

Hurricane Preparedness Guide *for* Veterans and Families



Be Informed.
Make a Plan.
Be Ready.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)

Don't Delay. Prepare Now



Preparation for hurricane season is critically important. Do not wait until a storm watch or warning is issued for your area to begin your preparations. The best time to prepare is now.

Prior to Hurricane Season



December - May

- ◇ Know your area's risk of hurricanes.
- ◇ Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- ◇ Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home. Consider a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level possible that is not subject to flooding.
- ◇ Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route, and shelter locations. If you have a medical condition you may qualify for a Special Needs Shelter registration. Check with your local emergency management office on requirements for registration.
- ◇ Consider purchasing a battery-operated weather radio.

- ◇ If you have a significant health condition that requires life-saving equipment such as a ventilator, check with your VA healthcare provider to see if you are eligible for a generator to keep that equipment in working order should you lose power. FEMA also has a program to provide financial assistance for "medical purpose" generators.
- ◇ Keep important documents in a safe place or create password-protected digital copies.
- ◇ Protect your property. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves in plumbing to prevent backups. Consider hurricane shutters.

Start of Hurricane Season



June 1

- ◇ Get your hurricane supply kit together and make sure it is readily accessible. Stock up on non-perishable supplies.
- ◇ Make a good inventory of valuable items. Insurance companies will accept photos as evidence. Review your insurance policies. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- ◇ If you live in a mobile home or structure that may not withstand a hurricane or may be flooded, contact your local emergency management office to locate the nearest community shelter and map out an evacuation plan.

- ◇ If you plan to evacuate, consider travel away from hurricane hazards in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.
- ◇ Make sure your battery-operated radio is in working order. Remember to replace its battery every 6 months.
- ◇ Identify an out-of-state family member/friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact. Plan how you will communicate with family members. You can call, text, email or your social media. Remember that during disasters, sending text messages is usually more reliable than make phone calls.
- ◇ Post emergency telephone numbers in a visible location in your home or save them to your cell phone. Make sure your children know how and when to call 9-1-1.
- ◇ Talk with your VA healthcare provider about any specific preparedness instructions related to your health condition or concerns. Keep a list of medications handy.
- ◇ Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route, and shelter locations. If you have a medical condition you may qualify for a Special Needs Shelter registration. Check with your local emergency management office on requirements for registration.
- ◇ Consider purchasing a battery-operated weather radio.

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water – 3 gallons per day per person | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery Operated Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bleach | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candles and matches or lighter | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duct Tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys, books, games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency cooking supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extension cores – heavy duty | <input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets/Pillows | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet care items |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain Gear and sturdy shoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Ready to eat canned and prepared food |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Valuable papers |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Valid drivers' license |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash |

Hurricane 36 Hours Out



- ◇ Turn on your TV or radio to get the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- ◇ Restock your emergency preparedness kit. Buy last-minute groceries now. You should have enough supplies on hand for at least 3 days; 5-7 days might be better. Do not rely on local relief organizations such as the American Red Cross or others to provide you food or water during the first few days following a hurricane.

- ◇ Buy several bags of ice to keep in your freezer. You can also freeze water in gallon jugs or large Ziplock bags.
- ◇ Get cash from ATM or your bank. If businesses lose power, they cannot take credit or debit cards.
- ◇ Fill up the gas tank in your car (and your gas cans for generators if you have one); stock your car with emergency supplies and a change of clothes in case you need to leave your home quickly.
- ◇ If you feel your home is not safe to ride out the storm, call or visit your local shelter to find out when it will open and what their requirements are regarding pets and medical needs.
- ◇ Make sure you have enough medication and medical supplies to last at least 15 days. Talk with your VA healthcare provider about any specific instructions related to your health conditions or concerns.

Hurricane 18-36 Hours Out



- ◇ Keep your TV/radio on for storm updates and emergency information.
- ◇ Bring loose, lightweight objects inside that could become projectiles in high winds (patio furniture, garbage cans); anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (propane tanks); trim and remove trees close enough to fall on your home.

