

Hurricane Preparedness

The Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)), the [National Weather Service](#), and the [Ready Campaign](#) are shining the spotlight on hurricane preparedness. Hurricane season begins June 1, but you can begin preparing your family now for hurricane season. The 2021 hurricane season is *still* unique because we are operating in a COVID-19 environment. You'll see below that we have maintained COVID-19 preparedness language this year, and its potential impact on your own hurricane preparedness, especially as it pertains to evacuation and sheltering.

It only takes one storm to change your life and community. Tropical cyclones are among nature's most powerful and destructive phenomena, affecting both coastal and inland areas. Each year, many parts of the United States experience heavy rains, strong winds, floods, and coastal storm surges from tropical storms and hurricanes. As we have seen with Hurricanes Dorian, Florence, and Isaias, the Atlantic coast is still vulnerable to tropical systems.

Hurricanes can cause loss of life and catastrophic damage to property along coastlines and can extend several hundred miles inland. The extent of damage varies according to the size, wind intensity, and path of the storm; the amount and duration of rainfall; and other factors including the number and type of buildings in the area, the terrain, and soil conditions.

As always, this toolkit is designed to provide you and your organization with easy-to-use tools to promote hurricane preparedness and help your stakeholders be better prepared for disasters.

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Important Dates

- **National Weather Service Hurricane Preparedness Week 2021:**
 - May 9-15, 2021
 - [National Hurricane Preparedness \(weather.gov\)](https://www.weather.gov/hurricane-preparedness)

Hurricane Preparedness

Key Messages for Hurricane Preparedness

- Know your hurricane risk and take steps to prepare.
- Plan for what you'll do in the event of a hurricane. Know where you can go and know how to contact your family.
- Sign up for emergency alerts and know where to get the latest information. Check with your local officials and follow official sources online, including social media.
- Follow the guidance of your local officials and stay tuned to weather forecasts for updates.
- Purchase or renew a flood insurance policy. It typically takes up to 30 days for a policy to go into effect and can protect the life you've built. Homeowner's policies do not cover flooding. Get flood coverage under the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](https://www.flood.gov/).

Talking Points for Hurricane Preparedness

- Know your risk of hurricanes and prepare in advance.
 - Just because you don't live near the coast doesn't mean you're not at risk of hurricanes or the remnants of tropical systems.
 - The remnants of tropical systems can also bring tornadoes, extreme rainfall and life-threatening flooding to areas hundreds of miles inland from the coast.
- Plan ahead – know what you'll do if a hurricane is forecast to impact your area, how to contact your family, and any community emergency plans.
- Have several ways to receive warnings/alerts from the National Weather Service. Do not rely on a single source of weather alert information. [Turn ON Wireless Emergency Alerts \(WEAs\) in your smartphone settings](#). [Keep a NOAA Weather](#) radio tuned to your local emergency station.

- Sign up for your [community's warning system](#). Stay tuned for the latest information. Follow the guidance of your local officials and check media and weather reports via official sources, including social media.
- Monitor local TV and radio stations. Many stations and on-air meteorologists have their own social media accounts, to which they post critical weather information.
- [By downloading the FEMA app](#), you can receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.
- Consider purchasing flood insurance to protect your property from potential flood damage.
 - Most homeowner's policies do not cover flood damage.
 - Flood insurance takes 30 days to become effective – don't wait until the last minute!
 - Visit www.Floodsmart.gov for more information.
- Based on your location and community plans, make your own plans for evacuation or sheltering in place.
 - **Know Your Zone!** Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route and shelter locations.
 - Maryland: www.MEMA.Maryland.gov/know-your-zone
 - Virginia: www.KnowYourZoneVA.org
- Take steps to protect yourself and your property:
 - Gather needed supplies for at least one week. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication.
 - Don't forget the needs of pets – plan ahead for your pets including pet-friendly shelters, extra food and water, and any other items they may need.
 - Keep important documents in a safe place or create password-protected digital copies. Consider using a waterproof container to store the copies.
 - Declutter drains and gutters to allow water to flow. Install check valves in plumbing to prevent backups.
 - Consider installing hurricane shutters if you live in a hurricane prone area.
 - Talk to your local officials about trimming trees and dead limbs.
 - Review insurance policies to make sure you are covered.
 - Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machinery outdoors ONLY and away from windows.
- Check on your neighbors to make sure they are safe and prepared.

- Document your property in advance, including photographs, in case you need to make an insurance claim.

