

Emergency Preparedness

Atlantic Hurricane Season: June 1 thru November 30

2024 Storm Names (Atlantic)

Alberto	Helene	Oscar
Beryl	Isaac	Patty
Chris	Joyce	Rafael
Debby	Kirk	Sara
Ernesto	Leslie	Tony
Francine	Milton	Valerie
Gordon	Nadine	William

Hurricane Preparedness Guide for Veterans and Families

Hurricane Preparedness Guide for Veterans and Families



MAKE A PLAN BUILD A KIT BE INFORMED

Preparing for hurricane season can help keep you and your family safe. Download the VISN 8 Hurricane Preparedness Guide today.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



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Health Information Card

Emergency Health Information Card

An [emergency health information card](#) is essential for first responders, offering vital medical and contact details if you're incapacitated. It should include information on disabilities, medications, allergies, communication issues, preferred treatments, medical providers, and emergency contacts.

Print and fill it out with permanent ink, and keep several copies in your emergency kit, car, wallet, purse, or wheelchair pack.

EMERGENCY HEALTH INFORMATION CARD

Carry your emergency health information card with you at all times. This gives emergency and rescue personnel the information necessary if you are unable to.

Name: _____	Emergency Contact Person: _____
Date of Birth: _____	Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Address: _____	Doctor's Name: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____	Phone : _____
Home Phone: _____	Doctor's Name: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Phone: _____
E-mail address: _____	Pharmacy Name: _____
Insurance/Health Plan: _____	Pharmacy Phone#: _____
Individual #: _____ Group #: _____	Pharmacy Address: _____
SPECIAL CONDITIONS: _____	
ALLERGIES: _____	
MEDICATIONS AND DOSAGES: _____	
COMMUNICATIONS/DEVICES/EQUIPMENT/OTHER: _____	



Know Your Watches and Warnings and other Misc. Information

Part of preparing for a hurricane is understanding the National Weather Service (NWS) forecast products, especially the meaning of [NWS watches and warnings](#).

Listen closely to local officials via TV, radio, cell phones, or computers for instructions. Evacuate immediately if instructed.

Watches

Storm Surge Watch: There is a chance of dangerously high water levels moving from the ocean onto land in the next two days. This could happen somewhere within the area that has been identified.

Hurricane Watch: Hurricane conditions, which means constant winds of at least 74 miles per hour, might hit your area. It's important to get ready for a hurricane before the winds get too strong. That's why a hurricane watch is announced two days before those strong winds are expected to start.

Tropical Storm Watch: Tropical storm conditions, with winds between 39 to 73 miles per hour, could occur in the area within the next two days.

Warnings

Storm Surge Warning: There is a danger of life-threatening rising water moving inland within 36 hours. Check evacuation orders if under a storm surge warning.

Hurricane Warning: Hurricane conditions (winds of 74 mph or more) are expected within the area. This warning is issued 36 hours in advance to allow time for preparations. Complete all preparations and evacuate if ordered.

Tropical Storm Warning: Expect tropical storm conditions (winds of 39 to 73 mph) within 36 hours.

Extreme Wind Warning: Anticipate extreme winds (115 mph or more) from a major hurricane within an hour. Take immediate shelter in the interior of a sturdy structure.

Hurricane and tropical storm watches and warnings, as well as storm surge alerts, may be issued for storms expected to develop tropical cyclone characteristics. These are called "potential tropical cyclones." Alerts can also be issued for "post-tropical cyclones," storms that have lost tropical characteristics but still pose dangers.

Know Your Watches and Warnings and other Misc. Information

Advisories

Tropical Cyclone Public Advisory: This advisory gives a rundown of all current coastal warnings and watches for tropical cyclones. It includes details like the cyclone's location, wind strength, movement, and potential hazards.

Tropical Cyclone Track Forecast Cone: This graphic shows where tropical storms and hurricanes might hit. The "cone" indicates where the storm center is likely to go, but remember, storms can affect areas far outside this cone, causing issues like tornadoes or flooding.

Hurricane and Tropical Storm Safety

When a tropical storm or hurricane forms in the Atlantic or the eastern North Pacific, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) and the Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) provide regular updates to keep everyone informed. These updates are issued at least every 6 hours at 5 am, 11 am, 5 pm, and 11 pm in their respective time zones.

