

SARASOTA COUNTY

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Early Preparation Leads to Smart Action

RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF SARASOTA COUNTY

In 2022, Hurricane Ian impacted the entire southwest coast of Florida, and Sarasota County was not spared. Many of our residents, especially in the southern parts of the county, felt the impact of winds above 100 mph and flooding equal to a 1,000-year event. The county collected over 3.3 million cubic yards of debris, and damages surpassed \$200 million. For many, the storm has not ended. Recovery is ongoing. Some of our citizens continue to complete repairs to return to their homes, and many lives have been changed forever by Ian.

It is hard to believe, but it could have been much worse, as evidenced by the extensive and catastrophic damage in Lee County. A small 20-mile shift in Ian's track would have brought the same catastrophic storm surge to Sarasota County's coast, which underscores the need to take action now in preparing for hurricane season.

Take action now...preparedness is key!

This guide provides information on the preparations necessary to take care of your family, home, pets, neighborhood and business. Sarasota County's website, scgov.net, also offers extensive information on what you need to do to get ready for hurricane season. There, you can also find a digital version of this guide.

Knowing what evacuation level your home is in and where you will go should you need to leave prepares you to take immediate action. If your home is outside of evacuation levels/areas, was built after 2002, and you have appropriate window and door coverings, you may be able to shelter at home.

If not, don't wait. When notified of an emergency, enact your evacuation plan and leave. Waiting until storm conditions deteriorate may prevent you from leaving, and after winds reach 45 mph, first responders will not be able to get to you. Sign up for emergency alerts at AlertSarasotaCounty.com for real-time updates on evacuations and important information.

Taking action now also means having a well-stocked emergency supply kit before the start of hurricane season. Ensure you are prepared for a potential extended loss of power and include any supplies you need for at least seven days. If your plan requires going to a hurricane evacuation center, plan to bring your disaster supplies, including bedding and comfort items.

For those who are medically dependent or not comfortable driving to an evacuation center, information about emergency transportation and how to apply for the Medical Needs Program is available on scgov.net or by calling **311**.

Being prepared to take action during hurricane season also means maintaining awareness of tropical weather as it develops. Sarasota County's Emergency Management team will work with local municipalities to keep residents informed as storms approach through emergency alerts, social media, our website, and local radio and television media.

After a storm leaves our area, it may not be safe to travel, or it may require a higher level of attention to damage when traveling through the community. Teams of county workers will assess damage, respond to calls, and take action to help our community. If it's not safe, stay home and let those teams open roads. Monitor media outlets for important safety messages about recovery and neighborhood points of distribution for supplies if needed.

Hopefully, this hurricane season will not be as busy as years past. While that would be great, I also know that if a hurricane is heading for our coast and area, we will take action to prepare and respond to our community. You can help by taking action now to prepare yourself and your family.

Being prepared is the best way to ensure your family is ready for any disaster, so when we take action, you do, too!

Richard A. Collins

Emergency Services Director, Sarasota County



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Learn more about
emergency preparedness at
scgov.net/beprepared,
or **scan the code**.

WEATHER SAFETY

Knowing what hazards can affect our community and learning what to do before, during and after each one will help you be safe and recover quickly after a disaster.

HURRICANES

Hurricanes are rated on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale from Category 1 to Category 5, based on their sustained wind speed. The scale estimates potential property damage. Hurricanes of Category 3 or higher are considered major because of their potential for significant loss of life and damage. Category 1 and 2 are still dangerous and require preventive measures.

Hurricane Season is from June 1-Nov. 30. The height of hurricane season is August-October. Hurricanes are not just a coastal emergency, flooding can occur far inland.

FLOODING

1. If flooding threatens, get to higher ground. Stay away from flood-prone areas, including low spots and ditches. Take dry clothing, a flashlight and a portable radio with you.
2. **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN.** Avoid flooded areas or those with rapid water flow. Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream or drive in water. The depth is not always obvious. It takes only six inches of fast flowing water to sweep you off your feet.
3. Do not allow children to play in or near high water, storm drains or ditches. Flood waters may be contaminated with oil, gasoline or raw sewage.
4. Purchase flood insurance.
5. Do not sweep or blow yard leaves, pine needles, grass clippings or soil into the street or stormwater system. Doing so clogs pipes and prevents flood waters from draining.

CATEGORY	SUSTAINED WINDS (MPH)	DAMAGE
1	74 - 95	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage.
2	96 - 110	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage.
3 (major)	111 - 129	Extensive damage will occur.
4 (major)	130 - 156	Devastating damage will occur.
5 (major)	157 or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur.





LIGHTNING/THUNDERSTORMS

1. IF THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS.

Find a safe place to take cover inside a home or business, a restroom in a park, or a shelter on a beach. Stay inside for at least 30 minutes after thunder stops.

2. Do not use trees for cover.
3. Do not lie down in an open area.
4. Stay away from bodies of water.

TORNADOES

1. Purchase a NOAA weather radio and/or a battery-powered commercial radio and extra batteries.
3. Know the terms used to describe tornado threats:
 - a. **Tornado Watch**
Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms.
 - b. **Tornado Warning**
A tornado has been sighted or indicated by a weather radar. Take shelter immediately.
4. If a tornado threatens, seek shelter in a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
5. **Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes.**
Abandon mobile homes and go to the nearest sturdy building immediately.



WHAT TO DO DURING A

TORNADO WATCH





When a Tornado Watch is issued, make sure the following items are stored in your safe place.

- Helmets, pillows, or even a mattress to protect your head from falling and flying debris
- Shoes to protect your feet from broken glass and other sharp objects
- A whistle or noise-making device to signal for help after the storm passes
- Baby formula, diapers, and other necessary items for your children
- Pet carriers, leashes, and other pet supplies