Flood Insurance

- Flooding can be an emotionally and financially devastating event. With flood insurance, you're able to recover faster and more fully.
 - Use the tool linked below to see how much flood damage – even from just a few inches of water – could cost you. <https://www.floodsmart.gov/flood-insurance-cost/calculator>
- Several factors are considered when determining your annual flood insurance premium. These factors include:
 - [Flood risk](#) (e.g., your flood zone)
 - The type of coverage being purchased (e.g. building and contents coverage)
 - The deductible and amount of building and contents coverage
 - The location of your structure
 - The design and age of your structure
 - The location of your structure's contents (e.g. Are your utilities elevated?)
- For detailed information about your flood insurance policy, review the [Flood Insurance Manual](#) or contact your insurance agent today. You can also call the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at 877-336-2627.
 - [For residential properties](#), you can secure coverage **up to \$250,000 for the building** and **\$100,000 for the building contents**.
 - [For commercial properties](#), you can secure coverage **up to \$500,000 for the building** and **\$500,000 for the building contents**.
 - Contents and building coverage are **purchased separately**, and there are always separate deductibles. Unless you have contents coverage, your flood-damaged belongings are not covered.
 - Typically, there's a 30-day waiting period from date of purchase until your flood insurance policy goes into effect.
- If you live outside of the high-risk area, NFIP's [Preferred Risk Policy \(PRP\)](#), offers the option for combination coverage for both contents and building, but there are always separate deductibles.
- If you live in the [high-risk flood area](#) and have a government-backed mortgage, you are required to purchase flood insurance.
- Learn more about flood insurance at www.floodsmart.gov/

Returning Home After a Hurricane

- Listen to local officials for information and special instructions.

- Be careful during clean-up. Wear protective clothing, use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning [mold or other debris](#), and maintain a physical distance of at least six feet while working with someone else. People with [asthma and other lung conditions](#) and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled, even if they do not have an allergy to mold. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work.
- Continue taking steps to protect yourself from COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, such as washing your hands often and cleaning commonly touched surfaces.
- Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.
- Avoid wading in flood water, which can contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.
- Save phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.
- Document any property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company for assistance.
- Engage virtually with your community through video and phone calls. Know that it's normal to feel anxious or stressed. Take care of your body and talk to someone if you are feeling upset. Many people may already feel fear and anxiety about the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). The threat of a hurricane can add additional stress. Follow CDC guidance for [managing stress during a traumatic event](#) and [managing stress during COVID-19](#).

General Talking Points

- FEMA coordinates with state, local, and tribal officials along with the private sector to share operational guidance and to encourage hurricane planning that includes public health guidelines.
 - [FEMA.gov](#) compiles best practices with the most, current and vital information in one central location for medical practitioners, emergency managers and other critical stakeholders.
- Before hurricane season starts, take action!
- [Ready.gov](#) has information online for individuals, families, kids and businesses on how to prepare for the upcoming season. Find updated information on how to prepare for the hurricane season during the pandemic.

- Preparing your home for hurricanes can mean the difference between minor damage and complete destruction. For details visit: [HurricaneStrong](#).
- Individuals should evaluate personal emergency plans and know major differences that may be occurring in their local jurisdictions due to the pandemic. Individuals should also keep track of their critical financial, medical, and household information by using the
 - [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#) (EFFAK).
- [Small businesses](#) should consult preparedness planning resources.

Talking Points for Hurricane Preparedness and COVID-19

Even as the nation vaccinates millions of Americans a day, and our nation begins to turn a corner, you may experience a storm where COVID-19 preparedness actions need to be taken.

- **Do not let COVID-19 virus prevention stop you from seeking shelter during severe weather.** If sheltering in a large group, take steps to ensure you are following CDC guidelines on social distancing. Follow guidance from local authorities on evacuation and sheltering as it pertains to COVID-19 prevention guidelines.
- **Disasters won't wait.** Neither should you. As we continue our efforts with the Whole-of-America to respond to and recover from coronavirus, we are also leaning forward and preparing for the upcoming hurricane season.
- **The start of the 2021 hurricane season is right around the corner.** FEMA urges residents in hurricane-prone areas, and far inland, to prepare now for the possibility of bad weather conditions while maintaining public health guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- **Readiness.** FEMA, other federal agencies, and the American Red Cross have modified policies and planning and have taken actions to ensure the federal government can respond to any disaster during our continued coronavirus response efforts.

News Release Template

<ORGANIZATION> is Encouraging Everyone to be #HurricaneStrong
Take the Next Step
Hurricane Awareness

<CITY, St.> – <INSERT ORGANIZATION> is proud to join and promote Hurricane Preparedness. The National Weather Service reminds us that **it only takes one storm to change your life and community** and to remain #HurricaneStrong <INSERT ORGANIZATION> is <INSERT EVENT INFORMATION HERE> or <committed to being a leader for emergency preparedness>.

