whether you live in a flood-prone area. Be aware of streams, drainage channels, and areas known to flood suddenly.



Ask your local emergency manager about official flood warning signals in your community.



Consider purchasing flood insurance. If you are located in a designated flood zone, learn about FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program\*\*\*;



Take steps to flood-proof your home.

\*\*\*[www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program](http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program)

## During the event

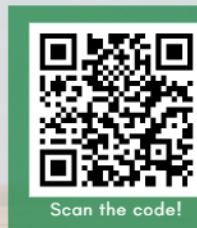


Keep all insurance policies and your household inventory in a safe place.

- Listen to radio or television stations for flood updates. If local authorities issue a flood watch, prepare to evacuate.
- Secure your home. If time permits, secure items located outside the home.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches, if instructed.
- Make sure your car has a full tank of gas before rainfall begins.
- Fill a sterilized bathtub with water in case your source of water is compromised.
- Stay away from flood waters\*\*\*\*.

\*\*\*\*[www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/housing-counseling-disaster-recovery-toolkit](http://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/housing-counseling-disaster-recovery-toolkit)

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# PREPARE FOR SPECIFIC DISASTERS - II

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Resource Sheet  
Publication date: 2023

## Tornadoes and Hurricanes Preparation



Identify a safe place to take shelter in the event of a tornado or a hurricane



Consider building a safe room:  
[www.fema.gov/mit/saferoom](http://www.fema.gov/mit/saferoom)



Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio to receive warnings.



Check for weather updates on the Internet: [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov).

### During the event

- Check on vulnerable populations: older adults, young children, or people with disabilities.
- Seek shelter: Stay away from windows and do not open them; move to the center of the room if a windowless room is unavailable; avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums; and leave mobile homes and go to the lowest floor of a nearby sturdy building.
- Leave your vehicle if you are driving. If you cannot find a secure structure, lie in a nearby ditch and cover your head and neck with your arms. Do not take shelter under an overpass or bridge. During a tornado, you are safer in a low, flat location. In a hurricane, find the best built structure available.
- Do not use open flames for light.
- Stay out of damaged buildings and away from downed power lines. Return home when the authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Help injured or trapped persons; give first aid, when appropriate, but do not try to move the seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help immediately.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, and gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately. If you smell gas or chemical fumes, open a window and quickly leave the building.
- If you see sparks, or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker.
- If you suspect that sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap.
- Take pictures of the damage – both the house and its contents – for insurance purposes.

## Earthquakes Preparation



Secure water heaters and gas appliances.



Repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas, and inflexible utility connections.



Place large, heavy, or breakable objects on lower shelves and fasten shelves to walls. Fasten high and top-heavy objects. [www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/housing-counseling-disaster-recovery-toolkit](http://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/housing-counseling-disaster-recovery-toolkit)



Anchor overhead lighting fixtures.



Locate safe spots and identify danger zones in each room.



Consider buying earthquake insurance if you reside in a high-risk area.

### During the event

- If you are indoors, take cover under sturdy furniture or against an inside wall. Stay away from the kitchen.
- Stay outside if you are there. Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires. Take cover under sturdy furniture away from windows and outside walls in a high-rise building. Wait for instructions from safety personnel, and do not use elevators.
- If you are driving, stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in your car. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave the building. Shut off the main gas valve outside.
- Wear sturdy shoes if walking through areas covered with fallen debris or glass.
- Check your home and chimneys for structural damage.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, and gasoline or other flammable liquids.
- Visually inspect utility lines and appliances for damage.
- Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are operating.
- Open cabinets cautiously and beware of objects falling off of shelves.
- Be aware of possible high water due to dam failures. Find high ground, if necessary.

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# MITIGATING EXTREME FLOODING

Disaster Series: What To Do to Prepare for Disasters  
By Brenda Marty-Jimenez, RN and Katherine Marin, M.Ed., MHFA

Available in English & Spanish  
UF/IFAS Miami-Dade  
County Extension Resources

Resource Sheet  
Publication date: 2023

Here are some things to consider when experiencing extreme flooding

## 10 tips to mitigate extreme flooding:

- 

**1 Stay informed**  
Sign up for phone and text message alerts. Follow advisories and closure announcements.
- 

**2 Don't drive in flood water**  
Some vehicles ride low to the ground, others higher. It is unknown what is under the water and lane lines are no longer visible. Driving through flooded areas can damage your vehicle and result in costly repairs and even loss of life. Large vehicles stalled out in flood water too. Use extreme caution when driving around stalled, abandoned vehicles.
- 

**3 Avoid speeding past other vehicles in flooded streets**  
This can cause loss of visibility and large waves, putting moving traffic and any pedestrians in danger. Driving quickly through water creates a potentially harmful wake for other vehicles, homeowners, and any nearby pedestrians. Be courteous and considerate on the road.
- 

**4 Don't walk and/or play in flood water**  
Don't let kids play in standing water, even though it looks like fun. It may be dangerous. Snakes, sewage from backed up systems, sharp objects, bacteria and hazardous chemicals can be found in and/or contaminate flood water. Bacteria can enter your body through a cut or open wound. I have heard of some alligator sightings, and this poses another type of risk. Watch for fallen power lines. Be sensible and stay safe and healthy.
- 

**5 Keep medications, emergency numbers and important documents handy and ready-to-go in a waterproof container**  
Use zip type plastic bags and put them into a lightweight backpack. It is always good to have a "to-go" bag, ready to use in the event unexpected evacuation is needed. <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/browardco/2022/05/12/hurricane-readiness-for-families-consumers-and-pets/>
- 

**6 Keep extra supplies on hand**  
Focus on nonperishable foods, formula and diapers for infants, medications especially for the elderly and food for pets. In Florida, we are used to having a supply of water and food in our pantries, as part of our hurricane preparedness efforts. We never know when disaster is going to strike.
- 

**7 Keep flood, homeowners, and vehicle insurance up-to-date and in a safe, accessible place**  
Cars can get totaled when submerged in flood water. Homes and contents can be damaged and/or lost too. It is reassuring to know that your insurance is paid, current and up to date. Keep insurance cards and contact numbers handy. Set an alert on your phone to check insurance status annually. Keep photos of your property and the resulting damage.
- 

**8 Think about the animals**  
Horses, cattle, and other large animals need our help during disasters. Keep vet phone numbers available and know what to do when flood waters arrive. See more information in the resource(s) section.
- 

**9 Be resilient**  
Keep your cool. Engage in self-care. It can be challenging when faced with unforeseen disaster. Some stop and cry and others act. We all react to stress differently. Do your best to control stress, emotional outbursts, and expressions of temper. Take a deep breath when the worst elements of frustration take over. Your mental health is important. Be an optimistic person. Happy days will emerge again, as will the sun. Seek help when needed.
- 

**10 Be kind**  
I have seen wonderful, heartwarming stories of people helping people. Strangers have gratefully assisted strangers evacuating homes with only their clothes on their back. It's humanity at its best. Disasters can bring people together. Help each other out when you can.

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