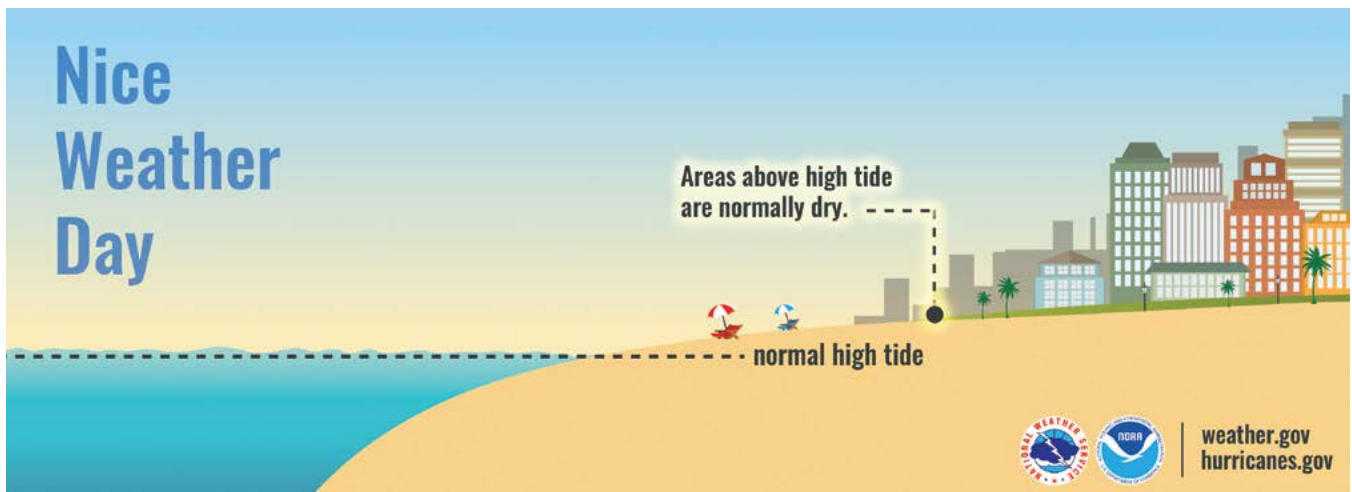
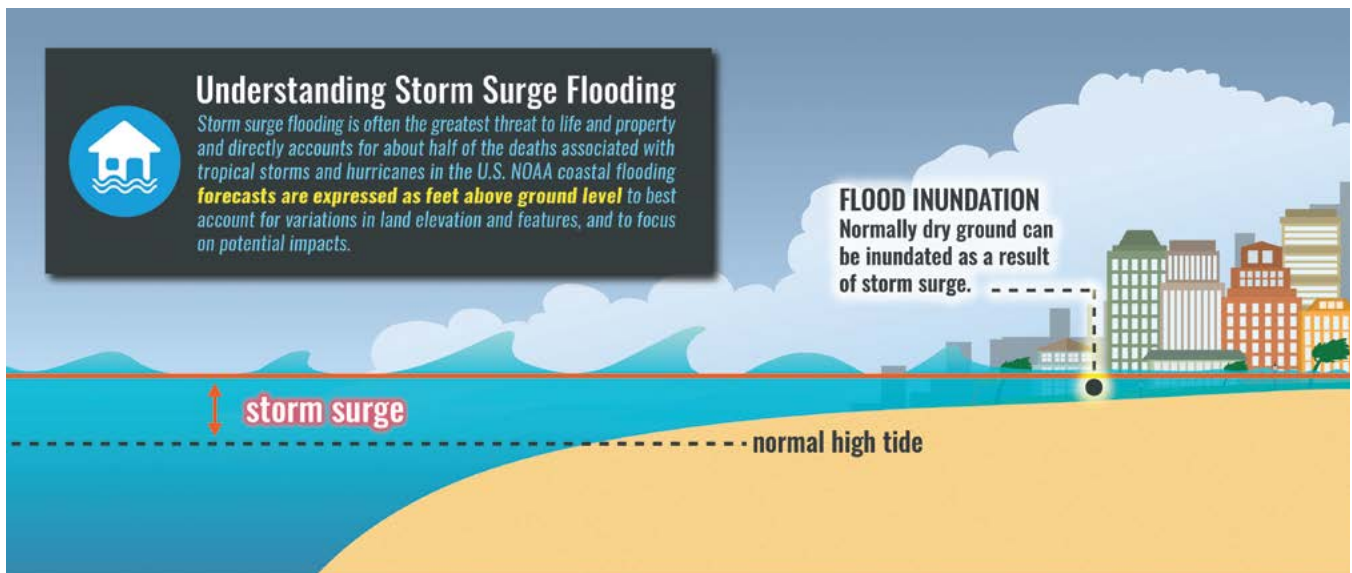
For more information, visit:
weather.gov/safety/tornado

UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK

STORM SURGE

Along the coast, storm surge from a hurricane is often the greatest threat to life and property. Storm surge is an abnormal rise of water generated by a storm, over and above the predicted astronomical tides.

Storm surge directly accounts for about half the deaths associated with tropical storms and hurricanes. This rise in water level can cause extreme flooding along the coastal areas and rivers, and can inundate populated areas as the storm approaches. Storm surge also has the potential to impact critical infrastructure including power, communications, water, sewers, fuel, roads and bridges. Damage severity depends on the storm's size, strength, forward speed and direction of movement. In Sarasota County, storm surge can travel for miles inland, so it is important to evacuate if your area is under an evacuation order (see Page 12 for Evacuation Level information).



COUNTY SAFETY STATUS: Red, yellow and green conditions

Hurricanes, tornados and other natural disasters can create widespread damage, leaving debris, downed trees, flooding, live power lines on the ground, and damaged buildings. Immediately following such disaster, many departments (including law enforcement, fire, emergency management and public works) respond to assess damage and help citizens.

Communicating the level of damage and potential danger is imperative. The safety of our community is our primary concern. **Sarasota County utilizes a color-coded system (RED, YELLOW, GREEN) to indicate the level of damage, hazards and impact to services.**

These colors will be used in Sarasota County's emergency public communications to represent the safety status of the county. Heavily impacted areas where damage is extensive and services are limited will require the **RED** status. As in Hurricane Ian impacts to power, traffic lights, and downed trees may require larger areas being designated as **YELLOW**; meaning take caution, be vigilant and careful when out on the roads. Finally, as power is restored, roads cleared, and traffic lights become operable, the level of danger will return to **GREEN**.

COLOR	LEVEL OF DANGER	CITIZEN ACTION
RED	Unsafe. Emergency services may not be available. Extensive damage limiting travel.	Access may not be allowed, or limited, according to authorities having jurisdiction. Travel in this area is unsafe and not recommended.
YELLOW	Limiting factors to include lack of power, trees and power lines down in areas. Traffic lights may be out. Potential damage to utilities such as water systems and wastewater.	Safety precautions required. General travel limited to essential needs.
GREEN	No limiting factors.	



PREPARE YOUR HOME

SAFE STRUCTURES

Hurricane research studies have shown that on average; homes built under the 2002 Florida Building Code sustained less damage and when paired with shutters may be safe to stay in as long as they are not in an evacuation area. Homes built between 1994 and 2001 under the Standard Building Code sustained more damage and homes built before 1994 fared even worse. Before storm season begins, take the following steps to protect your home:

- ▶ Secure loose rain gutters and downspouts, and clear clogged areas or debris.
- ▶ Secure and reinforce your roof, windows and doors, including garage doors.
- ▶ Consider building a FEMA safe room designed for protection from high winds and flood waters.
- ▶ Learn how and when to turn off gas, water and electricity. Never burn candles or oil lamps during the storm even if the power is off.
- ▶ Keep in mind your Wi-Fi will only work if electricity is on. Many router boxes have external batteries that will keep Wi-Fi running for a limited period of time if power is interrupted. Contact your local cable/internet provider for more information.

MOBILE OR MANUFACTURED HOMES

YOU MUST EVACUATE IF YOU LIVE IN A MOBILE HOME OR RECREATIONAL VEHICLE.

Mobile homes are unsafe shelter in high winds no matter how well fastened to the ground. Take precautions to ensure that your mobile home is properly secured to reduce possible damage to your home and your neighbor's property.

- ▶ Check tie-downs annually. Make sure straps are tight, properly aligned and not on an angle.
- ▶ Verify that ground anchors and stabilizer plates have been installed properly.
- ▶ Be sure support piers are in contact with the frame.
- ▶ Replace straps or ground anchors that show signs of corrosion or damage.

