

Polk County Management Hurricane Preparedness Guide



Vanguard Management will do its best to inspect the properties, update and respond to residents, and execute relief where needed and as-needed with most needed receiving priority. Please be advised that managers and their families often leave when evacuations are recommended and our phone lines and abilities to communicate may be the cause of non-responsiveness and should not be construed as indifference. Your managers contact numbers will still work because they are ported through an out of state site. However, their circumstance may make them unavailable.

The following pages contain information about the preparations our residents should take in the event a hurricane threatens or strikes our Community.

Polk County Office of Emergency Management	(863) 294-5941
American Red Cross	
1890 Jim Keene Blvd	(863) 648-1515
United Way Information Referral Service	
Winter Haven, FL 33880	(863) 401-2234
Citizens Information Line (local emergency updates)	
Polk County Animal Services	Phone: (863) 298-7000 (863) 499-2600
Polk County Emergency Management	(863) 401-2234
http://www.polkcounty.net/emergency-management	
Polk County Fire Rescue (Fire/EMS)	(863) 519-7350
EMERGENCIES ONLY (Police/Fire/Ambulance)	911

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GETTING READY FOR THE HURRICANE

WHAT TO DO NOW:

- Be certain you have adequate insurance on your home and its contents. Review your insurance coverage in detail with your agent. Don't wait until there is a storm, many insurance companies put a freeze on issuing coverage when there is a named storm occurring.
- Ask your insurance agent or company what you can do to reduce your chance of loss, such as installing hurricane shutters, (Check with Governing Docs for guidelines).
- Photograph or videotape your home and contents for insurance purposes.
- Make copies of family and personal records.
- Do not assume that the local, State, or Federal governments will be able to provide for your needs. You must take steps to be self-sufficient. Be prepared: make sure you have food, clothing, medication, and other supplies available for a week or more. During an emergency or recovery operation, public agencies will be flooded with requests for assistance. Resources will be and should be directed to the most vulnerable and needy members of the greater community

WHEN A HURRICANE WATCH IS ISSUED:

- Keep tuned to a local radio or television station for the latest National Weather Service advisories, as well as special instructions from local government.
- Check battery-powered equipment. Your battery-operated radio could be your only source of information, and flashlights will be needed if utility services are interrupted. Buy extra batteries.
- Keep your car fueled should evacuation become necessary. Also, service stations may be inoperable after the storm strikes.
- Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, and bottles as the water system may be contaminated or damaged by the storm.
- Obtain extra prescription medications and medical supplies.
- Many people board their windows or protect them with storm shutters (Please check with your Governing Docs). Windows are broken mainly from wind driven debris. Wind pressure may break large windows, garage doors, and double entry doors. The taping of windows does not keep the glass from breaking; it merely keeps broken glass in a more confined area. If desired, install hurricane shutters/window boards on all unprotected windows. (Check your governing docs for guidelines). This may prevent tree limbs or debris from breaking windows.
- Secure outdoor objects that might become debris. Garbage cans, garden tools, garden ornaments, toys, signs, porch furniture, and a number of other harmless items become deadly missiles in hurricane winds.
- Be alert for tornado watches and warnings as tornadoes are often spawned by hurricanes. Should you receive a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately in an interior bathroom or small hall, preferably at or below ground level.
- Check for loose rain gutters and downspouts.

Hurricane Disaster Kit:

If your home does get damaged be prepared to leave quickly! Keep your disaster supply kit in a designated place and have it ready. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.

