

Hillsborough County

Disaster Preparedness Guide



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**Hillsborough
County Florida**

Revised in 2022

Disaster Preparedness Guide

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Hillsborough County Emergency Management

A Great Place to Live, Work, and Play

Located in the thriving center of West-Central Florida, Hillsborough County is the Tampa Bay region's largest county, and a major part of the Florida High-Tech Corridor along Interstate 4. Situated between Orlando and the Gulf of Mexico, Hillsborough County features stunning natural treasures, a plethora of entertainment options, major employers, and the University of South Florida, a premiere research institution, all in a year-round temperate climate. Hillsborough County is a great place to live, work, and play.



Emergency Management is Prepared for You

The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for planning and coordinating actions to prepare, respond, and recover from natural or man-made disasters in Hillsborough County. The Office manages the County Emergency Operations Center, conducts emergency training, provides public education, helps coordinate the Community Emergency Response Teams, and many other tasks.

Four Steps to Disaster Preparedness

1. Determine Your Risk

An important first step for all residents is to determine risk, as hurricanes are not just coastal disasters. The impacts of wind and water can be felt for hundreds of miles, and knowing a location's vulnerability is vital. Beyond hurricanes, your location might be at risk for other disasters as well. Visit [page 2](#) for a list of potential disasters.

2. Make a Plan

Being prepared starts by having a plan. Where do you go if you have to evacuate? What should you do if you are sheltering in place? What about your business? What should you have packed and ready? What is in your disaster kit? Having a plan for every scenario is the best way to reduce your risk in case of a disaster. On [page 4](#), find tips to tailor your plan specific to your needs. A full list of items to pack in your disaster kit can be found on [page 5](#).

3. Stay Informed

During a disaster, it's important to stay up-to-date with the latest information from a reliable source. In Hillsborough County you can trust [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe), the HCFL Alert system, and the County's social media channels on Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor (@HillsboroughFL) to bring you the latest information when it's available. For general County information, call **(813) 272-5900**, the County's main information line. Check out [page 8](#) for more details.

4. Get Involved

There is always a need for helping hands before, during, and after a disaster. Learn how you can serve fellow residents during large-scale emergencies. Volunteer opportunities are available locally for individuals and groups. Find out more on [page 16](#).

1. Determine Your Risk

While hurricanes are the most talked about disaster, other disasters can occur at any time. Determining your risk is the first step in staying safe and being prepared for all hazards and disasters, no matter your location.



Lightning and Thunderstorms

- If thunder roars, go indoors
- Stay inside for at least 30 minutes after thunder stops
- Do not use trees for cover
- Do not lie down in an open area
- Stay away from bodies of water
- Find a place to take cover, like a restroom in a park, a shelter on a beach, or inside a nearby business



Tornadoes

- Know the terms of a tornado threat:
 - Tornado Watch: tornadoes are possible, remain alert
 - Tornado Warning: tornadoes are confirmed, take shelter
- Head to an interior room without windows on the lowest floor of the building
- Never stay in an automobile
- If you are outside with no shelter, lie down in a low lying area, flat on the ground with your head covered



Wildfires

- Keep your home ready by removing dry leaves and plants within 5 feet of your house
- Report a fire to authorities immediately
- If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately
- Do not return until officials say it is safe to do so



Active Shooter

If there is an active shooter in your vicinity:

- Run if there is an easy escape path and evacuate the area
- If running is not possible, find a place to hide from the shooter
- As a last resort, if you cannot run or hide, fight



Pandemic Disease

- Get routine and travel-related vaccines
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer
- Avoid contact with sick people
- Stay home if you feel sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a face mask when around others

- Follow all other CDC recommendations
- Monitor the news and [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe) for any recommendations not listed in this guide



Marine Hazards and Rip Currents

- Do not swim against the current
- Stay calmly afloat and signal for help
- Escape the current by swimming parallel to the shoreline
- When out of the current, swim at an angle toward the shore



Flooding

- Move to higher ground immediately
- Do not drive on or into a flooded roadway – turn around; don't drown



Suspicious Behavior

- If you see something, say something
- You can report suspicious behavior to your local law enforcement agency or by calling **1-855-FLA-SAFE (1-855-352-7233)**



Hazardous Materials Incident

- Listen for direction from authorities on evacuating or sheltering in place



Damaged buildings

- Do not enter a damaged building until local authorities say it is safe
- Leave your home if there is shifting or unusual noises
- Don't walk or drive through floodwaters



Power lines

- Stay far away from damaged power lines whether they've fallen or are dangling overhead



Power Outage

- Use flashlights not candles to avoid fire risk
- Practice portable generator safety; see **page 11**
- Be careful with food and water- food in the refrigerator can start to spoil after four hours; drink bottled water only, as purification systems may not be working, and always use camp stoves/grills outdoors only

Evacuation Zones vs. Flood Zones

Though they are often mistaken for each other, Flood Zones and Evacuation Zones are two very different things. So what's the difference? When do you use them? Here is what you need to know:

Evacuation Zones	Flood Zones
<p>These are areas that may be ordered to evacuate during a hurricane. These zones are mapped by the National Hurricane Center and indicate areas that will be affected by storm surge.</p> <p>Zones in Hillsborough County are identified from A - E, and there are parts of the county that are not in an evacuation zone. On the other hand, all mobile and manufactured homes are considered Zone A, regardless of where they are in the county.</p>	<p>These federally identified zones indicate a property's risk for flooding throughout the year. This zone has nothing to do with hurricanes or other emergencies, and everything to do with your property insurance and building requirements. Every property is in a flood zone.</p>

It's important to know both your Flood Zone and your Evacuation Zone, and the difference between them. You can find out your evacuation and flood zones by using the tools at [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe).