For detailed information or to verify a contractor's license, call the **Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Bureau of Mobile Home and Recreational Vehicle Construction at 850-617-3004.**

CHECKLIST FOR SHELTERING IN PLACE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathtub or other large containers and fill with water. | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash (ATMs may be out-of-service). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking water, one gallon per person, per day, for at least three days. | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet supplies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canned food and a manual can opener. | <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopies of important documents (birth certificate, license and insurance). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable (paper/plastic) items for food/snacks. | <input type="checkbox"/> Full tank of gasoline in your car. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone/tablet supplies (power bank/external battery charger(s); car phone charger (be sure to charge the phone in your car only while it is running to preserve the car battery). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications, prescriptions and a first aid kit. | <input type="checkbox"/> Battery operated fans with extra batteries. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-operated television or radio, flashlight and extra batteries. | |

Most of these items can be purchased during tax-free week prior to the start of hurricane season. Learn more at floridarevenue.com.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Apply online or by telephone:

- ▶ 800-621-FEMA (3362)
- ▶ TTY 800-462-7585
- ▶ disasterassistance.gov
- ▶ 711 or VRS 800-621-3362

Have your banking and insurance information handy before you call.

FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

An important aspect of disaster preparedness is financial preparedness. Safeguarding your finances should be part of your family preparedness program.

For more information, visit

myfloridacfo.com/division/consumers/storm.

CONTRACTORS

Unlicensed contracting is a felony during a state of emergency. Do not pay for any services until repair work has been completed. To verify a contractor's license, or to file a complaint against a contractor:

- ▶ Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), call 850-487-1395, or visit **MyFloridaLicense.com**

Sarasota County Planning and Development Services, Building and Permitting, call **311** or email **licensing@scgov.net**

ARE YOU COVERED?

Homeowners insurance covers catastrophic loss but it doesn't protect homeowners from loss due to flooding or rising water. A separate flood insurance policy is the only way to ensure this extra level of protection. If you do not have a flood insurance policy, check with your insurance agent for a price quote on your home and your personal property.

Do not wait! There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance becomes effective, unless you are purchasing a new home with a mortgage. For more information, visit **fema.gov/flood-insurance**.

INSURANCE

Insurance companies will send special disaster assistance teams, as will the state and federal government, to perform damage assessments. Check your insurance plans annually. Don't wait until after a disaster to know your coverages. Learn more at **floodsmart.gov**:

- ▶ If a storm is coming, take photos of your property and valuables ahead of time.
- ▶ Know where your insurance documents are.
- ▶ Have all your insurance documents ready.
- ▶ Check for identification. Anyone coming to your home doing damage assessments from a government agency will have official identification.
- ▶ Do not pay for any services until repair work has been completed.
- ▶ Call 1-877-MY-FL-CFO for insurance assistance.



DISASTER PLANNING FOR PETS

DOMESTIC PETS

The safety of your family pets depends on you, especially in an emergency. During severe weather or other emergency situations, if it is unsafe for you to stay in your home, it is also unsafe for your pets. Don't leave your pet behind, and don't use your pet as an excuse not to evacuate.

The best plan is to identify a safe location that allows pets. Keep in mind that boarding kennels may be without electricity or potable water and have limited personnel and supplies for days to weeks following a disaster.

During disasters pets may become afraid and run away. Consider microchipping your pets to make reunification easier.



Don't put yourself, your family and your pet at risk! You are responsible for planning for your pet. Just as you should prepare an emergency kit for yourself, you should also prepare one for your pet. If an evacuation is called for, take your pet-emergency kit with you wherever you go. The safety and successful evacuation of your family and pets depends on a good plan and being prepared with the proper supplies.

All of Sarasota County's evacuation centers are pet-friendly, but you must be prepared before you go. Bring a crate for your pet and all necessary supplies if you plan to stay in a Sarasota County evacuation center. If your pet is not accustomed to being confined, acclimate it to the crate before an emergency to help alleviate stress.

Sarasota County evacuation centers accept dogs, cats, birds, rodents and turtles. Service animals are allowed in all evacuation centers.

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR PETS TO AN EVACUATION CENTER:

- One week's supply of food (with can opener if necessary) and medication.
- Enough water for each pet for three days.
- Food and water bowls.
- Current vaccination records.
- Proper ID collar and rabies tag/license and leash.
- Carrier or cage (large enough for your pet to move around in).
- Cat litter, box (small enough to fit in cat carrier) and scooper.
- Plastic bags (for handling waste).
- Disinfectant and cleaning materials.
- Current photo of you with your pet (in case you're separated).
- A comfort item such as a favorite toy, blanket or treats.

RURAL ANIMALS

The decision to evacuate your livestock depends on many factors. If they are in a storm-surge area, flood plain, small pasture or urban area where they will be unable to avoid debris or will be in danger of collapsing buildings, you should consider evacuation. The key to a successful evacuation is to do it early.

Decide in advance how you are going to evacuate and, in case you cannot evacuate, how you and your animals are going to cope with limited water, electricity and access to assistance for three or four days or more. Write your plan down and keep it in a place with copies of important papers so that you will be ready in the event you must act quickly.



PREPARE YOUR LIVESTOCK BEFORE A STORM:

- Know where you can take your livestock in an emergency evacuation. Be prepared to evacuate early. Large vehicles can become difficult and unsafe to drive when winds reach 40 mph.
- Practice loading and unloading your livestock in a trailer. Stressed animals will be harder to handle (and may negatively react to your own stress) during an actual disaster.
- Pack a box with extra halters and leads for each animal, blankets, brushes, wire cutters, medications, bandages, fly spray and other first-aid supplies.
- Keep important documents such as medical records, Coggins tests, photographs and registration papers in a watertight envelope.
- A two-week supply of animal feed for each animal should be stored in waterproof containers.
- Be prepared to treat contaminated water. (Add two drops of chlorine bleach per quart and let stand for half hour.)
- If you are forced to evacuate and leave your animals behind, inform friends and neighbors of your evacuation plans and post detailed instructions in several places on your property. You will need to leave water for at least three days and access to quality hay. **DO NOT LEAVE ANIMALS WITH FREE ACCESS TO GRAIN.**
- The safest place for large animals to weather a storm is in a large pasture.
- Label your animals with a non-toxic grease pencil or spray paint with your phone number. Label your contact information onto waterproof luggage tags and attach them to their halters/collars or braid them into the mane or tail.

MAKE AN EVACUATION PLAN



Decide now if you'll need to evacuate your home in the event of a hurricane. Residents in low-lying areas, barrier islands and mobile homes should seek shelter when conditions warrant. Many coastal roads could be underwater well in advance of a storm, restricting their use as evacuation routes. If you are going to leave the area, be prepared to evacuate early and head inland to avoid the high winds and heavy rains that precede the arrival of a storm. **If Sarasota County issues an evacuation order, everyone within the identified zone needs to leave the area.**

IF YOU'VE DETERMINED THAT YOUR HOME IS NOT SAFE TO RIDE OUT A STORM

You have three options.

1. Stay with a friend or leave the area.

Emergency management agencies recommend you arrange to stay at a "host home" outside the evacuation level. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address and phone number of the family contact.

2. Go to a hotel.

You may be able to reserve a hotel room out of the evacuation area. Space will fill fast. Make reservations early.

