Hurricane Preparedness:
A Guide for Hospice Patients & Caregivers

Hurricane Season is
June 1 - November 30

My Hurricane Plan
My Hurricane Plan

My name: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

My direct caregiver’s name(s): ____________________________________________________________________________________________

My hospice provider Team Member names and contact information are:

You are on the _________________________________________________________Team

RN Case Manager Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

Social Worker: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

Chaplain: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

My emergency contact person and their contact information:

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

If there is an evacuation ordered, I will go to (location name, address, & phone #):

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

I am registered with their local emergency management office:
☐ YES  ☐ NO

I have pets:
☐ YES  ☐ NO

If yes, list the pet’s disaster plan:

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Additional notes regarding my hurricane plan:

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
**Introduction**

Hurricane preparation for hospice patients and their caregivers can present special challenges. We have developed this booklet especially for you in hopes that it answers your specific questions and alleviates any concerns you may have regarding preparation and evacuation in the event of a hurricane.

Many hospice patients and their providers have experienced severe storms in the past and have survived the damage and loss of property that has occurred during previous hurricane seasons. As Floridians, we have experience in such matters.

It is from these lessons that we have turned our attention toward the need to prepare our hospice patients and their caregivers for such emergencies.

Any season can bring disaster. Winter storms or summer heat waves can impact your ability to get to the store for food or medication. Even a simple water main break can leave you without vital water for a few days. Being prepared in advance is the key.

The following is a brief checklist of actions you can take before, during, and after a hurricane strikes. Check this list each spring to be better prepared for the hurricane season.

Please read through this booklet and discuss any things that are specific to your situation and needs with your hospice team.
Build a Disaster Supply Kit

It’s a good idea to stock a supply of food, water, and supplies for an emergency. It is usually recommended to have at least one week’s worth of supplies on hand. The following items should be considered as part of your basic disaster supply kit:

Water
Each person’s need for drinking water varies, depending on age, physical condition, and time of year. A good rule of thumb is to keep a gallon of water per person, per day for a week for drinking and for sanitation. Store water in plastic, airtight containers and replace every two months to be sure it is pure.

Food
Supplies should include enough nonperishable, high-energy foods to feed you and your family for up to seven days. You may be stranded in your home for several days or local stores may run low on supplies. Also, if you go to a public shelter, it is helpful to take as much non-perishable food as you can carry.

Suggested Foods:

** Include a manual can opener for food

- Whole dry milk
- Canned fruit juices
- Canned meats and fish or tuna
- Meat substitutes, like beans and nuts
- Peanut butter
- Dried fruits
- Dry cereals, bread and crackers
- Granola bars or cookies
- Any special dietary needs

Rotate Supplies

Review and change out your supplies before and after hurricane season each year to ensure your information is up to date, and you have enough food that your whole family will like to eat if necessary.
**Other Documents, Supplies and Equipment:**

Consider gathering the following items to ensure your key documents and papers are available and you have other items for your comfort and well-being:

- **Important family documents and insurance policies, identification, etc.**
- Battery-operated radio with weather band *(make sure batteries still work)*
- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Paper plates and utensils, including a bottle and manual can opener
- Toiletry articles and sanitary items
- Moist towelettes
- Garbage bags and plastic ties
- Extra batteries *(make sure batteries still work)*
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities if needed
- Change of clothes
- Waterproof matches in a waterproof container
- Cell phones with inverter or solar chargers
- Other items related to the daily care of the hospice patient
- Cash
- Paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Whistle to signal for help
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities
- Paper and pen/pencil
Special Needs
By evaluating your own personal needs, inventory what you use every day to live independently. Identify the essential items you will need for at least three days. Stock custom essentials in your kit like:

- Prescription medications
- Glasses
- Durable medical equipment
- Assistive technology
- List of medications
- Contact information for doctors
- Have a method to communicate your impairments and needs

Pet Disaster Supply Kit
Don’t forget to keep necessary items for your pets as part of your disaster supply kit or in case you need to evacuate to a pet-friendly shelter. You will need these items:

- Extra pet food
- Current rabies vaccination certificate
- Shot records
- Leash and collar
- County animal license tags
- Medications
- Crate or cage for each animal
- Cleaning supplies
- Newspaper or pet pad
- Comfort items for your pets
Plan for Evacuation

Even though you have emergency supplies, don’t make the mistake of trying to “ride out” a hurricane at home. EVACUATE if local authorities tell you to do so, especially if you live in low-lying areas which could be easily flooded.

Leave early before roads become jammed or flooded and you can’t get out. Your hospice provider can assist in coordinating transportation to a shelter through the local emergency management office. You can also call a local senior citizens group, your church, or your community emergency management office for help in arranging transportation.