What to Expect: If a tropical storm or hurricane is approaching, the NHC and CPHC will release public advisories every 3 hours. You can access this vital information in several ways:

Online: Visit <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/> for the Atlantic and eastern North Pacific updates or [weather.gov/cphc](https://www.weather.gov/cphc) for Central Pacific updates.

Media/Radio: Tune in to TV, radio, or check your cell phone for updates. Use [NOAA Weather Radio](#) for real-time information.

Local Information: For storm forecasts and details specific to your area, check with your local Weather Forecast Office by visiting [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov). Here, you'll find tailored information to help you prepare and stay safe during a storm.

Outlooks

- [Tropical Weather Outlook](#): The Tropical Weather Outlook talks about areas with bad weather and their chances of turning into tropical storms over the next five days. It gives a forecast on the likelihood of a tropical cyclone forming in the next two days and throughout the whole five-day period. You can also find graphical versions of the 2-day and 5-day Outlook at www.hurricanes.gov and www.weather.gov/cphc.

Before, During, and After a Tropical Event

Before

The best time to [prepare for a hurricane](#) is before hurricane season begins on June 1. It is vital to understand your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, and wind. Here is your checklist of things to do BEFORE hurricane seasons begins.

- Know your zone: Find out if you live in a hurricane [evacuation area](#).
- Be prepared for hurricane season: The [National Weather Service](#) hurricane preparedness information can help you be prepared.
- Put together an emergency kit: Put together a [hurricane disaster supply kit](#). Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators, and storm shutters. Ensure you have enough [medications](#) on hand.
- Before an emergency, discuss with family or friends how to contact each other, where to meet, and what actions to take. Store a copy of this plan in your emergency kit or another safe, accessible location. Start at the [Ready.Gov emergency plan webpage](#).
- Review your insurance policies: Review your insurance policies to ensure that you have adequate coverage for your home and personal property.

During

When a hurricane threatens your community, be prepared to evacuate if you live in a storm surge risk area. Allow enough time to pack and inform friends and family if you need to leave your home.

- Secure your home: For storm safety, cover your home's windows. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection. Alternatively, use 5/8 inch exterior grade or marine plywood to board up windows. Ensure they fit and are ready to install. Purchase materials before hurricane season to avoid last-minute rushes.
- Stayed tuned in: Check the websites of your local National Weather Service office and local government/emergency management office. Find out what type of emergencies could occur and how you should respond. Listen to the weather radio at [NOAA Weather Radio](#) or other radio or TV stations for the latest storm news.
- Follow instructions issued by local officials. Leave immediately if ordered.
- If Not Ordered to Evacuate:
 - Seek Shelter: Find a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
 - Maximize Protection: Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible.
 - Avoid Glass: Stay away from windows, skylights, and glass doors.
 - Be Aware: If the storm's eye passes, expect calm followed by strong winds from the opposite direction.

Before, During, and After a Tropical Event

After

- Stay informed: Continue listening to a NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates. If you evacuated, return home only when officials say it is safe.
- Stay alert: Once home, drive only if necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects in the road, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks that might collapse.
- Assess the damage: Walk carefully around the outside of your home to check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. Stay out of any building if you smell gas, if floodwaters remain around the building, if the building or home was damaged by fire, or if the authorities have not declared it safe.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the leading causes of death after storms in areas dealing with power outages. Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage. When the power goes out, keep your generator outside. Generator tips available [here](#).
- Use battery-powered flashlights. Do NOT use candles. Turn on your flashlight before entering a vacated building. The battery could produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present. Power outage tips available [here](#).
- Know where to get disaster assistance. Click here for [FEMA](#) disaster assistance information.

In case of an emergency dial 911

The VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center (VA Health Connect) is operational 24/7/365 for virtual care and tele-emergency care and support to Veterans enrolled for VA Health Care in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



1-877-741-3400

Resources National, Federal, and State

In times of crisis, having access to reliable emergency resources is crucial. Across the United States, a comprehensive network of National, Federal, and State resources is available to assist individuals and communities in navigating emergencies.