3. Move to an evacuation center.

In the event that Sarasota County will be impacted by a tropical storm or hurricane, Sarasota County may open evacuation centers. They are not hotels and will not be able to provide any conveniences

or luxuries. Evacuation centers do not provide bedding, cots or blankets. If you suffer from pet allergies, be aware that you may be exposed to domestic animals located inside evacuation centers. Every effort will be made to assist with limiting the exposure, but cannot be guaranteed.

Sarasota County partners with Florida Department of Health to provide sheltering for residents with qualifying medical needs. Pre-registration is required. See Page 22 for more details.

- ▶ Going to an evacuation center should always be considered a measure of last resort.
- ▶ Never go to an evacuation center until local officials announce it is open.
- ▶ Evacuation center information will be updated on the county's website (scgov.net), on local radio and television stations, and on the county's social media accounts.

A CHECKLIST FOR EVACUATING

Before you go to an evacuation center:

- Locate the water shut-off valve for your residence. The valve is generally on the side of the house nearest the water meter/backflow prevention device, or may be inside the garage.
- Turn the valve to the off position. This will help minimize damage to the interior of your home should a pipe burst.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for turning off your pool and/or water heater and unplug them, and switch off the circuit breaker.
- Place an ice cube or two in a sealed plastic bag or small container in the freezer. If the ice cube has melted down from its original shape by the time you return, you'll know the power was off for an extended period of time and that you should throw out any food.
- Turn off the power and shut off the water valve to your irrigation system.
- Remove loose items, decorative and otherwise, outside the house and in the yard, and place them inside.

What to bring to an evacuation center:

- Alert friends or family members of your plans and how they can contact you.
- Flashlight (in case your center loses power).
- Your insurance, Medicare or Medicaid cards, driver license or photo ID.
- Your children's immunization and other important health and insurance records.
- Each family member's medications, along with dosage information and physician's contact information.
- Drinking water.
- Snacks or special foods.
- Bedding and pillows.
- Book or electronic entertainment items with headphones and chargers.
- Change of clothing.
- Personal hygiene items (including toilet paper).
- Games/comfort items for children.

NOTE: You will be limited to approximately 20 square feet of space per person, and meal service may be delayed.

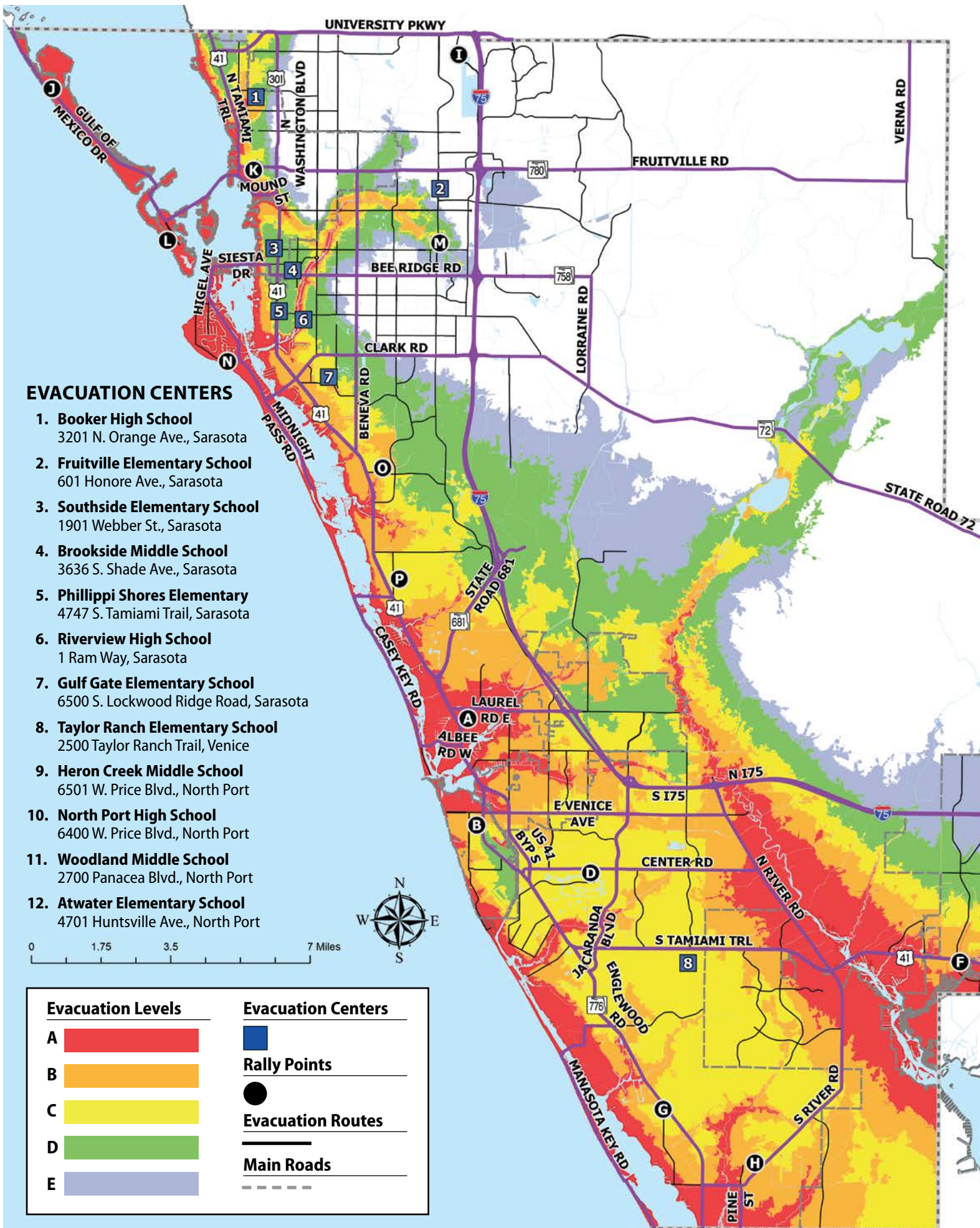
HOW TO GET TO AN EVACUATION CENTER

- **Personal transportation.**
- **Breeze Transit:** visit scgov.net for schedules.
- **Get to a transportation rally point.**

For those who cannot drive or otherwise be transported by family, friends or neighbors, Sarasota County will provide last-resort, free bus transportation for you and your pets (along with a limited amount of supplies) to and from a general population, evacuation center. Transportation will be offered at designated rally points throughout the county.

If you cannot drive to a rally point:

- ▶ Visit scgov.net (**keywords evacuation centers**) NOW to complete the online registration form.
- ▶ The form will include guidance for those who cannot drive or walk to a designated rally point.



