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Quail Forest
Cluster
Homes
Improvement
Association,
Unit One,
Inc., a Florida
not-for-profit
corporation

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Forward

This plan has been created by the Board of Directors of the Quail Forest Cluster Home Improvement Association, Unit One, Inc. (hereafter QF Association) in order to describe and guide activities before, during and after an emergency, disaster, or catastrophic event. The QF Association always defers to government authorities such as the sheriff, fire district, County or FEMA in an emergency. Therefore, owners and residents should consider this document as a guide in the absence of direction from a governmental agency. Also, the QF Association recognizes that, in some instances, facts or common sense may indicate that a course of action other than those described in this document may provide better protection for people and property. This document is not meant to preclude such alternative responses.

Objectives

- Identify and protect residents, visitors and workers at risk, as well as assets and vital records
- Reduce the risk of a disaster or damage caused by a disaster
- Improve the capability to resume operations after a disaster
- Strengthen ability to recover from damage to or loss of assets

Important Disclaimer

In the event of damage or serious threat to residents' property due to an emergency or disaster, the Quail Forest Board of Directors (hereafter QF Board) or Quail Forest Emergency Response Team (described in Responsible Parties, page 4) will take reasonable, temporary steps to protect that property (such as covering damaged roofs with tarps, covering broken windows and removing fallen trees or limbs that block access or pose a threat to private property). However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the owner to arrange for repairs or replacements, seeking payment or reimbursement from his/her homeowners insurance company. Also, pre-disaster mitigation steps such as installing plywood

or hurricane shutters over windows (do not put tape on your windows) and trimming trees on private property are the responsibility of the owner.

Homeowners Insurance Requirements

Section 2.33/2.34 of the QF Association Declarations states that each owner is required to purchase fire and extended coverage insurance, including public liability, for the full insurable value of the owner's unit and to keep that coverage in force continually. This insurance assures that funds are available for prompt repair or reconstruction of units in case of damage from any source. All policies must be HO 3 policies (not HO 6 policies, which are for condominiums and provide insufficient coverage). Each policy must also name the Quail Forest HOA at Management & Associates, 720 Brooker Creek Boulevard, # 206, Oldsmar, FL 34677 as a **“co- interested” party**. Protective or remedial services provided by the QF Association at its discretion before or after a disaster shall be reimbursed to the QF Association by the owner. (An insurance settlement can be used for this purpose.)

Scope of This Plan

This plan addresses activities and responsibilities during the four phases of emergency management (the emergency management cycle):

- Mitigation – identifying and addressing vulnerabilities in order to prevent an emergency and/or reduce the damage it can cause
- Preparedness – developing a written plan of the steps to be taken and responsibilities of individuals or organizations in the event of an impending or an actual emergency/disaster
- Response – carrying out the preparedness plan in an efficient and effective manner to prevent loss of lives or property and provide emergency assistance
- Recovery – returning all property and systems to a normal state and improving safety conditions and security practices

Responsible Parties

The Quail Forest community (hereafter QF community) is reliant on Pinellas County for law enforcement, fire, public safety and emergency services. The first contact in an emergency should be Pinellas County 911. See Appendix A for other contact numbers. It is important to emphasize that this plan is intended to support and not to interfere with or impede the efforts of Pinellas County Emergency Management Services, Emergency/Ambulance Services, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Department, State Law Enforcement, the Pinellas County Fire Department, FEMA, the National Guard, Federal/State/County Safety Personnel, Utility Company Services (electricity, water, or telephone), Wildlife Services, etc. Contact information for these services is in Appendix B.

Likewise, this plan is intended to support and not interfere with or impede the services of the East Lake Woodlands Community Association, which has responsibility for common property such as gates, guard houses, general drainage, and the ELW Parkway, ELW Boulevard and South Woodlands Drive within ELW. The lakes and drainage canals within the QF community are owned and maintained by ClubCorp, which also owns the country club and golf course. Should the emergency involve ELW property or be likely to affect other communities within ELW, Pinellas County 911 should be called first. To ensure that ELWCA knows about the emergency, you may also call the ELWCA rover at 813-462-8971 after first contacting 911.

For emergencies within the QF community, responsibility for mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery rests with the unit owners. The Quail Forest **Emergency Response Team**, appointed and empowered by the QF Board, will coordinate efforts unless a government agency, such as the County or FEMA, is providing direction. The Emergency Response Team members include the President of the Board of Directors, the Communications Chair of the Board, the Emergency Plan Managing Editor, the Property Manager, the Maintenance Manager and others appointed by the President. The Board Treasurer serves as an *ex officio* member of the Team. The purpose of appointing this Team and pre-assigning responsibilities, wherever possible, is to ensure that the QF community

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is not dependent upon one individual and that decisions and communications are closely coordinated.