- ◇ Cover all your home's windows if possible. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection. Another option is to board up windows with 5/8" exterior grade or marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install.
- ◇ Make sure you have all necessary medical supplies and prescriptions filled. If you have medications that require refrigeration, make sure you have a small portable cooler or ice chest ready for easy transportation, if needed.

FIRST AID KIT

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (20) Adhesive bandages (various sizes) | <input type="checkbox"/> Laxatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) conforming roller gauze bandage | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) 3" x 3" sterile gauze pads | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) triangle bandages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) 3" cohesive bandage | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) 4" x 4" sterile gauze pads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (6) antiseptic wipes | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) antibacterial hand-wipe packages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2" width adhesive tape | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) pair non-latex gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold pack | <input type="checkbox"/> •Antibacterial ointment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers | <input type="checkbox"/> •Small, personal scissors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid manual | <input type="checkbox"/> •CPR breathing face shield |
| <input type="checkbox"/> •Anti-diarrheal medication | <input type="checkbox"/> Aspirin or pain reliever |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Antacid (for upset stomach) |

Hurricane 6 Hours Out



- ◇ Charge your cell phones now so you will have full battery in case you lose power.
- ◇ If you are not in an area that is recommended for evacuation, plan to stay home or where you are so long as it is safe.
- ◇ Close storm shutters and stay away from windows. Flying glass can injure you.
- ◇ Turn your refrigerator or freezer to the coldest setting and open only when necessary. If you lose power, food will last longer.
- ◇ Turn on your TV/radio and check every 30 minutes for latest weather updates and emergency instructions.

Hurricane Landfall



- ◇ If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Do not drive around barricades. Make sure you have your medications and medical supplies with you.
- ◇ If sheltering in place, go to your safe room – a small, interior, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor that is not subject to flooding.

- ◇ If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building but DO NOT climb into a closed attic.
- ◇ Listen for current emergency information and instructions either on TV or weather radio.

After Hurricane Passes



- ◇ If you have a life-threatening medical issue, contact 9-1-1 immediately.
- ◇ If you have other health concerns and are unable to go to the nearest VA clinic, contact your local VA or the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center 1-877-741-3400 for 24/7 nurse advice and triage.
- ◇ If you evacuated outside your local area and need care, you can go to any VA health care facility that is open to receive care.
- ◇ Contact your local VA to get updates on hospital and clinic operations, how to get prescription refills and reschedule appointments, if necessary.
- ◇ Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.
- ◇ If you lose power, use flashlights or other battery-operated light sources - DO NOT USE CANDLES. Only open refrigerators or freezers when necessary.

- ◇ If you evacuated, return home only when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.
- ◇ Be careful during clean-up. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
- ◇ Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. Do not touch downed power lines.
- ◇ Save phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.
- ◇ Document property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company.
- ◇ Use generators safely. Never put a generator inside your home or garage.

VA Emergency Pharmacy Program



In the event of a catastrophic event, VA may activate the Emergency Pharmacy program. It is important to check with your VA medical center to see if this program is available to support your medication needs for a specific emergency or disaster. Through this program, Veterans with a VA ID card who need an emergency supply of medication can go to any retail pharmacy open to the public with a written prescription on a valid VA prescription form or active VA prescription bottle (not older than 6 months AND with refills available) to receive at least a 10-day supply. Controlled substances are not included in this program; they must be filled by VA. If a VA patient is

displaced, has lost their medication or no longer has a written prescription or bottle, they can contact the Heritage Health Customer Care Line at 1-866-265-0124, option 1. Hours of operation will vary depending on requirements.