National/Federal

- [CDC natural disasters and severe weather](#)
- [CDC: emergency preparedness and response](#)
- [Disaster Assistance Improvement Program \(DAIP\)](#)
- [EPA Natural Disasters and Weather Emergencies](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#)
- [FEMA Social Hub](#)
- [Food & Drug Administration Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)
- [Ready.Gov Disasters & Emergencies Resource](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)
- [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)
- [USA.gov Disasters and Emergencies](#)

State (Florida and Georgia)

- [Florida Department of Emergency Management](#)
- [Georgia Emergency Management](#)
- [Florida Shelter Locations](#)
- [Florida Department of Transportation](#)
- [Georgia Department of Transportation](#)
- [Florida Department of Public Safety](#)
- [Georgia Department of Public Safety](#)
- [Florida Department of State Health Services](#)
- [Georgia Department of State Health Services](#)
- [Florida Highway Patrol](#)
- [Georgia State Patrol](#)

Resources National, Federal, and State

County/City

- [State Emergency Management Agencies | USAGov](#)
- [Florida Emergency Shelters and Information by County](#)
- [County \(FL\) Emergency Managers](#)
- [Know Your Zone, Know Your Home \(FL\)](#)
- [GA Hurricane Evacuation Zones](#)
- [Shelters \(FL\)](#)

Weather

- [National Hurricane Center](#)
- [Florida Disaster Emergency Information](#)
- [Georgia Division of Emergency Management](#)
- [National Weather Service – Jacksonville](#)
- [National Weather Service – Tallahassee](#)
- [National Weather Service – Tampa Bay](#)
- [National Weather Service – Miami](#)
- [Ready.Gov – Hurricanes](#)
- [FEMA Mobile App and Text Messages](#)
- [National Weather Service](#)
- [National Hurricane Center](#)
- [Links to State/US Government Hurricane Resources](#)
- [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)
- [Storm Prediction Center](#)

Disaster Assistance, Evacuation, and Road Maps

- [State Emergency Operations Center- Florida Disaster Resources](#)
- [Florida Disaster Relief](#)
- [Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency's Disaster Recovery Division](#)
- [Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance – Georgia](#)
- [Evacuation routes and road maps – Florida](#)
- [Evacuation routes – Georgia](#)

Other Emergencies/Safety Tips (Tornado, Flood, Wildfire)

In times of crisis, having access to reliable emergency resources is crucial. Across the United States, a comprehensive network of National, Federal, and State resources is available to assist individuals and communities in navigating emergencies.

Tornado

- To stay safe during a tornado, prepare a plan and an emergency kit, stay aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms, know the best places to shelter both indoors and outdoors, and always protect your head.
- To protect yourself and your family from harm during a tornado, pay close attention to changing weather conditions in your area. If you know thunderstorms are expected, stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or an NOAA weather radio for further weather information. Some tornadoes strike rapidly without time for a tornado warning. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:
 - A dark or green-colored sky
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud
 - Large hail
 - A loud roar that sounds like a freight train
- If you notice any of these conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and TV stations or to a NOAA weather radio or check the internet.
- Know when to shelter. Falling and flying debris causes most deaths and injuries during a tornado. Although there is no completely safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others.
- Go to the basement or an inside room without windows on the lowest floor (bathroom, closet, center hallway).
- If possible, avoid sheltering in a room with windows.
- For added protection get under something sturdy (a heavy table or workbench). Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress. Protect your head with anything available.
- Do not stay in a mobile home.

Other Emergencies/Safety Tips (Tornado, Flood, Wildfire)

Flood Safty Tips – During a Flood Watch or Warning

- Gather emergency supplies, including non-perishable food and water. Store at least 1 gallon of water per day for each person and each pet. Store at least a 3-day supply.
- Listen to your local radio or television station for updates.
- Have immunization records handy (or know the year of your last tetanus shot).
 - Store immunization records in a waterproof container.
- Bring in outdoor items (lawn furniture, grills, trash cans) or tie them down securely.
- If evacuation appears necessary, turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve.
- Leave areas subject to flooding such as low spots, canyons, washes, etc. (Remember: avoid driving through flooded areas and standing water.)
- After you return home, if you find that your home was flooded, practice safe cleaning.