EVACUATION CENTERS

- 1. **Booker High School**
3201 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota
- 2. **Fruitville Elementary School**
601 Honore Ave., Sarasota
- 3. **Southside Elementary School**
1901 Webber St., Sarasota
- 4. **Brookside Middle School**
3636 S. Shade Ave., Sarasota
- 5. **Phillippi Shores Elementary**
4747 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota
- 6. **Riverview High School**
1 Ram Way, Sarasota
- 7. **Gulf Gate Elementary School**
6500 S. Lockwood Ridge Road, Sarasota
- 8. **Taylor Ranch Elementary School**
2500 Taylor Ranch Trail, Venice
- 9. **Heron Creek Middle School**
6501 W. Price Blvd., North Port
- 10. **North Port High School**
6400 W. Price Blvd., North Port
- 11. **Woodland Middle School**
2700 Panacea Blvd., North Port
- 12. **Atwater Elementary School**
4701 Huntsville Ave., North Port

Evacuation Levels

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E

Evacuation Centers

- Rally Points
- Evacuation Routes
- Main Roads



EVACUATION MAP

There are **FOUR WAYS** to get to an evacuation center:

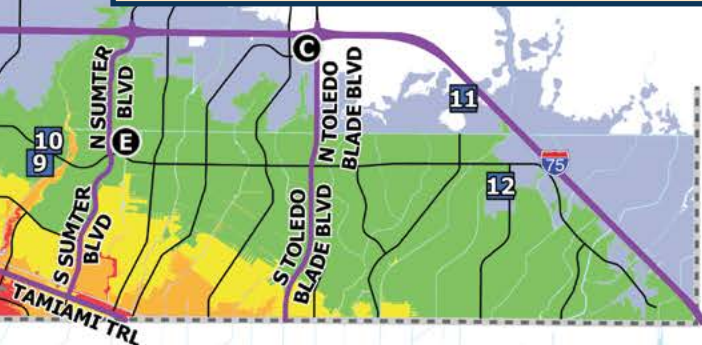
1. Take personal transportation.
2. Use Breeze Transit service.
Visit scgov.net for schedules.
3. Drive to a transportation rally point or evacuation center.
4. **AS A LAST-RESORT** for those who cannot drive or be transported by family, friends or neighbors, Sarasota County will provide free transportation to designated rally points.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR TRANSPORT TO A RALLY POINT.

Visit scgov.net (keywords evacuation centers) NOW to complete the online registration form. **All county libraries are available to help with online registration** for those without a computer, or call **311** to register.

Residents who register will receive an automated telephone message with information about when they will be picked up.

Pre-registration will stop 72 hours before landfall.



RALLY POINTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Laurel Park
509 Collins Road, Nokomis</p> <p>B. Venice Community Center
326 Nokomis Ave. S., Venice</p> <p>C. Suncoast Technical College
4675 Career Lane, North Port</p> <p>D. Garden Elementary School
700 Center Road, Venice</p> <p>E. George Mullen Activity Center
1602 Kramer Way, North Port</p> <p>F. North Port Library
13800 Tamiami Trail, North Port</p> <p>G. Buchan Airport Community Park
1390 Old Englewood Road, Englewood</p> <p>H. Englewood Sports Complex
1300 S. River Road, Englewood</p> | <p>I. Breeze Transit UTC Transfer Station
Mall at University Town Center
500 North Cattlemen Road, Sarasota</p> <p>J. Publix Super Market at Shoppes of Bay Isles
525 Bay Isles Parkway, Longboat Key</p> <p>K. Breeze Transit Downtown Transfer Station
150 N. Lemon Ave., Sarasota</p> <p>L. Lido Public Beach
400 Benjamin Franklin Drive, Sarasota</p> <p>M. Colonial Oaks Park
5300 Colonial Oaks Blvd., Sarasota</p> <p>N. Siesta Public Beach
948 Beach Road, Sarasota</p> <p>O. Potter Park
8587 Potter Park Drive, Sarasota</p> <p>P. Pine View School
1 Python Path, Osprey</p> |
|---|---|

RALLY POINT GUIDELINES

Baggage is limited to two carry-on sized bags per person that can be stored under a seat or held in lap.

Pets must be in a crate or carrier. Bring all pet supplies.

Passengers cannot specify what evacuation center they will be transported to.

All transportation will cease when landfall is expected within eight hours.

IMPORTANT: Rally points may change depending on the severity of a storm.

DID YOU KNOW?

Storm surge flooding is often the greatest threat to life and property. It directly accounts for about half of the deaths associated with tropical storms and hurricanes.

Learn more about how storm surge can impact coastal properties on **Page 4** of this guide.

TO FIND YOUR EVACUATION LEVEL
scgov.net/beprepared



AFTER THE STORM



The longest and hardest part of dealing with a tropical storm or hurricane is the recovery. It may take several days for relief supplies and other aid to arrive. Listen to local media for re-entry information. Some damage may not be readily apparent, so keep these things in mind for your safety.

POWER OUTAGES

- ▶ Avoid flooded and debris-laden areas that may be hiding downed lines.
- ▶ Assume all cables and wires are energized. Report downed wires to your utility company.
- ▶ Turn appliances that may have been on when the power went out to the off position, and turn off the main breaker until you are sure the system is safe.
- ▶ If you suspect there is water in the walls or ceiling, stay away from electrical outlets and contact a licensed electrician.
- ▶ Don't trim trees or remove debris located near downed power lines.

WILDLIFE AND INSECTS

- ▶ Fire ants, bees, wasps, snakes, rodents and wild animals will seek refuge from flood waters. Check for any breaches in structures that may allow them entry.

FOOD SAFETY

- ▶ Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container that has come into contact with flood water.
- ▶ Discard any food in damaged cans.
- ▶ Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours if it is unopened. Discard all refrigerated perishable foods after four hours without power.
- ▶ A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed).
- ▶ Dispose of food in small plastic garbage bags; tie or seal and place in a larger bag or can outdoors.

CHAINSaws

- ▶ Avoid downed or dangling power lines when clearing fallen trees.
- ▶ Call professionals to remove large, uprooted trees or trees in danger of falling over.
- ▶ Use proper safety equipment (heavy gloves, safety goggles, heavy boots, long-sleeve shirts and long pants).
- ▶ Tie back long hair to maintain full visibility and prevent entanglement.

HEAT EMERGENCIES

After a storm, loss of air conditioning and/or storm debris cleanup can cause heat cramps, heat exhaustion or heat stroke. To prevent heat emergencies:

- ▶ Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.
- ▶ Rest frequently and seek shade when possible.
- ▶ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ▶ Be especially careful if you are taking prescriptions that impair heat regulation, or if you are overweight or elderly.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a heat emergency:

- ▶ Remove the victim from the heat and have them lie down.
- ▶ Apply cool compresses, elevate the feet, give fluids and use a fan to blow cool air.
- ▶ Call 911.

WATER PRECAUTIONS

- ▶ Treat all water (including well water) as unsafe until you are notified that it is safe.
- ▶ Disinfect tap water you use for anything, including for your pets. Boil it for at least 10 minutes, or use chemicals (two drops of chlorine bleach per quart of water). Let the water sit at least 30 minutes before drinking.
- ▶ If you wash dishes in tap water, rinse in extra-chlorinated water.
- ▶ Wastewater lift stations may be without power. This will affect toilets and sink drainage. Avoid running dishwashers and clothes washers, and limit the amount of water used for showering, until lift stations are fully operational.
- ▶ If your well has been flooded, call the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County at 941-861-6133 for information on bacteriological testing.

