

Planning for Hurricane Season During COVID-19 Pandemic

Planning for hurricane season and other potential disasters can be stressful, and because the 2020 hurricane season comes during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it may be especially so this year.

Public health and emergency response professionals have advice to help you safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter for severe storms while protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. Here are some tips to help you and your family stay safe during hurricane season this year.

Prepare for hurricane season

- Understand that your planning may be different this year because of the need to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
- Give yourself more time than usual to prepare your emergency food, water and medicine supplies. Home delivery is the safest choice for buying disaster supplies; however, that may not be an option for everyone.
- Protect yourself and others when filling prescriptions by limiting in-person visits to the pharmacy. Sign up for mail-order delivery or call in your prescription ahead of time and use drive-through windows or curbside pickup, if available.
- Pay attention to local guidance about updated plans for evacuations and shelters, including shelters for your pets.
- When you check on neighbors and friends, be sure to follow social distancing recommendations (staying at least 6 feet from others).

Prepare to evacuate

- If you may need to evacuate, prepare a "go bag" with personal items you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19, such as hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes and two cloth face coverings for each person.
- Know a safe place to shelter and have several ways to receive weather alerts, such as the National Weather Service cell phone alertsexternal icon, the NOAA Weather Radioexternal icon, or (@NWS) Twitter alerts.
- Find out if your local public shelter is open, in case you need to evacuate your home and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- If you need to go to a disaster shelter, follow Centers for Disease Control recommendations for staying safe and healthy in a public disaster shelter during the current pandemic.
- Make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pets. Typically, when shelters accommodate pets, they are housed in a separate area from people.

- If you have to travel away from your community to evacuate, follow safety precautions for travelers to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Stay safe after a hurricane

In addition to following guidance for staying safe and healthy after a hurricane, note that:

- You should continue to follow preventive actions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, like washing your hands and wearing a cloth face covering during cleanup or when returning home.
- If you are injured or ill, contact your medical provider for treatment recommendations. Keep wounds clean to prevent infection. Remember, accessing medical care may be more difficult than usual during the pandemic.
- Dealing with disasters can cause stress and strong emotions, particularly during the ongoing pandemic. It is natural to feel anxiety, grief and worry. Coping with these feelings and getting help when you need it will help you, your family and your community recover.
- After a hurricane, it's not unusual for rats, mice and other pests to try to get into your home or building. Follow recommendations for keeping pests out of your home.

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