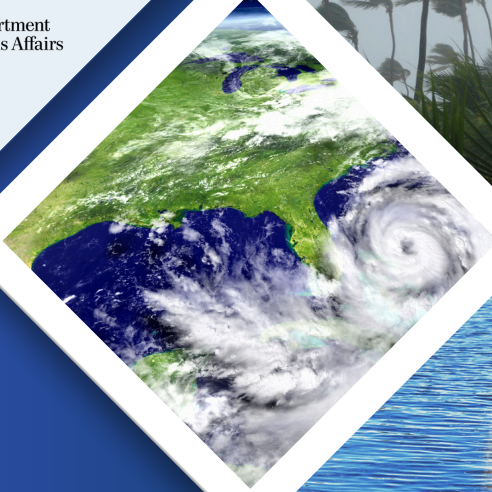


VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



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HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

For Veterans and Families

**Make a plan.
Build a kit.
Stay informed.**

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For questions, please email VISN8CommunicationOffice@va.gov



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Don't Delay. Prepare Now.

Preparation for hurricane season is critically important. Do not wait until a storm watch or warning is issued for your area to begin your preparations. The best time to prepare is now.

Prior to Hurricane Season

December - May

- Know your area's risk of hurricanes.
- Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home. Consider a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level possible that is not subject to flooding.
- Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route, and shelter locations. If you have a medical condition you may qualify for a Special Needs Shelter registration. Check with your local emergency management office on requirements for registration.
- Consider purchasing a battery-operated weather radio.

- If you have a significant health condition that requires life-saving equipment such as a ventilator, check with your VA healthcare provider to see if you are eligible for a generator to keep that equipment in working order should you lose power. FEMA also has a program to provide financial assistance for “medical purpose” generators.
- Keep important documents in a safe place or create password-protected digital copies.
- Protect your property. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves in plumbing to prevent backups. Consider hurricane shutters.

Start of Hurricane Season

June 1

- Get your hurricane supply kit together and make sure it is readily accessible. Stock up on non- perishable supplies.
- Make a good inventory of valuable items. Insurance companies will accept photos as evidence. Review your insurance policies. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- If you live in a mobile home or structure that may not withstand a hurricane or may be flooded, contact your local emergency management office to locate the nearest community shelter and map out an evacuation plan.

- If you plan to evacuate, consider travel away from hurricane hazards in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.
- Make sure your battery-operated radio is in working order. Remember to replace its battery every 6 months.
- Identify an out-of-state family member/friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact. Plan how you will communicate with family members. During disasters, sending text messages is usually more reliable than phone calls.
- Post emergency telephone numbers in a visible location at home or save them to your cell phone. Make sure your children know how and when to call 9-1-1.
- Talk with your VA healthcare provider about any specific preparedness instructions related to your health condition or concerns. Keep a list of medications handy.
- Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route, and shelter locations. If you have a medical condition you may qualify for a Special Needs Shelter registration. Check with your local emergency management office on requirements for registration.
- Consider purchasing a battery-operated weather radio.

Emergency Supply Kit



- Water – 3 gallons per day per person
- Battery Operated Radio
- Bleach
- Candles and matches or lighter
- Duct Tape
- Emergency cooking supplies
- Extra batteries
- Extension cords – heavy duty
- Blankets/Pillows
- Rain Gear and sturdy shoes
- Pet food
- Extra medications
- Fire extinguisher
- First Aid kit
- Toys, books, games
- Flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs
- Toiletries
- Manual can opener
- Pet care items
- Ready to eat canned and prepared food
- Valuable papers
- Valid drivers' license
- Cash

Hurricane 36 Hours Out

- Stay updated on weather conditions and local emergency instructions.
- Restock your emergency preparedness kit. You should have enough supplies on hand for at least 3 days; 5-7 days might be better.

- Do not rely on local relief organizations to provide you food or water during the first few days following a hurricane.
- Buy several bags of ice to keep in your freezer. You can also freeze water in gallon jugs or large Ziplock bags.
- Get cash from ATM or your bank. If businesses lose power, they cannot take credit or debit cards.
- Fill up the gas tank in your car (and your gas cans for generators. Stock your car with emergency supplies and a change of clothes in case you need to leave .
- If you feel your home is not safe to ride out the storm, call or visit your local shelter to find out when it will open and what their requirements are regarding pets and medical needs.
- Make sure you have enough medication and medical supplies to last at least 15 days.

Hurricane 18-36 Hours Out

- Keep your TV/radio on for storm updates and emergency information.
- Bring loose, lightweight objects inside that could become projectiles in high winds (patio furniture, garbage cans); anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (propane tanks); trim and remove trees close enough to fall on your home.
- Cover all your home's windows if possible. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection. Another option is to board up windows with 5/8" exterior grade or marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install.
- Make sure you have all necessary medical supplies and prescriptions filled. If you have medications that require refrigeration, make sure you have a small portable cooler or ice chest ready for easy transportation, if needed.

First Aid Kit



- (20) Adhesive bandages (various sizes)
- (1) conforming roller gauze bandage
- (2) 3" x 3" sterile gauze pads
- (1) 3" cohesive bandage
- (6) antiseptic wipes
- 2" width adhesive tape
- Cold pack
- Tweezers
- First Aid manual
- Antidiarrheal medication
- Laxatives
- (1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing
- (2) triangle bandages
- (2) 4" x 4" sterile gauze pads
- (2) antibacterial handwipe packages
- (2) pair non-latex gloves
- Antibacterial ointment
- Small, personal scissors
- CPR breathing face shield
- Aspirin or pain reliever
- Antacid (for upset stomach)

Hurricane 6 Hours Out

- Charge your cell phones now so you will have full battery in case you lose power.
- If you are not in an area that is recommended for evacuation, plan to stay home or where you are so long as it is safe.