Here are key messages you can use to help yourself, your loved ones, and your friends prepare:

- Know your hurricane risk and take steps to prepare.
- Plan for what you'll do in the event of a hurricane. Know where you can go and know how to contact your family.
- Sign up for emergency alerts and know where to get the latest information. Check with your local officials and follow official sources online, including social media.
- Follow the guidance of your local officials and stay tuned to weather forecasts for updates.
- Purchase or renew a flood insurance policy. It typically takes up to 30 days for a policy to go into effect and can protect the life you've built. Homeowner's policies do not cover flooding. Get flood coverage under the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#).
- The start of the 2021 hurricane season is right around the corner. FEMA urges residents in hurricane-prone areas, and far inland, to prepare now for the possibility of bad weather conditions while maintaining public health guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

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Online Resources

State Lead Websites and Materials:

- Delaware: [Prepare DE](#)
- DC: [Ready DC](#)
- Maryland: [MEMA Know Your Zone](#)

- Pennsylvania: [Ready PA](#)
- Virginia: [VDEM Hurricane Preparedness](#)
- West Virginia: [Ready WV](#)

[FEMA Hurricane Safety Graphics Collection](#) – This collection houses FEMA’s hurricane safety graphics on FEMA.gov, including graphics highlighting checking on your neighbor or knowing your hurricane risk. Each of these graphics can be used on social media to amplify actions that can keep individuals and communities safe before, during and after a potential hurricane.

[Social Media Toolkits](#) – FEMA has created social media toolkits to help savvy social media users effectively message preparedness for all hazards, including severe weather. These includes Severe Weather, Flood Safety, Hurricane Preparedness, and other toolkits which contain social media resources, messaging ideas and templates, and hazard specific preparedness graphics.

[National Weather Service \(NWS\) Hurricane Safety Materials](#) - This collection of resources focuses on safety and educational materials compiled by the National Weather Service for hurricane preparedness. The materials include videos, social media content, infographics, and ways for individuals and communities to get involved in hurricane safety.

[Floodsmart.gov](#)- The official website of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

[Flood Risk Communication Toolkit – Start Guide](#)- The Start Guide introduces the components of the Flood Risk Communication Toolkit, which were developed to help community officials begin and maintain an open channel for communication. The toolkit includes templates and guides for designing a communication plan, effective public meetings, and a social media strategy for addressing flood risk. It is supported by story maps and videos that visually communicate the objectives of updating flood risk data and maps.

[FEMA Flood Risk Communication Toolkit for Community Officials](#)- The Flood Risk Communication Toolkit was developed to help community officials begin and maintain an open channel for communication. The toolkit includes guides for designing a communication plan, effective public meetings, and a social media strategy for addressing flood risk. It is supported by story maps and videos that visually communicate the objectives of updating flood risk data and maps. This document contains guidance on when and how to use the [videos](#) during a flood risk project as well as additional engagement ideas and a section on special topics.

[Flood Risk Communication Video Series](#)- Eight videos that visually communicate the objectives of updating flood risk data and maps and the importance of flood insurance.

Social Media

Social Media for Hurricane Preparedness

Below are sample messages that you can post on your own social media accounts to engage your friends/followers and promote hurricane preparedness. More information and ideas on how to take action and be an example can be found on FEMA's official [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, Ready.gov's official [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, National Weather Service's official [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, or FEMA Region 3's [Twitter](#) account.

Hashtags:

#Floodready

#Floodsmart

#BeAForce

Twitter

General

- #severeweatherprep makes sense! Take your first steps today. www.ready.gov
- 39% of Americans live in areas of high susceptibility to high-impact weather #severewxprep <http://go.usa.gov/cyKXR>
- FEMA urges the use of weather radios. For programming information, visit [@NOAA](https://twitter.com/NOAA). <http://go.usa.gov/h9sC>
- If you use a power wheelchair, keep a lightweight manual wheelchair available for emergencies.
- We can't say it enough: know your evacuation routes! <http://go.usa.gov/cyKYR>
- Preparing your pets makes sense. #PetPreparedness <http://www.ready.gov/animals>
- Don't let bad weather sneak up on you! Check weather.gov every morning before you go out. #SevereWeatherPrep
- Develop a family plan, make an #emergencykit & get involved in #preparedness #BeAForce
- Do you have the basics in your emergency kit? Pledge to prepare and check this list: <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>
- In #severewx, listen to [@NOAA](https://twitter.com/NOAA) Weather Radio for comprehensive weather and emergency info. Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/yb9> #BeAForce