Items To Consider for your Disaster Supply Kit

- Cash and Credit Cards
- ID and Driver's License
- Insurance policy, Name of Agent and Telephone Number
- Cell Phone
- Inventory of household contents
- Copies of family and personal records including your insurance policies and the phone number of your insurance company and agent. Phone number(s) to report an insurance claim.
- Road maps
- List of temporary housing locations to include phone numbers
- Change of clothing (several days is advisable)
- Protective clothing & sturdy shoes
- Prescription medicines
- First Aid Kit and manual
- Whistle
- Fire Extinguisher (ABC Type). Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguisher(s).
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers
- Bottled water and canned beverages. You should store at least one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs at least one half gallon of water just for drinking.
 - o Children, nursing mothers, and ill people need more water
 - o Very hot temperatures can double the amount of water needed
 - o A medical emergency might require additional water
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils, including a can opener
- A five (5) day supply of non-perishable food
- Matches and waterproof container
- Sanitation and hygiene items (moist towelettes and toilet paper)
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Blankets and pillows
- A family communications plan. Your family may not be together when a storm hits, so plan how you will contact one another. Have contact information documented for each family member and make sure you let out-of town family members know where you are going in the event of an evacuation
- If you have a pet, see Pets Section for a list of pet supplies to consider.
- Copy of your property tax bill for proof of ownership if you are a non-resident and do not have a FL driver's license with a FL address.

WHEN A HURRICANE WARNING IS ISSUED:

Hurricane Advisories and coordination of storm-related matters is typically handled by Polk County Emergency Management and residents are advised to utilize their website for information: Please see links on front page.

- Move outdoor objects such as porch furniture, grill, garbage cans, hanging plants, etc, into garage or house. Store drinking water in clean containers and fill bathtubs with water should your community water supply be contaminated.
- Park extra vehicle(s) in garage if possible.
- Leave a message on your answering machine so relatives and friends know if you leave and where you are going. Know answering machine codes so you can retrieve messages and change recording.
- Move gas/barbecue grills to garage, and turn off gas at tank.
- Put up plywood covers over windows, if available.
- Close and secure outside window shutters, if available.
- Check storage yard for any loose items that may become airborne. Put trash cans in garage.
- Take a walk around your property to insure all moveable items are now inside your garage.

HURRICANE SHELTERS

There are several hurricane shelters in Polk County. Evacuees are reminded that pets are not allowed in most shelters because of health regulations. The shelter opening will be announced on the relevant county websites.

DURING THE HURRICANE

TAKE COVER

- Remain indoors during the hurricane. Blowing debris can injure and kill. Travel is extremely dangerous. Be especially aware of the “eye” of the hurricane. If the storm center passes directly overhead, there will be a lull in the wind lasting for a few minutes to a half hour or more. At the other side of the “eye”, the winds will increase rapidly to hurricane force and will come from the opposite direction.

FLOODS

- The floods and flash floods brought by the torrential rains of a hurricane are dangerous killers. Even though hurricanes weaken rapidly as they move inland, the remnants of the storm can bring 6 to 12 inches of rainfall to the area it crosses. The resulting floods have caused great damage and loss of life.

WINDS

- The winds of a hurricane (74 miles per hour or more) can be very dangerous. For some structures, wind force is sufficient to cause destruction. Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to hurricane winds that can spawn tornadoes, which contribute to incredible destruction. The greatest threat from hurricane winds is their cargo of debris—a deadly barrage of flying missiles such as lawn furniture, signs, roofing, trees, siding, etc.

If a hurricane hits, don't expect recovery to be quick or easy.

- State and Federal disaster assistance will seldom completely compensate you for all your losses. In many cases, the assistance will come in the form of a low-interest loan.

- All the important information you will need prior to and during a hurricane will be available from newspapers, radio, television, and weather alert monitors. Do not call 911 for information.
- After a storm, be wary of strangers who want to sell you something or do work on your property. Hurricanes bring out con artists and crooks. Follow the recommendations of your insurance company.

General Guidelines for Safety and Cleanup

DISASTER AFTERMATH

Bad storms can be both physically and mentally challenging. Disasters can be dangerous even after they are over. Take the time to be cautious with food, sanitation, and especially electricity. Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. (The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering—the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.)

Cleanup

- Begin cleanup of your property as soon as possible.
- Contact your insurance companies.
- If you must throw away valuables, take photographs of them for insurance purposes.
- Take pictures of exterior damage to structure and trees.
- If air conditioning is not available, open all doors and windows in the house to dry and ventilate.