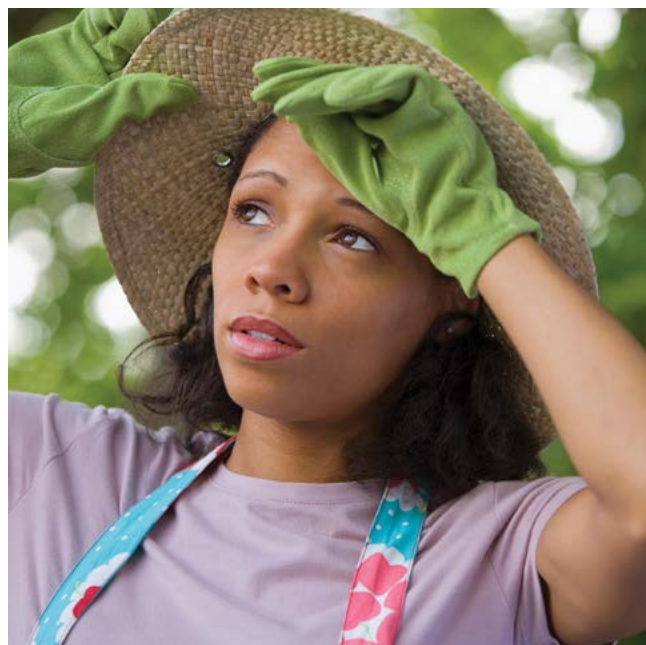
MOSQUITOES

Storms can cause flooding through surge and rain. Floods often leave behind standing water that creates a breeding ground for mosquitos.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites:

- ▶ Place netting around living areas.
- ▶ Create airflow with portable fans.
- ▶ Use repellants with CDC-recommended active ingredients. Visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information.
- ▶ Dress in the three "L"s: long, loose, light.
- ▶ As much as possible, avoid outside activities at night and early morning.

Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services and the state of Florida will conduct surveillance to determine the extent of mosquito treatment needed after a major weather event. Not all mosquitoes are capable of transmitting disease, and those more likely to make us sick are of higher concern. Staff will use a variety of methods to lower mosquito populations, including aerial and ground treatments, larval controls and distribution of natural predators like mosquitofish.



STORM DEBRIS



BEFORE THE STORM

Prevent storm debris by preparing your property for hurricane season (June 1 – Nov. 30). You can help reduce a storm's impact by cutting back trees and vegetation from power lines or other areas that could damage your home and property. Move all outside furniture and decorations inside when a storm is approaching our area.

Depending on the severity of the storm, residents should anticipate delays, and possibly suspension in their regular collection services including trash, recycling and yard waste. Delays and/or suspension may occur before and after a storm.

If you live within the city limits of Sarasota, Venice or North Port, or the Town of Longboat Key, you will need to contact your jurisdiction to determine when your garbage is collected. Processes may vary between unincorporated Sarasota County and local municipalities.

Garbage collection:

- ▶ Sarasota County: **311**
- ▶ City of North Port: 941-240-8050
- ▶ City of Sarasota: 941-365-7651
- ▶ City of Venice: 941-486-2422
- ▶ Town of Longboat Key: 941-316-1988

AFTER THE STORM

Instructions for **how to prepare storm debris will be released via Sarasota County's website (scgov.net)** and its social media accounts as soon as possible after a thorough damage assessment by emergency responders. Some items may be eligible for bulk collection at the curb, requiring minimal preparation, while other items will need to be properly prepared for regular curbside collection. After a major storm event, yard waste associated with land clearing and landscape improvement activities is not eligible for collection; disposal of this type of debris is the responsibility of the property owner at the property owner's expense.

It's important to separate your debris into the following categories for collection:

- ▶ Garbage: including spoiled food in containers, or double bagged.
- ▶ Household goods: furniture, clothes, books, toys and carpet.
- ▶ Vegetative: tree limbs and trunks.
Note: Small branches and leaves are not considered storm debris. They should be prepared for regular curbside collection.
- ▶ Appliances: refrigerators, water heaters, televisions and computers.
- ▶ Construction materials: drywall, roof shingles, aluminum.



PLEASE NOTE: In 2022, Sarasota County collected 3.3 million cubic yards of debris from Hurricane Ian. After any major event, it will take time to reach all areas of the county for collection. Depending on the extent of storm damage, debris removal may require multiple passes to complete.

Avoid stacking debris:

- ▶ Near utility poles.
- ▶ Under power lines.
- ▶ On top of water meters or other water connections.
- ▶ Near fire hydrants.
- ▶ Near vehicles.
- ▶ Next to mailboxes or fences.
- ▶ On storm drains.
- ▶ In the street.
- ▶ Do not place damaged fences, garbage, or other items close to vegetative storm debris piles because it interferes with removal crews and operations.

Priority access for the county landfill:

As soon as the landfill can open after a storm, priority access will be given in the following order:

- ▶ Disposal of spoiled food from shelters, food stores and restaurants.
- ▶ Contracted haulers for Sarasota County, the cities of Sarasota, Venice, North Port and Town of Longboat Key.
- ▶ Debris contractors.
- ▶ Local residents and businesses.

If you hire a contractor to perform any type of work involving debris:

The contractor is responsible for disposal of the debris from the property. Once a contractor prepares debris on a residential property, the debris is considered commercial material and is no longer eligible for pick up by debris contractors. The contractor performing the services is required to dispose of debris properly; they cannot place it in the road's right-of-way.

PRIVATE ROADS AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

Residents who live on a private road must grant the county the right to enter the roadway for debris removal PRIOR to any debris removal. This requires a completed Right-of-Entry Form that is signed by the legal owner of the road or a legal representative, such as a homeowners association.

A completed Right-of-Entry Form form must be filed after each storm event.

PLEASE NOTE: Sarasota County will not enter private property to remove debris. Residents are responsible for getting all debris to the curb/right-of-way for pickup. To learn more about debris removal on private roads or to obtain the Right-of-Entry Form, call Sarasota County at **311**.

GENERATORS, CONTRACTOR FRAUD AND HAZARD MITIGATION

GENERATORS

Generators provide power to your home or business during a power outage or shortage, but they require special precautions.

1. Place generators at least 20 feet away from your home and position them away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to enter a building. Exhaust fumes are deadly.
2. Always store fuel safely outside, in labeled, approved containers.
3. Determine if you need a stationary (whole house) appliance or a portable or stationary generator.
4. Stationary generators run off gas utility lines or an LP tank and supply electrical power to pre-selected circuits. They **MUST** be professionally installed by a licensed electrician.
5. Determine if you need multiple outlets or multiple types of outlets on your generator.
6. **NEVER** connect a portable generator to building wiring. There is an extreme danger of generator back-feed for the public (downed wires etc.) and utility workers. Plug appliances directly into the generator.
7. Before refueling your generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Check the oil every time you add gas. Keep generators dry.
8. Conserve fuel by limiting use of appliances.

CONTRACTOR FRAUD

1. Hire only licensed contractors. Be cautious of anyone coming to your home uninvited and offering to do home repairs. View contractor licenses at myfloridalicense.com.
2. Obtain a written estimate or contract. Insist on start/completion dates and payment terms in the contract. Do not pay for any services until repair work is completed. **NEVER** pay with cash.

