



## RESIDENT'S HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY GUIDE

(If you have any questions, please contact the office at 772-466-5512)

### Prepare For a Hurricane or Tropical Storm.

Your best defense is to plan for hurricane season ahead of time to help you and your families stay safe as well as protect your home and property before a hurricane reaches your location.

Preventing the loss of life and minimizing the damage to property from hurricanes are responsibilities that are shared by everyone. Any time you are asked to evacuate, you should do so without delay. You and your family need to have a plan that makes you as safe as possible. Preparedness includes having the supplies on hand to weather any storm. Finally, stay informed.

### When Is Hurricane Season?

*The official Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1st through November 30th.* The Atlantic basin covers the area which includes the entire Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea. Pay attention to all official announcements on the radio and/or television from the [National Hurricane Center](#) as well as our local [St. Lucie County Division of Emergency Management](#) and follow their suggestions or requirements.

A hurricane watch means that conditions are possible, and a warning means that hurricane conditions are expected.

The hurricane categories are based on the miles per hour (MPH) wind speeds...

- Category 1 Hurricane = 74-95 MPH winds - **Very dangerous winds will produce some damage**
- Category 2 Hurricane = 96-110 MPH winds - **Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage**
- Category 3 Hurricane = 111-129 MPH winds - **Devastating damage will occur**
- Category 4 Hurricane = 130-155 MPH winds - **Catastrophic damage will occur**
- Category 5 Hurricane = 155+ MPH winds - **Catastrophic damage will occur**

### Make a Plan:

North and South Hutchinson Islands are barrier islands. As a resident of HIW, you can anticipate receiving the order to evacuate the island under all five hurricane categories especially if a hurricane will make landfall.

It's also best to have a hurricane plan in place prior to the beginning of hurricane season. The decision as to whether to stay and ride out the hurricane or evacuate is an important one. It's strongly advised that you base your decision on the recommendations of local authorities as they are most knowledgeable about the storm's potential for death and destruction.

## Before The Storm: General Preparedness

- Fill up your vehicle's gas tank, if there is a power outage in your area, gas pumps won't work.
- Get cash (in small denominations) before banks close; ATMs may not work due to loss of electricity.
- Make sure you have enough of your prescription medicine available.
- Have a battery-operated flashlight or lantern if you lose power during a hurricane.
- Maintain portable battery-powered AM radio.
- Charge your cell phone battery as well as any other electronic devices. Consider getting a portable charger.
- If you need transportation to a public shelter due to a "special need" such as a physical disability or a neurological or psychological disorder, register with the [County Office of Emergency Management](#) in advance. **Do not wait until a storm approach.**

If you or a family member receives home health care or depends on electrical life-support equipment, discuss emergency plans with your agency representative. Check with your physician and, if necessary, make arrangements now with a hospital or special needs shelter to stay there if you must evacuate.

- Review your insurance policies prior to the start of hurricane season. This is critical to ensure that your assets are adequately covered. It's important to remember that once a hurricane watch has been issued, insurance providers will not issue additional coverage or new policies.
- It's smart to take inventory of your possessions (have a written record and photograph or videotape any items of value) well in advance.
- Keep your important documents in a safe place (such as a safe deposit box) and if you must evacuate, consider taking the documents with you.

## Have A Plan For Evacuation

North and South Hutchinson Islands are barrier islands. As a resident of HIW, you can anticipate receiving the order to evacuate the island under all five hurricane categories especially if a hurricane will make landfall. You have to evacuate quickly. If you need to evacuate, prepare a "go kit" with personal items you cannot do without during an emergency.

Consider these items for your [Emergency Supply Go Kit](#)

For information on evacuation zones, please go to the interactive map at <https://www.stlucieco.gov/EvacZones>

For up-to-date shelter information, please go to the interactive map at <https://www.stlucieco.gov/SheltersMap>

## **Plan For Evacuation (Continued)**

- Evacuate when ordered. Waiting till the last minute and you may find yourself on the road when the hurricane hits.
- **Bridges will be closed to traffic when winds reach speeds of 45 MPH.**
- Don't forget about your pets
- Where are you evacuating to?
- Who is your contact at your destination?
- What is their contact information?
- What is your backup evacuation location?
- Take a copy of all important documents and store them in a waterproof container and place it in a safe location
- Shut off main water valve (1/4 turn). It is located in the front bedroom closet behind the far wall panel.
- Shut off the water heater at the unit and the breaker panel.
- Place towels in the tracks of the sliders and windows.
- Leave water in toilets.
- Remove all garbage from the unit.
- Set A/C thermostat at 78 degrees to avoid humidity built up and mold. If you have a humidistat, set it at 55 – 60 degrees.
- Remove and stow slider screens.
- If you are planning to leave for an extended period, please contact the front office to ensure a current emergency phone number is on file and where a functioning spare key is

## **Pets**

If you have pets of any kind, be sure to include them in your hurricane preparedness planning. Remember that pets can be traumatized if left behind alone during a hurricane. If a category three (03) hurricane (or higher) is approaching, consider evacuating and taking your pets with you but try to do so in such a way that it does not cause the pet undue stress. Please note that many shelters do not allow pets so you may need to make other plans to ensure your pet's safety and well-being during a hurricane.

## **If You Do Stay - Before the Hurricane Strikes**

- Sanitize and then fill your bathtubs, sinks, and other containers with water for sanitary usage.
- To keep food fresh, turn the settings on your refrigerator & freezer to their highest settings in case of a power outage.
- Turn off and unplug any non-essential electrical equipment in your house.
- Locate and place important documents in a waterproof container.
- Listen to the radio or TV for important information.
- If you plan to ride out the storm at home, identify the safest room (typically an interior room with no windows) and stay inside that room if a hurricane is expected to pass directly over your location.

## After the Storm

If you are returning from evacuation:

- Return only after the all-clear is given for your area.
- Do not venture onto roads until you have been advised they are passable and safe.
- If an evacuation was ordered by St. Lucie Emergency Management, you will be required to show proper identification to return to the island during the time immediately following a hurricane. You will also be required to present some form of proof that you are a resident of the island (e.g., utility bill).
- Be on the lookout for downed power lines and avoid if identified.
- If any safety issues are present, do not enter your home (floodwaters, fire damage, etc.).
- Watch for and avoid loose animals and poisonous snakes.
- DO NOT run generators, grills, or other gas-operated appliances indoors.

## Safety and Damage Assessment

- Have a fire extinguisher readily available in the case of a fire.
- Watch for safety hazards (slippery floors, broken glass, etc.).
- Check with local authorities before using any water (could be contaminated).
- Until cleared with authorities all water should be boiled for 1 minute at a rolling boil to disinfect before drinking.
- If any damage is identified to your home, contact your insurance company to start a claim.
- Photograph and document any damage.
- Throw away any spoiled food items or those that have come in contact with floodwaters. When in doubt throw it out!

## Resources

[Register for Alert St. Lucie](#) and get notifications

[St. Lucie County Disaster Preparedness Guide](#)

[City of Fort Pierce – Hurricane Preparedness Guide](#)

[National Hurricane Preparedness](#) - National Weather Service (NOAA)

See the latest [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it may affect your hurricane planning.

[What's Your Hurricane IQ?](#) – Why not.... For fun.