- Close storm shutters and stay away from windows. Flying glass can injure you.
- Turn your refrigerator or freezer to the coldest setting and open only when necessary. If you lose power, food will last longer.
- Turn on your TV/radio and check every 30 minutes for latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- Regularly check your VA medical center's website and social media accounts to stay updated on closures. Websites are listed on the back cover of this guide.

Hurricane Landfall

- If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Do not drive around barricades. Make sure you have your medications and medical supplies with you.
- If sheltering in place, go to your safe room – a small, interior, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor that is not subject to flooding.
- If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building but DO NOT climb into a closed attic.
- Listen for current emergency information and instructions either on TV or weather radio.

After Hurricane Passes

- If you have a life-threatening medical issue, contact 9-1-1 immediately.
- If you have other health concerns and are unable to go to the nearest VA clinic, contact your local VA or call VA Health Connect at 1-877-741-3400 for 24/7/365 virtual urgent and tele-emergency care.



The Right Care, Right Now

1-877-741-3400

- If you evacuated outside your local area and need care, you can go to any VA health care facility that is open to receive care.
- Contact your local VA to get updates on hospital and clinic operations, how to get prescription refills and reschedule appointments, if necessary.
- Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.
- If you lose power, use flashlights or other battery-operated light sources - DO NOT USE CANDLES.
- Only open refrigerators or freezers when necessary.
- If you evacuated, return home only when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.
- Be careful during clean-up. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. Do not touch downed power lines.
- Save phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.

- Document property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company.
- Use generators safely. Never put a generator inside your home or garage.

Emergency Pharmacy Program

In the event of a catastrophic event, VA may activate the Emergency Pharmacy program. It is important to check with your VA medical center to see if this program is available to support your medication needs for a specific emergency or disaster. Through this program, Veterans with a VA ID card who need an emergency supply of medication can go to any retail pharmacy open to the public with a written prescription on a valid VA prescription form or active VA prescription bottle (not older than 6 months AND with refills available) to receive at least a 10-day supply. Controlled substances are not included in this program; they must be filled by VA. If a VA patient is displaced, has lost their medication or no longer has a written prescription or bottle, they can contact the Heritage Health Customer Care Line at 1-866-265-0124, option 1. Hours of operation will vary depending on requirements.

VA Issued Medical Equipment

If you have a health condition that requires life-saving equipment such as a ventilator, check with your VA healthcare provider to see if you are eligible for a generator. FEMA also has a program to provide assistance for “medical purpose” generators. If you are on home oxygen, the home oxygen company should have an emergency plan in place. Check with them for requirements to receive backup tanks. Many power companies have programs for individuals who have special medical equipment at home and are dependent on that electric-powered equipment to live. Contact your local power company to learn more.

Other VA Resources

Veterans, their beneficiaries and caregivers may contact the VA’s Health Resource Center Disaster Hotline at 1-800-507-4571 regarding VA health benefits, eligibility, billing and pharmacy related inquiries during the storm or disaster period.

Notes

Miami VA Healthcare System

1201 NW 16th Street, Miami, FL 33125
305-575-7000 • 888-276-1785
www.va.gov/miami-health-care

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center

10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL 33744
727-398-6661 • 888-820-0230
www.va.gov/bay-pines-health-care

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33612
813-972-2000 • 888-716-7787
www.va.gov/tampa-health-care

Lake City VA Medical Center

619 South Marion Avenue, Lake City, FL 32025
386-755-3016 • 800-308-8387
www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center

1601 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608
352-376-1611 • 800-324-8387
www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care

Orlando VA Healthcare System

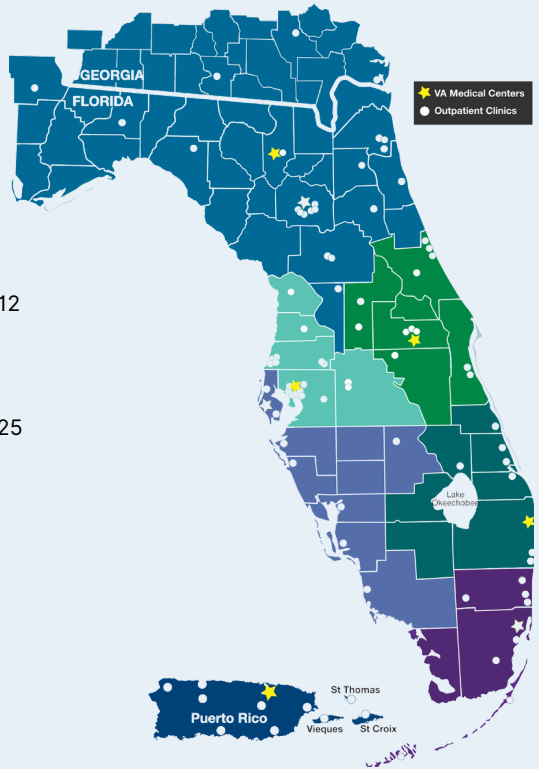
13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32827
407-631-1000 • 800-922-7521
www.va.gov/orlando-health-care/

West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System

7305 North Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33410
561-422-8262 • 800-972-8262
www.va.gov/west-palm-beach-health-care/

VA Caribbean Healthcare System

10 Casia Street, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921
787-641-7582 • 800-449-8729
www.va.gov/caribbean-health-care



The Right Care, Right Now
1-877-741-3400

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



**DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1**



**Veterans
Health Library**

Your source for health information

veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov



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