Food and Water

- Avoid opening the refrigerator door unnecessarily.
- Do not drink untreated water from taps until officials give the all clear.
- Do not eat fresh food or use spices or utensils that have been contaminated by floodwaters.
- Eat the food most likely to spoil in your refrigerator first.
- If you suspect that food has spoiled, do not eat it.
- Conserve water used to cook with and for washing utensils. In a large cook pot, cook canned goods in their cans by opening them, removing the label, and placing them in 2 inches of gently boiling water. Use oven mitts to avoid burning hands when lifting cans from water. Reuse that water for another meal, but don't drink it.
- Disinfect water if that is the only source of drinking water available and boil for 5 minutes. Add 16 drops (1/4 teaspoon) of liquid chlorine bleach to a gallon, providing that the bleach contains hypochlorite as its only ingredient. Let the water stand, unopened, for one hour before drinking. Boil water from toilet (tank only) or bath for 5 minutes before using.

GENERAL SAFETY

- After floodwaters, wear rubber gloves when cleaning to avoid infection from sewage and other contaminants.
- Wear thick-soled shoes or sneakers at all times to avoid injury or possible infections from floodwaters.
- Do not smoke or light matches outdoors until you determine that there are no gas leaks in the area.
 - If you smell gas:
 - Immediately open windows and doors.
 - Turn off the main gas valve.
 - Do not start your car.
 - Leave the house.
 - Call Polk Fire Department
- Be careful when walking around outdoors, and watch out for downed power lines, debris, animals, snakes, and insects.
- Check any structure before entering. If you are not sure that it's safe, do not go in.

ELECTRICITY

Often during storms and for sometime after the power may be off:

- Do not turn on or touch electrical outlets or panel boxes if you are standing in water or if you are wet.
- Do not call the power company to report outages. Keep the lines clear so that emergency personnel can get through.
- If not already OFF, flip the main circuit breaker to the OFF position, and do the same with all other breakers in the box.
- Be sure that the main electrical connection to your house is not damaged. (This connection is located near the meter). If it is pulled away or damaged, an electrical repairman will have to fix it before the power company will reconnect.
- If you have not already done so, unplug any appliances that use motors, such as computers, TVs, refrigerators, VCRs, washers, dryers, hair dryers, etc. If there is something wrong with the power supply, they could be seriously damaged when power returns.
- Do not connect portable generators directly into the panel box — use extension cords plugged into the generator.

When you know the power has been restored:

- Flip the main breaker to the ON position.
- Then start flipping other circuits ON, one at a time. Start with the single breakers, which carry a lighter load. If the breaker stays in the ON position, it should be OK. (If it flips back to OFF, leave it there, because you'll need an electrician to fix it.)
- Next, turn on the breakers that are hooked together, which supply power to large appliances, such as heating, air conditioning, refrigeration, etc. Don't plug in any appliance yet. Go ahead and turn on the lights.
- Once the lights are on, try to determine if they are as bright as they used to be. If they seem dimmer, there could be a faulty connection in the negative (or ground) wiring in the house. This reduced power is what could destroy machines with motors. If the lights seem too dim, IMMEDIATELY FLIP THE MAIN CIRCUIT TO OFF.
- If your lights seem as bright as usual, turn OFF the circuits for the large appliances, plug them in, and then flip the switch ON again. If the breakers stay in the ON position, your electricity is probably okay.
- Report all loose wires or exposed wires to the Property Manager.

SANITATION

- Dispose of all spoiled food in a sanitary manner.
- Check to see if sewage lines are broken before using your toilet. If they are, do not flush your toilet. To test for damaged lines, run clear water at each fixture for 5 minutes to assure adequate drainage.

OTHER

- Take a break from the cleanup now and then, and try to conserve your energy.
- Consider stopping and purchasing items you may find in short supply when you get here. For example, cleaning supplies, box fans, dehumidifiers, water, and food.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE:

Hurricane Watch:

Hurricane is possible within 36 hours. (Hurricane shutters may be installed, check Governing Docs for guideline).