3. Permits are required for any kind of demolition or permanent repairs, reconstruction, roofing or filling. Contact your local building department for information on required building permits.
4. Do not pull permits for a contractor. This may indicate they are not properly licensed.
5. If you suspect a contractor of potential fraud, contact the State of Florida Consumer Fraud hotline at 866-966-7226.

HAZARD MITIGATION

Preventing damage is less expensive than restoring damaged property. Hazard mitigation is taking sustained actions to eliminate or reduce future risk to people and property.

1. Elevate your building above flood levels by placing it on stilts, pier foundations or a raised platform. Install flood barriers and wet/dry floodproofing. Construct a waterproof wall or sandbag your home's perimeter. Elevate electrical panels and air conditioners above flood levels.
2. Tie down the building to its foundation. Anchor manufactured homes, trailers, boats and any detached items that could cause damage in high winds.
3. Install reinforced, impact-resistant doors, laminated windows, storm-resistant windows or hurricane shutters, pull-down PVC shutter systems and high-impact synthetic window shades.
4. Prevent penetration of moisture with sealants, waterproof membranes, house wrap, rainscreen systems. Use mold and mildew-resistant materials.
5. Ask your insurance agent if you receive discounts for making mitigation measures to your home or business.
6. Rebuild responsibly. Be aware of substantial damage and substantial improvement rules. For details, visit scgov.net (**keyword: substantial**).

SECURING ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND DATA

The electronic devices you use at home and in the office receive the latest news, speak to our loved ones and call for help. Data inside these devices operate businesses, monitor properties and store important records. Without question, it is much more difficult to return to home and work life after a storm has passed if these technologies have failed and if important records are lost. Do not leave your data and devices to chance.

These tips can help you secure electronic devices and digital information from hurricanes and other disasters:

- 1. Schedule regular backups of your personal and workplace data and devices.** Hurricane season should not be your cue to prepare, as anything could happen to your home or office throughout the year. Use the start of hurricane season as a reminder to confirm that automatic backups are working properly. This is extremely important for business owners and anyone who relies on files and data to operate that business after the storm has passed.
- 2. Scan important paperwork and documents** into a digital format, using a scanner, a handheld camera or a free smartphone app that digitizes documents.
- 3. Take before-and-after photos and videos of your home, business, furniture and valuables.** These records will be important when making an insurance claim.
- 4. Back up your digital data and files to an external hard drive or USB flash drive.** These backup drives become a portable copy of your data that you can take with you if you evacuate.
- 5. Back up your data and files to a cloud-based server.** Uploading "to the cloud" provides an added layer of protection in case something happens to your phone, computer or backup drives. Cloud-based protection secures your information online and makes it easy to restore to the original or a replacement device.
- 6. After everything is backed up digitally, store all important documents and keepsakes in a fire-safe, waterproof container that is easily portable.** This includes birth certificates and passports, or irreplaceable keepsakes like family photo albums.
- 7. Place electronic devices in high and dry locations away from windows.** Water is an obvious enemy of electronic technology. Even the smallest amount of water can ruin your device.
- 8. Make sure electronic devices are unplugged during a storm.** Power outages and lightning strikes can cause major damage to devices, computers, servers and televisions. Charge portable battery packs before the storm so you can avoid having to plug in any devices.
- 9. Limit the use of electronics until the storm has passed and power is stabilized.** Turn off and unplug devices to prevent power surge damage and battery drain. You may need to make an emergency call during or after the storm, so you need to conserve your battery life.
- 10. Your disaster supply kit should contain a battery-powered radio with plenty of extra batteries.** This will allow you to tune in to radio broadcasts for storm tracking and important safety updates from the Sarasota County Emergency Operations Center and NOAA Weather Radio.

MORE RESOURCES TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER

- ▶ flash.org (Federal Alliance for Safe Homes)
- ▶ FLASH toll-free at 877-221-SAFE (7233)
- ▶ mysafeflorida.org
- ▶ floodsmart.gov
- ▶ disastersafety.org
- ▶ fema.gov/grants/mitigation
- ▶ myfloridacfo.com

PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Department of Labor, 68% of small-business owners do not have a written disaster recovery plan.

Here's what happens after a natural disaster to businesses without a plan.

IMMEDIATELY	1 YEAR LATER	3 YEARS LATER
40% won't reopen	25% will close	75% will fail

All businesses should have a disaster plan to communicate with employees, local authorities, customers and others during and after a disaster.

Suggestions to prepare your business:

- ▶ Provide employees with information on when, if and how to report to work following an emergency.
- ▶ Set up a telephone call tree, a password-protected page on the company website, an email alert or a call-in voice recording to communicate with employees.
- ▶ Store valuable information in fire/waterproof containers, off-site and away from the storm's path.
- ▶ Evaluate your insurance coverage to ensure it will allow your business to fully recover after a storm. Keep your policy in a location off-site.
- ▶ Maintain a video or pictures of your office/equipment prior to a disaster.
- ▶ Have a supply of spare parts and alternative power supplies.
- ▶ Locate alternate work sites and moving companies.
- ▶ Ensure that there are written procedures in place, lists of customers, vendors, inventory, calendars and schedules; and that this information and location is shared with other employees who will be needed to get the business back in operation.
- ▶ Unplug equipment during major storms.



- ▶ Encourage employees to have a workplace survival kit.
- ▶ Complete a business disaster recovery plan. You can find a sample business emergency plan at ready.gov/business or FloridaDisaster.org.

IF MY BUSINESS IS DAMAGED, HOW DO I GET HELP?



INSURANCE

Insurance companies will send special disaster assistance teams, as will the state and federal government, to perform damage assessments.

To prepare for a claim:

- ▶ Take pictures of the damage, both to the property and its contents.
- ▶ Have all your insurance documents ready.
- ▶ Do not pay for any services until repair work has been completed.

HIRE ONLY LICENSED CONTRACTORS

Unlicensed contracting is a felony during a state of emergency. To verify a contractor's license, or to file a complaint against a contractor:

- ▶ Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), call **850-487-1395** or visit **MyFloridaLicense.com**
- ▶ Sarasota County Planning and Development Services, Building and Permitting cal **311** or email **licensing@scgov.net**

COMMERCIAL DEBRIS REMOVAL

Debris from commercial establishments is the responsibility of the property owner. Commercial property owners should contact their insurance company or the **FEMA Small Business Assistance Program** for assistance with debris removal.

Avoid stacking debris after a storm event:

- ▶ Near utility poles.
- ▶ Under power lines.
- ▶ On top of water meters or other water connections.
- ▶ Near fire hydrants.
- ▶ Near vehicles.
- ▶ Next to mailboxes or fences.
- ▶ On storm drains.
- ▶ In the street.

If you hire a contractor to perform any type of work involving debris, the contractor is responsible for disposal of the debris. Contractors are required by law to dispose of debris properly; they cannot place it in the road's right-of-way. This doesn't apply to work performed by faith-based organizations and volunteers.

- ▶ Federal Emergency Management Administration: **fema.gov**
- ▶ Small Business Administration: **sba.gov**
- ▶ Doing Business in Sarasota County



MEDICAL NEEDS PROGRAM



Sarasota County residents with qualifying medical needs are encouraged to apply for registration as a medically dependent person. It is important to apply in advance for the Medical Needs Program so, if qualified, you will be on the county's registry for transportation and sheltering at a medically dependent evacuation center during a disaster.