Still unsure? Here's a helpful guide on when to use which map:

When to check your Evacuation Zone	When to check your Flood Zone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before hurricane season to make sure your family is prepared • During a hurricane or major storm, to know if you should evacuate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you own, rent, or are buying a new property and don't know if you need flood insurance • If you refinance or get a mortgage • If you need building permits for work on your property

Additional Resources

- Visit [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe) for more information on disasters in Hillsborough County, more in-depth tips on how to make a plan, evacuation, and shelter in place information
- Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for more information about preparing for disasters and the government's role in response
- Visit [FloridaDisaster.biz](https://www.floridadisaster.biz) to register your business in case of disasters
- Visit [HCFLGov.net](https://www.hcflgov.net) and search under Economic Development for more business services, workshops, and resources

2. Make a Plan

Disaster Preparedness Checklist

It's never too early or too late for Hillsborough County residents to prepare for a major event. Before a storm or other disaster heads this way, follow these steps below to prepare your families, homes, and businesses.

Know your zone: A flood zone is not the same as an evacuation zone. Learn the difference and find out which zone you are in by visiting [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe).

Prepare your pets: Stock the necessary supplies for your pet, including a pet crate, food, medications, proof of current vaccinations, and registration tag.

Pre-register for Special Needs Disaster Assistance: Residents with special needs, seniors, and those without transportation can pre-register for shelter and transportation at [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe) or [hillsborough.floridahealth.gov](https://www.hillsborough.floridahealth.gov).

Get your property storm-ready: Take steps to get your residence or property ready for hurricanes and other inclement weather. **See page 10.**

Review Insurance policies: It is important to review and understand your policies including your deductibles. Take pictures of your valuables; take important papers with you if you have to evacuate and/or scan them into a computer file.

Consider buying flood insurance. Flooding can occur everywhere in Florida, not just along the coastline. A standard homeowner or renters policy does NOT cover damage from flood; you will need to purchase a separate flood insurance policy.

Ready Your Business

For businesses, disasters can come in many forms. A new, free tool available to Hillsborough County businesses connects them with help before, during, and after disasters. Businesses can register at [FloridaDisaster.biz](https://www.floridadisaster.biz). For more information, businesses can contact Hillsborough County Economic Development at **(813) 204-9267**.

Your business depends on your employees. Remember, your emergency plan should include everyone.



Disaster Kit Checklist

General

- Two-week minimum supply of medication, regularly used medical supplies, and a list of allergies
- A list of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices
- Batteries
- Flashlights, do not use candles
- NOAA Weather Radio, battery operated or hand cranked
- Cash, banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm
- Cell phone chargers
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children

Phone Numbers

- Maintain a list of important phone numbers including: County emergency management office, evacuation sites, doctors, banks, schools, veterinarian, out of town contacts, friends and family

Clothing

- Rain gear such as jackets, hats, umbrellas and rainboots
- Sturdy shoes or boots and work gloves

Special Needs Items

- Specialty items for infants, small children, the elderly, and family members with disabilities

First Aid Items

- First Aid Manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
- Sterile gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sewing needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Disinfectant wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Thermometer
- Tube of petroleum jelly
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or other pain reliever
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Antacid
- Laxative
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips

Food and Water

- Food
- Nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, baby food, and any special dietary items to last at least seven days
- Water, one gallon per person per day
- Non-electric can opener
- Paper plates
- Napkins
- Plastic cups
- Utensils

Important Documents

- Insurance cards
- Medical records
- Banking information
- Credit card numbers
- Copies of social security cards
- Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
- Other personal documents
- Set of car, house, and office keys
- Service animal I.D., veterinary records, and proof of ownership
- Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug, and dosage
- Copy of Will

*Items should be kept in a waterproof container

Vehicle

- Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline

Pet Care Items

- Pet food and water to last at least 7 days
- Proper identification
- Medical records/microchip information
- A carrier or cage
- Muzzle and leash
- Water and food bowls
- Medications
- Supplies for your service animal

FloridaDisaster.org

When to Stay and When to Go

In case of a disaster, it may be safest for your family to evacuate, or it may be better to shelter in place. These tips can help you create a plan in case of any disaster.