Hurricane Warning:

Hurricane is expected within 24 hours.

TEMPORARY HOUSING GUIDELINES

The HOA wants to expedite the repair and reconstruction of damaged housing caused by a disaster. Residents are urged to acquaint themselves with the temporary housing market in the area, such as condos, motels, or timeshares. Review your insurance to ensure you have adequate coverage for alternate living expenses.

TORNADOES

One of the most important things you can do to prevent being injured in a tornado is to be aware of the onset of severe weather. If a tornado "watch" is issued for your area, it means that a tornado is "possible." If a tornado "warning" is issued, it means that a tornado has actually been spotted, or is strongly indicated on radar, and it is time to go to a safe shelter immediately. Be sure to listen to local radio and TV stations for updated storm information.

A tornado is a violent storm with whirling winds of up to 300 miles per hour (mph). It appears as a funnel shaped cloud, from gray to black in color, which extends to the ground from the base of a thunderstorm. A tornado spins like a top and may sound like the roaring of an airplane or a locomotive. Tornadoes move at an average speed of 30 mph and generally move from the southwest to the northeast. Their direction can be erratic and change suddenly.

Most tornadoes are likely to occur during the mid-afternoon and evening hours during the months of April, May, and June. However, they have been sighted and caused damage during other months. Fortunately, we in Florida are not subject too many of the larger type tornadoes that are seen in the Midwest. Most of our tornadoes are small and short-lived. However, they still can cause damage, injuries, and fatalities.

You should be familiar with the following terms:

- Tornado watch: Conditions are favorable for the formation of tornadoes. Be aware of changing weather conditions.
- Tornado warning: A tornado has been sighted in your area, or is strongly indicated on radar. Take shelter immediately.
- Tornado: A violent, whirling, funnel-shaped cloud that touches the ground.
- Funnel Cloud: A violent, whirling, funnel-shaped cloud that does not touch the ground. Many people mistakenly call these tornadoes.
- Waterspout: A tornado over water.
- Hurricane damage: Hurricanes can also produce tornadoes that add to the storm's destructive power.

Tornadoes are most likely to occur in the right-front quadrant of the hurricane. However, they are also often found elsewhere embedded in the rain bands, well away from the center of the hurricane.

Some hurricanes seem to produce no tornadoes, while others develop multiple ones. Studies have shown that more than half of the land falling hurricanes produce at least one tornado; Hurricane Beulah (1967) spawned 141 according to one study. In general, tornadoes associated with hurricanes are less intense than those that occur in the Great Plains. Nonetheless, the effects of tornadoes, added to the larger area of hurricane-force winds, can produce substantial damage.

We have no way at present to predict exactly which storms will spawn tornadoes or where they will touch down. The new Doppler radar systems have greatly improved the forecaster's warning capability, but the technology usually provides lead times from only a few minutes up to about 30 minutes. Consequently, preparedness is critical.

Tornados Associated with Hurricanes

- When associated with hurricanes, tornadoes are not usually accompanied by hail or a lot of lightning.
- Tornado production can occur for days after a hurricane landfall when the tropical cyclone remnants maintain an identifiable low pressure circulation.
- They can also develop at any time of the day or night during landfall. However, by 12 hours after landfall, tornadoes tend to occur mainly during daytime hours.

Fujita scale

The Fujita scale (F-scale) uses actual damage to determine a tornado's wind speed.

- F0 Gale Tornado 40-72 mph

Some damage to chimneys. Tree branches broken off. Shallow rooted trees uprooted.

- F1 Moderate Tornado 73-112 mph

Peels surface off roofs. Mobile homes overturned. Moving autos pushed off roads.

- F2 Significant Tornado 113-157 mph

Considerable damage. Roofs torn off frame houses. Large trees snapped or uprooted. Light-object missiles generated.