Register online or download a paper application at scgov.net/MedicalNeedsProgram. For questions about how to register, call 311.

It is important to register early. Paper applications for medically dependent registration will be stopped at 120 hours prior to potential impact from a storm, and all online applications will stop at 72 hours prior to impact from a storm or hurricane.

You may bring your spouse/significant other and dependents (limited to high school age and below, living in the same household), along with one caregiver who is prepared to:

- ▶ Help with (and lift you to/from) a toilet, cot and/or wheelchair/walker.
- ▶ Transport your food from the cafeteria, if needed.
- ▶ Help with medication and any treatments.
- ▶ Monitor your oxygen usage.
- ▶ Provide the evacuation center management with a discharge plan in the event that you cannot return to your home.
- ▶ Household members may not be housed in the same room as you.
- ▶ Bedding/cots are only available to registered medically dependent persons.
- ▶ Be sure to leave your answering machine or porch light on prior to evacuating to help determine if your electric has been restored.

WHAT TO BRING TO A MEDICALLY DEPENDENT EVACUATION CENTER

- ▶ Pillow and quilt or heavier blanket.
- ▶ Two weeks of medications.
- ▶ Oxygen concentrator and extra small “travel” bottles of oxygen, if applicable.
- ▶ Your walker/cane, wheelchair or electric scooter (with charger), as applicable.
- ▶ Medical equipment/supplies (sharps container, catheters, incontinence supplies, c-pap).
- ▶ Special dietary needs, in a cooler.
- ▶ List of current medications.
- ▶ Extra batteries for phones and personal electronic devices.
- ▶ Insurance, Medicare or Medicaid cards, driver’s license or photo ID.
- ▶ Book or electronic entertainment items with headphones and chargers.
- ▶ Change of clothing with layers for comfort.
- ▶ Personal hygiene items.
- ▶ Games/books.

IMPORTANT

Label (name and phone number) all equipment and belongings. If you suffer from pet allergies, be aware that you may be exposed to domestic animals located inside evacuation centers. Every effort will be made to assist with limiting the exposure, but cannot be guaranteed.

IF YOU HAVE A PET

Upon acceptance into the Medical Needs Program, you will be assigned an evacuation center and informed of that center’s pet policy.

- ▶ Pets that are accepted will be kept in a separate area.
- ▶ All pets must be current on vaccinations and have all necessary supplies (crate, food, etc.).
- ▶ If you do not wish to be separated from your pet, consider evacuating to a pet-friendly hotel outside of the evacuation zone.
- ▶ Staff will be available to assist with pet care, if needed.



OTHER TYPES OF DISASTERS

Disasters come in all shapes and sizes. When you think of your safety, think beyond the next storm.

FIRE SAFETY

- 1. PLAN:** The time to plan for a fire emergency is now. Take a few minutes to discuss with your family or coworkers what actions you will need to take as you make your disaster plan for your family or business. Test smoke alarms in your home and business monthly. Collect contact information in case of evacuation.
- 2. EVACUATION PLAN:** Decide where you will go and how you will get there. Unlike evacuating for a hurricane, with fire you may only have a moment's notice. Have at least two escape routes out of your home. Have a plan for evacuating your pets or service animals.
- 3. FIRE DRILLS:** Make sure everyone knows at least two escape routes from your home or business and practice regularly.

RIP CURRENTS

1. Do not swim against the current.
2. Stay calmly afloat and signal for help.
3. Escape the current by swimming parallel to the shoreline.
4. When outside of the rip current, swim at an angle away from the current toward the shore.

PANDEMIC DISEASE

1. Prevention is key. Get routine flu shots and other vaccinations.
2. Wash hands often and thoroughly with soap and water.
3. Stay home when you are ill. Employers and schools should encourage this policy.
4. Avoid contact with sick people.
5. If ill, cover your mouth and nose with a face mask when around others.
6. Follow guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding safety protocols.

SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR

- 1. SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.** Call local law enforcement, then Florida's toll-free hotline 1-855-352-7233 (1-855-FLA-SAFE) to report any suspicious activity.
2. Be prepared to provide the exact location and as much detail as you can provide about the threat or danger you observed.
3. If it is an emergency, dial 911!

ACTIVE SHOOTER

1. Run if there is an easy escape path to evacuate the area. Leave your belongings behind. Move as quickly as you can and create as much distance between you and the threat as possible.
2. If running is not possible, find a place to hide from the shooter.
3. As a last resort, fight if you are not able to run or hide.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

IF YOU ARE TOLD TO EVACUATE:

1. Stay calm. Quickly gather what you will need, unless you are told to leave immediately.
2. Evacuate outside of the vulnerable area. Move to a place/shelter designated by local officials.
3. Keep car windows and air vents closed. Do not use the air conditioner until you are out of the evacuation area.

IF YOU ARE TOLD TO STAY INDOORS AND SHELTER IN PLACE:

1. Bring pets indoors. Close all doors and windows. Seal all gaps under doorways and windows with damp towels and duct tape. Turn off heating, cooling or ventilation systems.
2. If air quality is at risk, cover your nose and mouth with a damp handkerchief or other cloth folded over several times.
3. Stay inside until local officials declare that the threat has subsided.

Visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for more information about preparing for disasters.



DISASTER SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST

GENERAL

- Two week minimum supply of medication, regularly used medical supplies, and a list of allergies
- A list of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices
- Batteries -
Do not use candles
- Flashlights
- NOAA Weather Radio -
Battery operated or hand cranked
- Cash - Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm
- Cell phone chargers
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

PHONE NUMBERS

- Maintain a list of important phone numbers including:
County emergency management office, evacuation sites, doctors, banks, schools, veterinarian, a number for out of town contacts, friends and family

CLOTHING

- Rain gear such as jackets, hats, umbrellas and rain boots
- Sturdy shoes or boots and work gloves

SPECIAL NEEDS ITEMS

- Specialty items for infants, small children, the elderly, and family members with disabilities

FIRST AID

- First Aid Manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
- Sterile gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sewing needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Disinfectant wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Thermometer
- Tube of petroleum jelly
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or other pain reliever
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Antacid
- Laxative
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips

FOOD AND WATER

- Food - Nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, babyfood, and any special dietary items to last at least 7 days
- Water - *1 gallon per person per day*
- Non-electric can opener
- Paper plates
- Napkins
- Plastic cups
- Utensils

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- Insurance cards
- Medical records
- Banking information
- Credit card numbers
- Copies of social security cards
- Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
- Other personal documents
- Set of car, house, and office keys
- Service animal I.D., veterinary records, and proof of ownership
- Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug, and dosage
- Copy of Will

**Items should be kept in a water proof container*

VEHICLE

- Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline

PET CARE ITEMS

- Pet food and water to last at least 7 days
- Proper identification
- Medical records/microchip information
- A carrier or cage
- Muzzle and leash
- Water and food bowls
- Medications
- Supplies for your service animal

**FIND MORE DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS TIPS AT
FloridaDisaster.org**



Sarasota County

1660 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34236

Call 311
scgov.net

Follow us
@SRQCountyGov
@scgovEOC

Learn more about
emergency preparedness at
scgov.net/beprepared,
or **scan the code.**