It is most important for your hospice provider to have the contact information for the individual or location to which you are evacuating so they can remain up to date regarding your care and your whereabouts.

When you evacuate, you may wish to take some of the supplies listed previously with you, but don’t take more than you can carry. If you are going to a special needs shelter, the most important items to take are your medication, a blanket, the portable radio, an extra change of clothing and perhaps a small supply of packaged quick-energy foods like raisins and granola bars.

Plan ahead to make evacuation easier. Keep your hospice provider abreast of any change in plans regarding your evacuation. Your hospice provider cannot assist or care for you if they cannot locate you. Plan your evacuation together. If possible, make plans in advance to stay with friends or relatives living inland on higher ground if you need to evacuate. Know what your destination will be in advance. Learn the recommended evacuation route from your home to safer, higher ground. Local broadcasts will tell you where to go during an evacuation, but you can learn the safest route ahead of time by watching for a pre-season distribution of a local evacuation plan or by calling your local emergency management office.

Snakes, animals, and insects instinctively travel inland to higher ground to escape approaching flood waters. Expect them and be prepared to protect yourself. Careful planning and quick response to a hurricane threat will reduce damage to your home and could save your life. Most importantly, you must evacuate if you are told to do so by local officials. Material possessions are replaceable; your life is not. Take action now to be better prepared for hurricane season.
My Hurricane Plan

Be Aware of Changing Weather Condition

Listen to daily weather forecasts during hurricane season. As hurricanes develop, they are monitored closely by the National Weather Service. The National Weather Service issues two types of notices about approaching hurricanes.

A hurricane watch means a hurricane may threaten coastal and inland areas, and that hurricane conditions are a real possibility; it does not mean they are imminent. However, you should take preparatory action. The hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds. At this point, you should be initiating proactive measures you have set in your disaster plan.

When a watch is issued for your area, you should:

- Stay tuned to local stations for the latest weather information.
- Contact your hospice staff to review your plans. Be sure you have transportation arranged through your hospice (via the local emergency management office) or contact the person who agreed to assist you in an evacuation to re-confirm your arrangements.
- Gather your emergency supplies, placing them near the front door. Be sure that all objects on your lawn or patio which could be picked up and carried away by the wind are stored in advance. Lawn furniture, garbage cans, garden tools, toys, signs, and a number of other harmless items can become deadly missiles in hurricane winds.
- Gather important papers in your home such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, insurance policies, deeds, etc. Place them in a water proof container with your non-perishable food supply or in your safety deposit box.
- Caretakers of patients that are unable to care for themselves should remember to also plan for their own needs as well as their loved one.

A hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance when the anticipated onset of tropical storm-force winds are expected. A hurricane warning may also include an assessment of flood danger in coastal and inland areas, small craft warnings, gale warnings, and recommended emergency procedures. At this point you should be completing proactive measure set in your hurricane plan.
When a Storm Threatens

If a **HURRICANE WARNING** is issued for your area and an evacuation is ordered, local radio and television stations will make the announcement. Don’t panic if you cannot get transportation right away. In a hurricane evacuation, local emergency services personnel or police usually patrol each street to warn those people who may not have a radio or television. You can stop one of these officers and they will help you. **Leave early!** Do not wait, especially in low-lying areas. Roads can flood quickly, leaving you stranded.

During The Hurricane

If you are unable to evacuate before the hurricane hits, stay inside. Do not be fooled by the eye of the hurricane and its temporary period of peaceful weather conditions. The length of time within the eye varies from several minutes to a couple of hours, depending on the size of the storm. The larger and more intense the hurricane, the larger the eye will be. Stay away from windows and glass doors. You could be struck by flying debris. Continue to listen to your radio or television for hurricane updates and emergency information.

After The Hurricane

Local authorities will announce when it is safe to return to your home. Stay tuned to local stations for current information. If you have been transported to a special needs shelter, it may be necessary to arrange for transportation to return to your home. Do not panic. Simply contact your hospice provider to make appropriate arrangements.

When you get home, look for visible structural damage before you go inside. Watch for loose or dangling electrical power lines and broken sewer, water or gas lines. Notify local officials immediately if you see any of these or any other dangers. Make sure all electrical outlets and appliances are dry and free of water before using them. Do not drink water from the faucet until officially notified it is safe from contamination. Use your emergency supply or boil tap water before drinking it. Without electricity, food in your refrigerator could spoil in a few hours. Don’t eat it. Food in a freezer could partially thaw, but would be safe to eat for several days. Food should not be re-frozen once it begins to thaw.
Emergency and Hurricane Preparedness Resources

» brevardfl.gov/EmergencyManagement/BePrepared
» redcross.org/local/florida/central-florida
» FloridaDisaster.org