VA Issued Medical Equipment



If you have a health condition that requires life-saving equipment such as a ventilator, check with your VA healthcare provider to see if you are eligible for a generator. FEMA also has a program to provide assistance for “medical purpose” generators. If you have been issued a CPAP to prevent respiratory failure and have multiple chronic conditions worsened by sleep apnea or when a BiPAP device is used as a non-invasive pressure ventilator, you may be eligible to receive VA issued back-up batteries. If you are on home oxygen, the home oxygen company should have an emergency plan in place. Check with them for requirements to receive backup tanks. Many power companies have programs for individuals who have special medical equipment at home and are dependent on that electric-powered equipment to live. While registering for this service does not guarantee you will not lose power, it can provide notifications before and after a major hurricane, can help with referrals to that provide assistance. Contact your local power company to learn more.

Other VA Services

Veterans, their beneficiaries and caregivers may contact the VA’s Health Resource Center Disaster Hotline at 1-800-507-4571 regarding VA health benefits, eligibility, billing and pharmacy-related inquiries during the storm or disaster period.

Bruce W. Carter Dept. of VA Medical Center
1201 NW 16th Street
Miami, FL 33125
305-575-7000 • 888-276-1785
www.miami.va.gov

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
727-398-6661 • 888-820-0230
www.baypines.va.gov

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612
813-972-2000 • 888-811-0107
www.tampa.va.gov

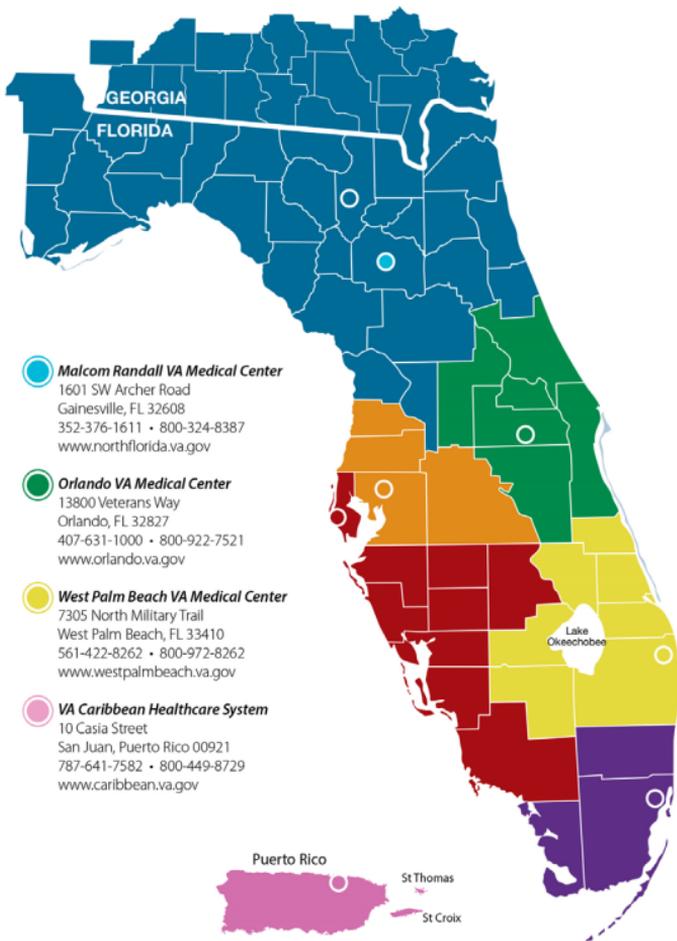
Lake City VA Medical Center
619 South Marion Avenue
Lake City, FL 32025
386-755-3016 • 800-308-8387
www.northflorida.va.gov

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608
352-376-1611 • 800-324-8387
www.northflorida.va.gov

Orlando VA Medical Center
13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL 32827
407-631-1000 • 800-922-7521
www.orlando.va.gov

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center
7305 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
561-422-8262 • 800-972-8262
www.westpalmbeach.va.gov

VA Caribbean Healthcare System
10 Casia Street
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921
787-641-7582 • 800-449-8729
www.caribbean.va.gov



VISN 8 Office of Communication and Stakeholder Relations

140 Fountain Parkway N. | St. Petersburg, FL 33716

VISN8CommunicationOffice@va.gov

VA



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