- F3 Severe Tornado 158-206 mph

Severe damage. Roofs and some walls torn off well-constructed homes. Trains overturned. Most trees in forests uprooted. Heavy cars lifted off ground.

- F4 Devastating Tornado 207-260 mph

Well-constructed houses leveled. Structures with weak foundations blown off some distance. Cars thrown and large missiles generated.

- F5 Incredible Tornado 261-318 mph

Strong frame houses lifted off foundations and disintegrated. Automobile-sized missiles fly through the air in excess of 100 mph. Trees debarked.

Look out for:

- * Dark, often greenish sky
- * Wall cloud
- * Large hail
- * Loud roar; similar to a freight train

Caution: Some tornadoes appear as a visible funnel extending only partially to the ground. Look for signs of debris below the visible funnel. Some tornadoes are clearly visible while others are obscured by rain or nearby low-hanging clouds.

Tornado Preparedness Tips:

For Tornado Watches:

1. Stay tuned to local radio or your NOAA weather radio.
2. Secure any loose objects outdoors, or move them inside.
3. Survey local structures for the most suitable shelter.
4. Keep watching the sky. If you see any funnel shaped clouds, report them immediately to the nearest law enforcement agency or emergency management.

For Tornado Warnings:

Take shelter immediately!

1. In a Motor Vehicle: This is the least desirable place to be. Do not try to outrun the funnel cloud or tornado. Do not get under or next to your vehicle. Try to find indoor shelter immediately. If all else fails, try to find a ditch or depression to get in.
2. At School: Follow the school disaster plan. Stay away from gyms and auditoriums. Go into center hallways and stay away from windows.
3. Open Country: Move away from the tornado at a right angle. Seek shelter in a ravine, ditch, or culvert. A low spot in the ground will give you some protection.
4. At Home: Stay away from windows. Move into an area with no windows such as a bathroom or a closet. The bathroom is the safest due to the fact that the plumbing gives extra support to the walls. Also, your bathtub may be able to provide you with some protection.
5. In a Mobile Home: This is another one of the least desirable places to be. Seek other shelter immediately. Go to another shelter on foot, if possible. Do not get under your mobile home. Lie in a ditch or other ground depression if all else fails.

Tornado Myths:

MYTH: Areas near rivers, lakes, and mountains are safe from tornadoes.

FACT: No place is safe from tornadoes. In the late 1980's, a tornado swept through Yellowstone National Park leaving a path of destruction up and down a 10,000 ft. mountain.

MYTH: The low pressure with a tornado causes buildings to "explode" as the tornado passes overhead.

FACT: Violent winds and debris slamming into buildings cause most structural damage.

MYTH: Windows should be opened before a tornado approaches to equalize pressure and minimize damage.

FACT: Opening windows allows damaging winds to enter the structure. Leave the windows alone; instead, immediately go to a safe place.

Tornadoes Occur Anywhere!

KNOW THE NUMBERS!

NOTICE: The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale (SSHWS) underwent a minor modification in 2012 in order to resolve awkwardness associated with conversions among the various units used for wind speed in advisory products. The change broadens the Category 4 wind speed range by one mile per hour (mph) at each end of the range, yielding a new range of 130-156 mph. *This change does not alter the category assignments of any storms in the historical record, nor will it change the category assignments for future storms.* The new summary table is shown below.

Category	Sustained Winds	Types of Damage Due to Hurricane Winds
1	74-95 mph 64-82 kt 119-153 km/h	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage: Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles, vinyl siding and gutters. Large branches of trees will snap and shallowly rooted trees may be toppled. Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days.
2	96-110 mph 83-95 kt 154-177 km/h	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage: Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks.
3 (major)	111-129 mph 96-112 kt 178-208 km/h	Devastating damage will occur: Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will be snapped or uprooted, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
4 (major)	130-156 mph 113-136 kt 209-251 km/h	Catastrophic damage will occur: Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
5 (major)	157 mph or higher 137 kt or higher 252 km/h or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur: A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.