Stay or Go? Evacuating During a Storm

Having a plan means knowing when you can safely stay and when it's time to go. Check here for a guide:

1. Has Hillsborough County ordered an evacuation?

NO

If there's no evacuation order, you can safely shelter in place no matter where you are.



YES

See question 2

2. Do you live in a mobile or manufactured home?

NO

See question 3



YES

Go! Mobile and manufactured homes are considered zone A and must evacuate when an order is called. Consider the options under question 4 when making your evacuation plan.

3. Do you live in an evacuation zone?

NO

You will not be ordered to evacuate. Shelter in place and consider hosting friends and family that may need to evacuate.

I don't know

Find your evacuation zone at [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe). Remember, evacuation zones are different than flood zones.

YES

See question 4

4. Was your zone ordered to evacuate?

NO

Shelter in place and consider hosting friends and family that may need to evacuate.



YES



It's time to go! When evacuating, it's important to have a plan. Consider the following options from first to last when setting your plan.

1. Reach out to family and friends outside the evacuation zone to see if they can host you.

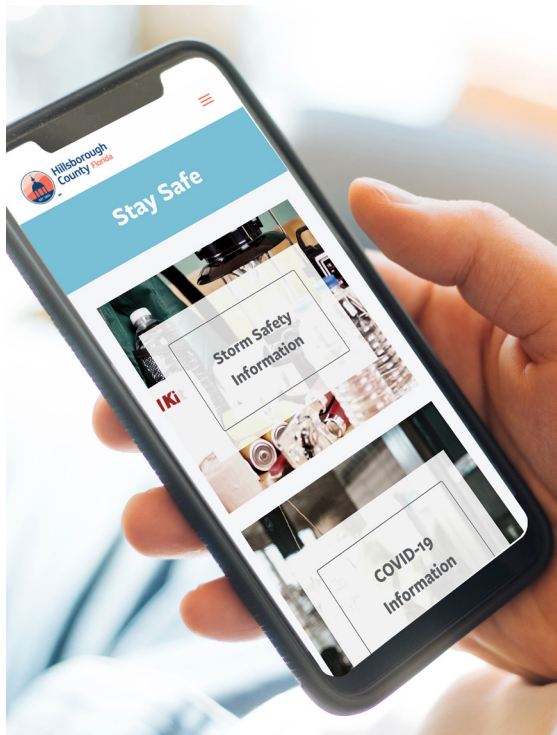
2. Hotels and motels outside of the evacuation zone are great options for evacuating.

3. If you have no other option, take shelter in a Hillsborough County emergency shelter. **This should be a last resort.**

Evacuation Plans

If you live in an evacuation zone, you may be called to evacuate in an emergency. Mobile and manufactured home residents throughout the County must evacuate when an order is called. When creating an evacuation plan, consider the following:

- Have a plan on where you will relocate
- Plan for delays and multiple stops; keep your gas tank full
- Keep cash on hand in case you need to utilize a transportation service
- Plan to evacuate tens of miles instead of hundreds of miles
- Know where to find State Evacuation Routes to get on the highway faster. These signs are usually white and blue and read “Evacuation Route”
- Visit the Hillsborough County Hurricane Evacuation Area Tool on [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe) for real time shelter locations and evacuation routes
- Visit [GoHART.org](https://www.goHART.org) for bus evacuation routes
- Remember: If you do not evacuate when transportation is made available, the storm may prevent additional vehicles from coming to pick you up



Shelter in Place Plans

Sheltering in place may be best if you're not in an evacuation zone, or if there is not a hurricane-related disaster. To shelter in place, follow these steps:

- Go inside immediately; take family and pets with you
- Close and lock your doors and windows; close air vents and fireplace
- Turn off your fans, air conditioning, and heating systems
- Turn off all exhaust fans in kitchens, bathrooms, or other spaces
- Go into an interior room with as few windows as possible
- Stay in place until advised it's safe to leave
- Monitor local TV stations, radio stations, [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe), and official Hillsborough County social media on Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor for updates

When It's Time to Return

In case of large-scale disaster, it could be weeks before roads are safe and opened, and rescue workers can deliver water and food to the area. It could be weeks before grocery stores and other basic services are restored as well. Stay informed. Wait until authorities say it is safe to return.

If a disaster happens in Hillsborough County, it is your responsibility to arrange loans, insurance, contractors, and other things that you will need to recover. **Preparing early and staying prepared is the only way to make sure you'll be ready to ride out any disaster.**

- Enter your home with caution
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls
- Check refrigerated foods for spoilage
- Beware of snakes, insects, and other animals driven to higher ground by floodwater
- Do not use candles or open flames indoors
- Use a flashlight to inspect for damage
- Check electric or gas
- Turn power off if house was flooded
- Take photos of the damage will help in filing insurance claims
- Contact your insurance claims agent as soon as possible

3. Stay Informed

Get Connected. Stay Alert.

- **HCFL Alert** is Hillsborough County's official mass notification system to keep everyone informed about emergencies. Register at [HCFLGov.net/HCFLAlert](https://www.hcflgov.net/HCFLAlert)
- Follow Hillsborough County's official social media accounts @HillsboroughFL on **Facebook** and **Twitter**, and sign up for **Nextdoor**, for official information and updates during emergencies



Did You Know...