Flood Safety Tip – After Flooding Occurs

- Avoid driving through flooded areas and standing water. As little as six inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- Do not drink flood water, or use it to wash dishes, brush teeth, or wash/prepare food. Drink clean, safe water.
- If you evacuated, return to your home only after local authorities have said it is safe to do so.
- Listen for boil water advisories. Local authorities will let you know if your water is safe for drinking and bathing.
 - During a water advisory, use only bottled, boiled, or treated water for drinking, cooking, etc.
- When in doubt, throw it out! Throw away any food and bottled water that comes/may have come into contact with floodwater.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Generators: Use at least 20 feet from doors, windows, or vents; Pressure Washers: Keep engines outdoors, 20 feet from openings; Vehicles: Never run inside an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Floods pose risks beyond the initial damage. Standing floodwater can spread diseases, introduce chemical hazards, and cause injuries. If your home was flooded, practice safe cleaning by discarding contaminated drywall and insulation. Dispose of items like mattresses, pillows, carpeting, and stuffed toys that cannot be cleaned with bleach. Consider storing items outside temporarily until you can file insurance claims. See recommendations by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Clean walls, hard-surfaced floors, and other household surfaces with soap and water and disinfect with a solution of one cup of bleach to five gallons of water.

Other Emergencies/Safety Tips (Tornado, Flood, Wildfire)

Wild Fire Safty Tips

Wildfires affect everyone. They can spread fast and harm us. Wildfires are getting bigger and more dangerous. More people are living in areas at risk for wildfires, but we can take action to prepare. Learn how to prepare your household and community.

Protect yourself from smoke.

When wildfires create smoky conditions it's important for everyone to [reduce their exposure to smoke](#). [Wildfire smoke](#) irritates your eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. It can make it hard to breathe and make you cough or wheeze. [Children](#), [pregnant women](#), and people with [asthma](#), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ([COPD](#)), or heart disease, need to be especially careful about breathing wildfire smoke.

Keep smoke outside.

- Choose a room you can close off from outside air.
- Set up a portable air cleaner or [indoor air filtration](#) to keep the air in this room clean even when it's smoky in the rest of the building and outdoors. If you use a [do-it-yourself box fan](#) filtration unit, never leave it unattended.

Reduce your smoke exposure by wearing a [respirator](#).

- A respirator is a mask that fits tightly to your face to filter out smoke before you breathe it in.
- You must wear the right respirator and wear it [correctly](#). Respirators are not made to fit children.
- If you have heart or lung disease ask your doctor if it is safe for you to wear a respirator.
- Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, or aerosol sprays and don't fry or broil meat, smoke tobacco products, or vacuum.
- If you have a central air conditioning system, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.

Pets and other animals can be affected by wildfire smoke too.

- Learn how to [protect your pets](#) and [livestock](#).
- Some evacuation centers do not accept animals. Check [Petfinders](#) for shelters or [RedRover](#) for information on local animal shelters and rescue groups.

Keep track of fires near you so you can be ready.

- AirNow's "[Fires: Current Conditions](#)" page has a map of fires throughout North America.
- NOAA's "[Fire weather outlook](#)" page maps fire watches and warnings.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio for emergency alerts.



Other Emergencies/Safety Tips (Tornado, Flood, Wildfire)

Wild Fire Safty Tips - con't

Pay attention to any health symptoms.

If you have [asthma](#), [COPD](#), [heart disease](#), or are [pregnant](#). Get medical help if you need it. Learn more about protecting yourself from [wildfire smoke](#).

Evacuate safely.

You may be asked by public authorities to evacuate or you may decide to evacuate. Read about how to [evacuate safely](#) and how to [develop a family disaster plan](#), including:

- Finding out what could happen to you
- Making a disaster plan
- Completing the checklist
- Practicing your plan

Stay healthy during power outages.

Large fires can cause long-term power outages. Read about [what to do if your power goes out](#), including:

- Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning
- Food safety
- Safe drinking water
- Power line hazards

VISN 8 Facility Emergency Preparedness and Facility Status

VISN 8 Facility Emergency Preparedness and Facility Status Pages

[Bay Pines VA Healthcare System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

[VA Caribbean Healthcare System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

[Miami VA Healthcare System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

[North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

[Orlando VA Healthcare System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

[Tampa VA Healthcare System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

[West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System:](#)

Preparedness Info: [Emergency Preparedness](#)

Facility Status Updates: [Locations](#)

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