



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS: A GUIDE FOR HOSPICE PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS



**HURRICANE SEASON IS
JUNE 1 - NOVEMBER 30**

MY HURRICANE PLAN

My name:

My caregiver's name(s):

My hospice provider's name and contact information:

My emergency contact person and their contact information:

If there is an evacuation ordered, I will go:

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 effect 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 with your hospice team members things that are specific to your situation and needs.



STOCK YOUR HOME

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.

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:

- Whole dry milk
- Canned fruit juices
- Canned meats and fish, like vienna sausage, canned ham 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

Disaster kit A well stocked disaster supply kit can save untold hardships in an emergency situation. Consider gathering the following items to ensure your basic comfort and well being.

Suggested Supplies and Equipment:

- Battery-operated radio with weather band (make sure batteries still work)
- First-aid kit
- Flashlight
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Paper plates and utensils, including a bottle and manual can opener
- Toiletry articles and sanitary items
- Extra batteries (make sure batteries still work)
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities if needed
- Local maps
- Change of clothes
- Waterproof matches
- Important family documents
- Cell phones with inverter or solar chargers
- Other items related to the daily care of the hospice patient

Medicine and medical supplies It is very important to keep an adequate supply of any medicines you take. If you are stranded in your home, or requested to go to a public shelter, you may not be able to get more medication easily. If possible, you should also keep an extra pair of glasses on hand for emergencies or hearing aid batteries if necessary.

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.

BE AWARE OF CHANGING WEATHER CONDITIONS

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.

ADDITIONAL HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

FloridaDisaster.org	Florida Elder Affairs Hotline (800) 963-5337
MySafeFloridaHome.com	American Red Cross redcross.org • call your local chapter
MyFlorida.com	Federal Emergency Management Agency fema.gov • (800)480-2520 • call your local EMA Office
NOAA National Weather Service www.nws.noaa.gov	



FLORIDA HOSPICE
& PALLIATIVE CARE ASSOCIATION

2000 Apalachee Parkway | Suite 200 | Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Consumer Hotline: (800) 282-6560 | Phone: (850) 878-2632 | Fax: (850) 878-5688
E: info@floridahospices.org | W: www.floridahospices.org