Storm Surge: Real Threat, or Hollywood Myth?

You may have noticed tall signs in your neighborhood warning you about storm surge. Those aren't real, right? Wrong.

Storm surge is what happens when water from the ocean is pushed to shore by weather like tropical storms or hurricanes. During hurricane season, storm surge is one of the primary threats to Hillsborough County residents, and

one of the factors that determine whether your neighborhood will be ordered to evacuate.

Making and Using Sandbags

When used correctly, sandbags may be useful in redirecting stormwater and debris from your home. However, there are some limits to what sandbags can do.

Learn about making and using sandbags, at [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe).

Hurricane Season in Hillsborough County (June 1 – November 30)

Throw these 8 Hurricane Myths to the Wind

Don't let untrue claims about hurricanes put your family at risk. Hurricane season spawns lots of myths and disinformation. Here are eight of them:

Myth	Fact
Placing tape on windows helps prevent glass from breaking in high winds.	If anything, tape holds together large chunks of glass that are more dangerous than small shards. Forget tape. Install shutters, plywood, or impact-resistant windows.
Wind is the deadliest part of a hurricane.	It's water. About half of hurricane-related deaths in the United States are attributed to storm surge, the sea level rise caused mainly by a tropical system pushing water toward the coast. Flooding due to rain is another major killer.
I'm not in the track "cone of uncertainty," so I'm OK.	The cone shows the possible path of the center of a storm. It does not depict potentially destructive weather which can extend far beyond.
Emptying the swimming pool keeps it from overflowing into your house during heavy rains.	This precaution doesn't hold water. Saturated ground can lift an empty pool. A pool filled with water is more likely to stay put.
Get as far away as possible from a storm's projected path.	When evacuating, go to a safe location where your family can ride out the storm, such as a hotel or friend or family member's home. Staying at a hurricane shelter is the last option.
After a storm passes, you're safe.	People die or are badly injured removing debris from their homes and yards, falling off ladders while making repairs, accidentally touching high-voltage power lines, entering floodwaters, and becoming overheated. Be sure to remove debris safely and with the aid of others.
Your homeowners insurance has you covered.	Most policies do not pay for repairs or losses due to floodwater. That often requires an additional policy, or a rider to the one you have.
It can't happen where I live.	Floridians who say they live in an area where hurricanes don't hit, or a storm struck last year so it won't happen again, are wrong. Long-term hurricane season forecasts, as well as days-out predictions of a hurricane's path, are unreliable. It's wise to prepare, every year.

Prepare Your Property

Hurricanes, tropical systems, and even intense afternoon thunderstorms can cause serious damage. Here are steps you can take to get your property disaster ready:

Clean rain gutters and drain pipes, ensuring no obstacles block the flow of water.

Remove trees with rotting trunks, and trim limbs and shrubs near your house.

Move patio furniture, potted plants, bird baths, and other lightweight, unsecured items indoors. Items that can't be moved indoors should be tied down or secured.

Keep your insurance information and other important documents in a fireproof, waterproof safe or box. Inventory everything you have with video or photos.

Turn over objects that collect rainfall and can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.



Renters should also be prepared to weather a storm. Renters should consider getting insurance to protect their belongings. Landlords should make sure tenants know if there are any responsibilities they must take care of on the property. Both parties should consider exchanging emergency information, in case it's needed.

Mobile and manufactured home residents should know that if an evacuation is called they must evacuate – no matter where their home is located in the County. All mobile and manufactured homes are considered to be in Evacuation Zone A.

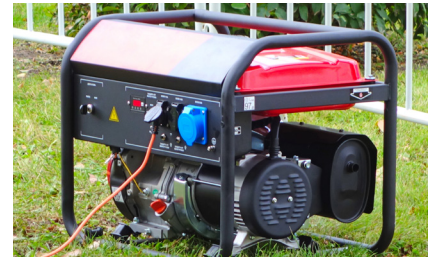


Power Pointers

- If you see a downed power line, do not touch it. Do not touch tree limbs or other objects touching a power line
- Do not attempt to tie generators into the house circuit. This can be dangerous to you, your neighbors, and to linemen. Plug appliances directly into the generator
- Should the power go out while you are cooking, remember to turn the stove off and remove any cookware from the cooking surfaces and oven
- Do not open refrigerators or freezers during an outage unless absolutely necessary. Repeated openings cause the cold air to escape and food to thaw more quickly
- If you smell gas, leave your home immediately and call power company

Portable Generators

When a disaster cuts off electricity in your neighborhood, a portable generator can be your best friend. Or, it can cause serious harm. If you rely on a generator to provide power in an outage, it's critical to know how to use it properly.



Do	Don't
Run your machine a few times during the year, to ensure its ready when you need it.	Place a running generator inside your home or garage. The exhaust is deadly.
Have plenty of fresh fuel to power your generator.	Store fuel in your home or garage near fire hazards.
Check the oil and use heavy-duty, properly grounded extension cords.	Connect a generator to your home electrical box or exceed the wattage of your generator's capacity without the help of a licensed electrician.

If you receive an alert on your TV, phone, or radio:



- Take the actions listed here.
- Follow instructions from local officials.
- Follow the instructions in the alert.



Advisory and Statement

Be aware! A hazard is expected to occur in your area or nearby, but its impact is not expected to be life-threatening.



Watch

Be prepared! A hazard may possibly occur in your area or nearby.



Warning

Take action! A hazard is expected to occur or is already occurring in your area or nearby, and its impact may be serious.

"THIS IS A TEST"

Officials sometimes send test or practice messages. Consider using this as a reminder to check your emergency plan and supplies.

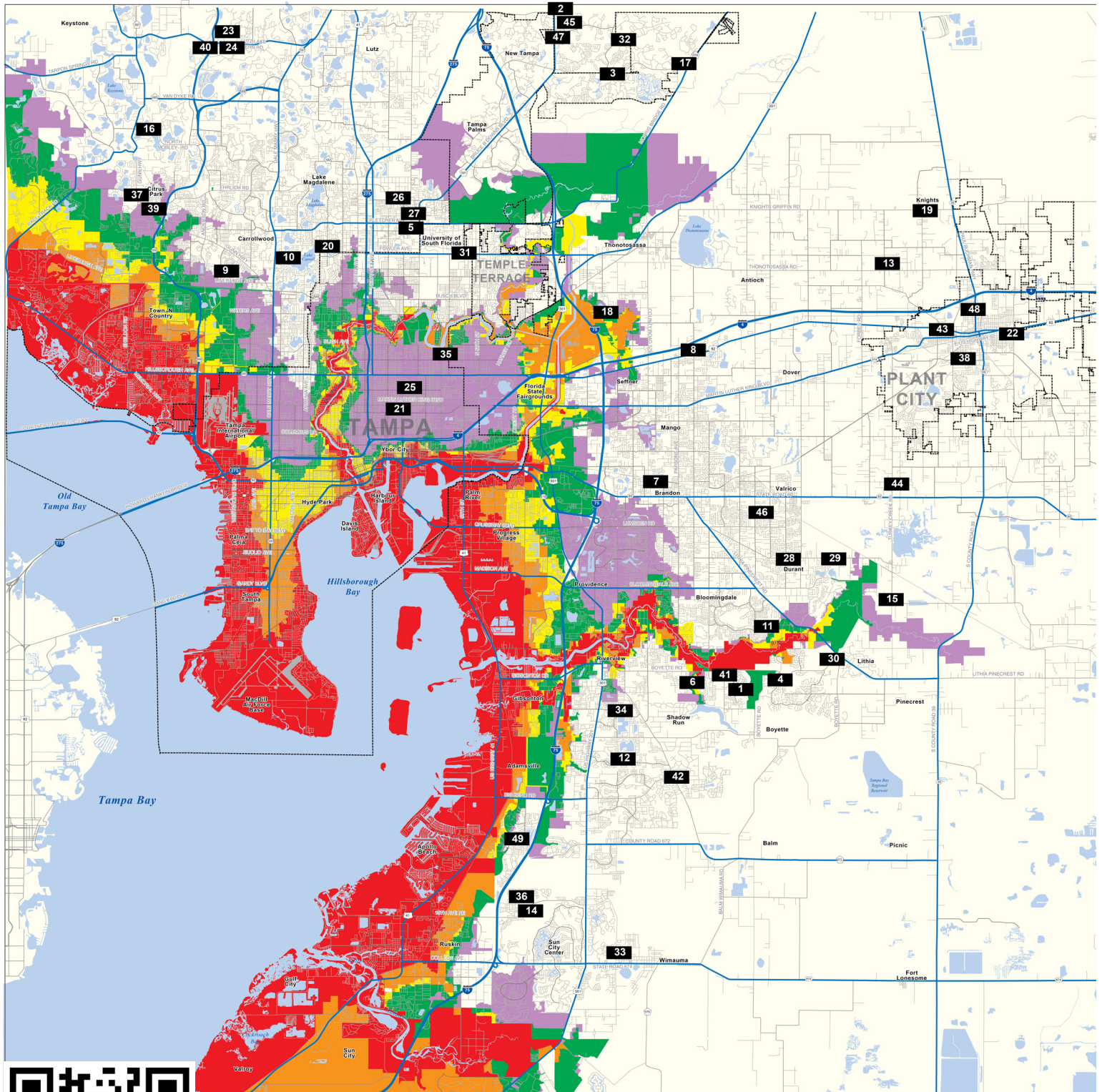
Some hazards may not have an advisory, watch, or warning.

Visit [Ready.gov/Be-Informed](https://www.ready.gov/be-informed) to learn more about hazards not included in this guide.

This is general guidance. Always defer to the alert.

Hillsborough County Evacuation Zones

— Evacuation Routes 1 Shelters



Note: This is a quick reference map. For a more detailed map scan the QR code, or visit: HCFLGov.net/heat






Legend

Evacuation Level	Wind Velocity (MPH)	Potential Tide Heights (FT)	Areas To Be Evacuated
A	74 to 85	To 11'	Red areas plus all mobile home residents.
B	96 to 110	To 17'	Red and Orange areas plus all mobile home residents.
C	111 to 130	To 22'	Red, Orange, and Yellow areas plus all mobile home residents.
D	131 to 155	To 31'	Red, Orange, Yellow, and Green areas plus all mobile home residents.
E	156 and over	To 38'	Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, and Purple areas plus all mobile home residents.

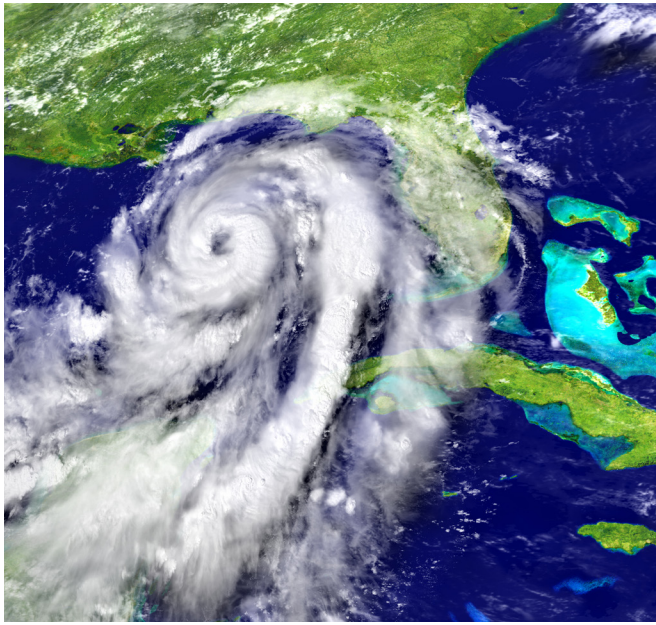
	Shelter Names	Address	Pets
1	Barrington Middle	5925 Village Center Dr	✓
2	Bartels Middle	9020 Imperial Oak Blvd	✓
3	Benito Middle	10101 Cross Creek Blvd	
4	Bevis Elem	5720 Osprey Ridge Dr	
5	Bowers-Whitley	13609 N 22Nd St	
6	Boyette Springs Elem	10141 Sedgebrook Dr	
7	Brandon High	1101 Victoria St	
8	Burnett Middle	1010 N Kingsway Rd	✓
9	Canella Elem	10707 Nixon Rd	
10	Carrollwood Elem	3516 McFarland Rd	
11	Cimino Elem	4329 Culbreath Rd	
12	Collins Elem	12424 Summerfield Blvd	
13	Cork Elem	3501 Cork Rd	
14	Cypress Creek Elem	4040 Ne 19Th Av	
15	Durant Senior High	4748 Cougar Path	✓
16	Hammond Elem	8008 North Mobley Rd	
17	Heritage Elem	18201 East Meadows Rd	
18	Jennings Middle	9325 Governors Run Dr	
19	Knights Elem	4815 Keene Rd	
20	Lake Magdalene Elem	2002 Pine Lake Dr	
21	Lockhart Elem	3719 N 17Th St	
22	Marshall Middle	18 S Maryland Ave	
23	Martinez Middle	5601 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd	
24	Mckitrick Elem	5503 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd	
25	Middleton High	4801 N 22Nd St	
26	Mort Elem	1806 Bearss Ave	
27	Muller Elem	13615 N 22Nd St	
28	Mulrennan Middle	4215 Durant Rd	
29	Nelson Elem	5413 Durant Rd	
30	Newsome High	16510 Fish Hawk Bv	
31	Pizzo Elem	11701 Bull Run Dr	
32	Pride Elem	10310 Lions Den Dr	
33	Reddick Elem	325 West Lake Dr	
34	Sessums Elem	11525 Ramble Creek Dr	
35	Sheehy Elem	6402 N 40Th St	
36	Shields Middle	15732 Beth Shields Way	✓
37	Sickles High	7950 Gunn Hwy	✓
38	Simmons Career Ctr	1202 W Grant St	
39	Smith, Sgt. Paul Middle	14303 Citrus Pointe Dr	✓
40	Steinbrenner High	5575 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd	✓
41	Stowers Elem	13915 Barrington Stower D	
42	Summerfield Elem	11990 Big Bend Rd	

	Shelter Names	Address	Pets
43	Tomlin Middle	501 Woodrow Wilson St	
44	Turkey Creek Elem	5005 S Turkey Creek Rd	
45	Turner Elem	9190 Imperial Oak Blvd	
46	Valrico Elem	609 S Miller Rd	
47	Wharton High	20150 Bruce B Downs Blvd	
48	Wilson Elem	702 W English St	
49	York Innovation Academy	5995 Covington Garden Dr	

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale

	Wind Speed	Type of Damage
	74-95 mph	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage: Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles, vinyl siding and gutters. Large branches of trees will snap and shallowly rooted trees may be toppled. Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days.
	96-110 mph	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage: Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks.
	111-129 mph	Devastating damage will occur: Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
	130-156 mph	Catastrophic damage will occur: Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
	157 mph or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur: A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.

Source: <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutshws.php>



Emergency Shelters

In the event of an emergency, Hillsborough County has emergency shelters for residents and visitors. **Shelters are a last resort** and should be used only if you have no other options for evacuation. Residents should evacuate with friends or family or to a hotel/motel outside of the evacuation zone if possible.

If you must evacuate to a shelter, be advised:

- Shelters are opened on an as-needed basis
- Shelter openings may vary with each emergency
- Never go to a shelter unless local officials have announced it is open

Stay informed on shelter locations and openings by signing up at [HCFLGov.net/HCFAlert](https://www.hcflgov.net/HCFAlert).

All schools are ADA compliant.

General Population Emergency Shelters

These shelters are intended to provide immediate protection and save the lives of those in the path of a catastrophic and deadly storm. If you need to shelter in a County evacuation shelter, keep in mind:

- Evacuation shelters will not have cots, blankets, or supplies like face masks and hand sanitizer
- Each resident may only have space the size of approximately one sleeping bag
- Bring your disaster kit with water, food, bedding, medications, hygiene items, and any other specific items you might need for your family. See **page 5**
- Alcohol, illegal drugs, and weapons are not permitted
- Plan for delays; transportation could take 90 minutes or longer and will have to make multiple stops
- Add money to your disaster fund for transportation service. You can always take a shared service like Uber, Lyft, cab companies, etc.
- Sheltering in place is a practical option to consider if you live in a sound structure outside of the evacuation area (especially if built since 2002 and not located in a flood prone area)



- Evacuate tens of miles instead of hundreds of miles
- The Hillsborough County Hurricane Evacuation Assessment Tool (HEAT) available at [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe) includes real-time open/closed shelter locations, evacuation zones, and HART evacuation routes
- Visit [HCFLGov.net/HCFLAlert](https://www.hcflgov.net/HCFLAlert) and register for HCFL Alert for the timeliest updates
- 20 feet of space available in General Population Shelter

Pet-Friendly Emergency Shelters

Hillsborough County offers limited pet-friendly shelters. To use a pet-friendly shelter you must:

- Bring proof of current rabies vaccination and license for dogs and cats
- Place pet on a leash or in a crate
- Bring a crate large enough for your pet to stand up and turn around. Cats need a crate large enough to contain litter and food/water
- Bring pet supplies, including: food, water, litter, treats, cleaning supplies, medications, etc.



You are responsible for the care of your pet while in the shelter.

Cohabitation of pets and owners is not permitted.

Special Needs Shelters

Hillsborough County residents with special needs can register for special needs shelters through the Florida Health Department in Hillsborough County by visiting [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe) or [hillsborough.floridahealth.gov](https://www.hillsborough.floridahealth.gov)

Those with special needs include:

- Someone with a medical condition that requires periodic observation, assessment, or maintenance
- Someone who depends on electricity for medical equipment, such as an oxygen machine or feeding tube
- Someone who, in a health expert's opinion, might not fare well in a general population shelter

Registration before a storm expedites entry at the special needs shelter and assists shelters with planning. Residents not registered prior to a storm will be triaged onsite to determine if they meet eligibility.

Instructions for registration and more information is available at [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe).

It is important to pre-register for special needs shelters.

- Special needs shelters are for residents whose medical condition may require the use of electrical equipment, oxygen, or dialysis, or individuals with physical, cognitive, or medical conditions that may require assistance from medical professionals
- Please be ready when your transportation arrives; they will not return for you
- If you have a pet, please ensure you have all supplies prepared and that you have a carrier
- Bring a caregiver
- Remember only 60 square feet of space is available in Special Needs Shelters

County Evacuation Bus Routes are Available at: GoHART.org

If you have no way to evacuate:

- County Bus Transportation-HART/Hillsborough County Sunshine Line/School District provide free emergency evacuation bus services to one of four open public shelters
- There are nine evacuation bus routes, which are designated with a letter from “A” to “I.” Each route is assigned to deliver passengers to one of the four shelters
- For County Evacuation Bus Routes go to GoHART.org and search for “Emergency Evacuation Maps”

The State Evacuation Routes are available for people utilizing their cars to evacuate on an interstate.

State Evacuation Routes signs typically are located along state thoroughfares, are white and blue, include arrows and read: Evacuation Route.

The County Evacuation Shelter Bus Routes are for buses headed towards the shelters that service the routes.

Signs for the HART Evacuation Shelter Bus Routes are typically on top of existing HART Bus Route Stop Signs.

If you do not evacuate when transportation is made available, the storm may prevent additional vehicles from coming to pick you up.