Flood

- 30: The number of days it takes for #floodinsurance to begin. Don't wait until it's too late! <https://www.floodsmart.gov/> #BeAForce
- Don't wait until it's raining cats and dogs to get #petprepared <http://www.ready.gov/animals>

Tornado

- Information can get twisted but click here for the truth! #BeAForce #Tornadosafety <http://go.usa.gov/cyK8j>
- Be sure that your loved ones are safe and sound after a #tornado! Have a meeting place or communication plan! www.ready.gov/make-a-plan

Facebook

- Make sure you have a written hurricane evacuation plan. If you live in a storm surge hurricane evacuation zone or if you're in a home that would be unsafe during a hurricane, figure out where you'd go and how you'd get there if told to evacuate. You do not need to travel far. Find a friend or relative who doesn't live in an evacuation zone or unsafe home and see if you can use their home as your evacuation destination. Remember to account for your pets, as most local shelters do not permit them.
<http://flash.org/hurricane-season/evacuation-zones/find-your-evacuation-zones.pdf>
- If a hurricane strikes, you'll need supplies not just to get through the storm, but for the potentially lengthy recovery period that could follow. Have enough non-perishable food, water and medicine to last each person in your family a minimum of one week. Electricity and water could be out for at least that long. You'll need extra cash, a battery-powered radio, flashlights, and a portable crank or solar powered USB charger to charge your phone. <https://www.ready.gov/kit>
- Call your insurance company or agent to make sure you have enough homeowner's insurance to repair or even replace your home. Don't forget coverage for your car or boat. Remember, standard homeowner's and renter's insurance don't cover flooding – you'll need a separate policy for flooding. Contact your company or an agent or use the agent locator at www.floodsmart.gov. Act now as flood insurance requires a 30-day waiting period.
- Many Americans rely on their neighbors after a disaster, but there are also many ways you can help your neighbors before a hurricane. Learn about the actions you and your neighbors can take to prepare and recover from the hazards associated with hurricanes. <https://community.fema.gov/action/plan-with-neighbors>
- Prepare for a hurricane before the season begins, when you have time and aren't under pressure. If you wait until a hurricane approaches, you may be under duress and make bad decisions. Take the time now to write down your hurricane plan. Gather your supplies and know where you'll ride out the storm. You don't want to be stuck in long lines when a hurricane watch is issued, and supplies may be sold out by the time you reach the front of the line. Preparing makes you resilient to the impacts of wind and water and can mean the difference between being a hurricane victim and a hurricane survivor. <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>
- Learn the dangers of a hurricane storm surge with this fast draw video. Storm surge is what officials use when determining who to evacuate. Remember, when officials say it is time to evacuate... go! <http://youtu.be/bBa9bVYKLPO>
- Remember, it only takes one storm to change your life and community. For more information on hurricanes and hurricane safety, visit www.weather.gov/hurricanesafety
- Tornadoes can happen any time of year but are most common in the spring and summer. Now is the time to make a plan for where you'll shelter if a tornado warning is issued. Have a plan for all members of your family at home, work, and school. <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>

- If you're hunkering down to ride out the storm, take a moment to think through what to do in a power outage.

⚡ Charge your devices now.

🗂️ Check your supplies and make sure you can reach them easily.

🛏️ Have blankets and other warm items of clothing ready.

Remember: do not use a gas stove to heat your home and place generators outside of the house, away from windows.

More tips: [ready.gov/power-outages](https://www.ready.gov/power-outages)



Images and Graphics



QUICK FACTS ABOUT HURRICANES



Can happen along any U.S. coast or territory in the Atlantic or Pacific



Most active in September

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over warm ocean waters and move toward land. The Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30. The Pacific hurricane season runs May 15 to November 30.



Can affect areas more than 100 miles inland

Threats from hurricanes include powerful winds, heavy rainfall, storm surges, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, tornadoes, and landslides.

During an emergency, always listen to local officials.



#BeInformed

Ready 

In an emergency, make sure to text, not call, your loved ones.



#BeInformed

Ready 



Get **#HurricaneStrong** in 1 Day

Build an Emergency Supply
By adding a few extra items to your weekly shopping list and looking around you house, preparing for **Hurricane Season** can be **simple** and **affordable**.

Shopping List

- Food Shop
 - Water
 - Non-Perishable Food
 - Garbage Bags
 - Personal Sanitation Items
- Pharmacy
 - First Aid Kit
 - Batteries
 - Radio
- Hardware Store
 - Flashlight
 - Whistle
 - Duck-Tape
 - Plastic Sheeting

Look around the House
Phone Charger
Local maps
Can Opener
Wrench or pliers

Hurricane Season starts June 1!
[Learn more at Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov)