



MAKE A PLAN

How To Prepare

After a major disaster, it is unlikely that emergency response services will be able to immediately respond to everyone's needs, so it's important to be prepared to take care of yourself and your family. Knowing what to do is your best protection AND your responsibility.

Create a family disaster plan including a communication plan and an [Evacuation Plan](#).

These steps will help you prepare for a hurricane:

. Designate an out-of-area contact person

 Try to select someone that is far enough away to not be affected by the same emergency. Provide this person with the names and contact information of the people you want to keep informed of your situation. Instruct family members to call this person and tell them where they are. Write down all contact numbers and information on an [Emergency Contact Card](#). Long distance phone service is often restored sooner than local service.

. Designate a safe room

 Select a safe room in the event that you are home during a hurricane (in non-mandatory evacuation situation). The safe room should be centrally located in the house, with no windows, at ground level, or in a basement. Safe rooms are typically bathrooms or closet rooms. Make sure your safe room has adequate ventilation.

. Plan an escape route

🗺️ Discuss the options you have in the case your home is no longer safe. If possible, plan to stay with a friend or relative who lives out of state or further inland. Please note that many in-state [hotels](#) tend to be full during the event of a hurricane. If you are bringing a pet, check with the hotel first or visit [PetsWelcome.com](#) for a list of pet-friendly hotels. [Area Shelters](#) are not designed for comfort and should be used as a last resort. Please see our list of [Evacuation Procedures](#) for more information.

. Duplicate important documents

📁 Also keep copies off-site, either in a safety deposit box or with someone you trust.

Documents may include:

- passport
- drivers license
- social security card
- wills
- [deeds](#)
- financial statements
- insurance information
- [marriage license](#)
- prescriptions

. Inventory valuables

☑️ This can be done through inventory lists, photographs, or video. Keep copies of this information off-site with your other important documents.

. Create a Pet Plan

For helpful tips please visit the [Pet Plan](#) web page.

. When planning, consider Special Needs

★ Children, seniors, people with disabilities, and family members that don't speak English may need extra attention during a hurricane. If you, or someone you know, requires special assistance during an evacuation, [register](#) with the local emergency office of the disadvantaged person. Palm Beach County has a [Special Needs Program](#) for citizens with certain medical problems during a major hurricane. [FloridaDisaster.org](#) features safety tips and hurricane facts especially for kids. Learn about emotional coping during a hurricane at [NCTSNet.org](#).