4. Get Involved



When disaster strikes, local, state, and national emergency management professionals engage and respond, but more help often is necessary. Volunteer opportunities exist for residents to assist before, during, or after a disaster.

Join a **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** in your area. [Hillsborough County’s CERT program](#) educates volunteers about disaster preparedness and the emergency situations that may impact the county.

CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, allowing them to focus on more complex tasks.

By joining a Hillsborough County CERT team, you’ll get training in:

- Basic disaster response skills
- Fire safety
- Light search and rescue
- Team organization
- Disaster medical operations



CERT volunteers are trained, certified, and work with Hillsborough County’s Office of Emergency Management.

Another volunteer opportunity is with [ARES RACES](#), a field organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the largest amateur radio advocacy and fraternal organization in the United States. ARES provides organization and guidance to help amateur radio operators to establish local emergency communications volunteer groups. ARES Emergency Coordinators work with local government agencies such as police, fire, sheriff, search and rescue, and offices of emergency management to determine what emergency communications needs may exist and how to best serve the community.



From finding a **Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)** in your area, to donating supplies to a local charity, there are many ways you can help before, during, and after a disaster.

Visit Ready.Gov/Volunteer for information on volunteer opportunities.

Family Emergency Communication Plan

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Person #1: _____

Address: _____

Mobile #: _____

Other # or social media: _____

Email: _____

Important medical or other information: _____

Person #2: _____

Address: _____

Mobile #: _____

Other # or social media: _____

Email: _____

Important medical or other information: _____

SCHOOL, CHILDCARE, CAREGIVER, AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Person #1: _____

Address: _____

Emergency/Hotline #: _____

Website: _____

Emergency Plan/Pick-Up: _____

Person #2: _____

Address: _____

Emergency/Hotline #: _____

Website: _____

Emergency Plan/Pick-Up: _____

Get Connected. Stay Alert.

Hillsborough County's official mass notification system

HCFLGov.net/HCFLAlert

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name: _____

Mobile #: _____

Address: _____

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT

Name: _____

Mobile #: _____

Address: _____

EMERGENCY MEETING PLACES

Indoor: _____

Instructions: _____

Out-of-Neighborhood: _____

Instructions: _____

Out-of-Town: _____

Instructions: _____

IMPORTANT NUMBERS OR INFORMATION

Police - Dial 911 or #: _____

Fire - Dial 911 or #: _____

Poison Control #: _____

Doctor #: _____

Doctor #: _____

Pediatrician #: _____

Dentist #: _____

Medical Insurance #: _____

Policy #: _____

Hospital / Clinic #: _____

Pharmacy #: _____

Homeowner/Rental Insurance: _____

Flood Insurance: _____

Policy #: _____

Veterinarian: _____ Kennel: _____

Electric Company #: _____

Water Company #: _____

Alternate/Accessible Transportation #: _____

Other #: _____

Important Contact Information

The following numbers may be useful in case of emergencies. Calling 911 should be reserved for emergencies only. For all the information found in this guide and more, you can visit [HCFLGov.net/StaySafe](https://www.hcflgov.net/StaySafe).

Disaster Related Information	Department / Agency	Phone Number	Website
Special Needs Shelter Registration	Florida Department of Health	(813) 307-8063	HCFLGov.net/StaySafe
General information and assistance	Hillsborough County Customer Service Call Center	(813) 272-5900	HCFLGov.net/StaySafe
Pet information	Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center	(813) 744-5660	HCFLGov.net/StaySafe
Building and development information	Hillsborough County Development Services	(813) 272-5600	HCFLGov.net/StaySafe
Solid waste information	Hillsborough County Solid Waste	(813) 272-5680	HCFLGov.net/StaySafe
Business preparation and assistance	Hillsborough County Economic Development	(813) 204-9267	HCFLGov.net/StaySafe
Law enforcement information	Florida Highway Patrol	(813) 558-1800	Flhsmv.gov
Law enforcement information	Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office	(813) 247-8000	Teamhcso.com
Communications and internet information	Frontier	(800) 239-4430	Frontier.com
Communications and internet information	Spectrum	(800) 267-6094	Spectrum.com
Natural gas utilities	TECO Peoples Gas	(877) 832-6747	Peoplegas.com
Electric utilities	TECO	(877) 588-1010	Tecoenergy.com
Crisis counseling and service referral information	Crisis Center of Tampa Bay	211	Crisiscenter.com
Crisis counseling and service referral information	American Red Cross	(813) 348-4820	Redcross.org
Crisis counseling and service referral information	Catholic Charities	(813) 631-4370	Ccdosp.org
Crisis counseling and service referral information	Salvation Army	(813) 226-0055	Salvationarmyflorida.org/tampa
Business preparation and assistance	Business Disaster Hotline	(813) 301-7458	N/A
Transit and emergency transportation information	Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART)	(813) 254-4278	GoHART.org
Drainage issues, street flooding, or other flooding issues	Hillsborough County Public Works	(813) 635-5400	HCFLGov.net/AtYourService



**Hillsborough
County Florida**