If the Governor has declared a local emergency, the QF Board is granted **emergency powers** for the duration of the emergency, per Florida Statutes pertaining to HOAs. Among these emergency powers is the ability of the Board – and/or the Emergency Response Team it has constituted and authorized – to hold meetings without advance notice to homeowners and to make decisions regarding emergency response and recovery.

This plan is consistent with the concepts and terminology of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The plan will be tested and revised or updated as needed. All residents or workers in the QF community are advised to contact the President of the QF Board to suggest improvements for the future.

Definitions

- An **emergency** is a brief incident that involves risk to people or property and calls for immediate action. Examples include a localized leak, flooding or fire, or the presence of an armed and dangerous person.
- A **disaster** is an accident or natural catastrophe that causes great damage or loss of life, disrupts operations and has long-term consequences. Examples include fire, explosion, flooding or prolonged power/internet outage.
- A **catastrophic event** is characterized by communication difficulties, prolonged lack of basic services (power, clean water, housing), and possible unavailability of supplies, recovery services and human resources. Examples include a hurricane, major flooding, earthquake or tornado.

For the purposes of this plan, we will use the words disaster and emergency interchangeably. The plan is intended to be “generic” as well as “hazard specific,” with the understanding that all possible situations cannot be anticipated.

Emergency, disaster and catastrophic situations addressed by this plan include, but are not limited to, a natural, technological, civil and other impending or actual calamity that endangers life or the property of a constituted government.

- Natural: hurricanes, tropical storms, tornadoes, floods, lightning strikes, forest fires, sink holes, earthquakes or tsunamis
- Technological: transportation incidents (automobile, truck, aircraft, train), widespread power or internet outages, energy/fuel outages, hazardous material incidents, explosions
- Civil: terrorism, vandalism, active shooter incidents, warfare or bombs
- Other: major structural fires

Risk Assessment

QF consists of 186 cluster homes within East Lake Woodlands in Pinellas County, Florida. The average elevation is 7 to 10 feet above sea level. The entirety of QF is in Pinellas County Evacuation Zone B.¹ **Evacuation is mandated when potential storm tide heights are 8 feet or higher.**

The outflow canals of Lake Tarpon are less than a mile to the west, Tampa Bay 4 miles to the south, and the Gulf of Mexico 10 miles to the west. The Tampa International Airport is 16 miles away, the St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport 11 miles. MacDill Air Force Base is in Tampa, 25 miles to the east. Still other locations where accidents or terrorism can occur are the Clearwater Executive Airport, the Coast Guard Air Station, and the Lockheed Martin plant near the Sunflower Gate.

¹ **FEMA's flood maps** for the QF community (used for requiring flood insurance) were last prepared on 09/01/2003 and place the entirety of the community in a Minimal Flood Hazard zone but adjacent to an A (high risk) Zone. These flood maps have recently been redrawn. No change was made to ELW. Due to the fact that our **Evacuation Zone** was changed by the County from a C Zone to B as recently as 2016, this Plan stresses the **Evacuation Zone** and what it means for QF residents.

Vulnerabilities

- All properties within the QF community are potentially at risk for flooding due to high water levels and storm surges during tropical storms and hurricanes.
- All properties are potentially at risk for wind, rain and tree damage during tropical storms and hurricanes.
- Streets are potentially susceptible to flooding during heavy rains, and roads can washout. Do not drive into puddles unless you know that they are shallow.
- Broken glass and scraps of torn metal from carports, gutters and other sources are hazards.
- Wildlife such as alligators and poisonous snakes pose a potential risk.

Hazard Analysis

- Hurricanes, tropical storms, tropical depressions and tornados are potentially the most problematic natural emergencies or disasters for the Quail Forest community.
- Flooding can affect properties and travel in heavy downpours.
- Fires and brush fires are potential problems during periods of drought or in the event of lightning strikes. The risk is highest for homes located near conservation areas or the Brooker Creek Preserve. Structural fires and car fires are potential problems among cluster homes.
- Sink holes are also a potential risk.
- Hazardous materials can be a risk in the event of transportation of fuels or an incident at a nearby manufacturing facility.
- Aircraft crashes can happen anywhere. The most common aircraft in QF's air space are small private planes, commercial airlines, military or Coast Guard aircraft.
- Shortages of energy, food or water can threaten the welfare of QF residents.
- The contamination of water could threaten the welfare of QF residents.

- National emergencies, including a possible attack by terrorists or an enemy, can occur anywhere and may pose a threat to QF residents.

A weather-related disaster poses the greatest threat to the Quail Forest community. The impact of the disaster may be exacerbated if:

- All or most residents and visitors do not evacuate, if so ordered.
- Areas of the QF community's roads are deemed impassable due to flooding, the presence of debris and/or fire or rescue operations.
- Utilities (power, water, telephone) are down for 24 hours or longer.
- The Property Manager's office is inaccessible due to flood waters or damage and the Property Manager is forced to work remotely.
- QF's Board President, Board of Directors, Property Manager and/or Maintenance Manager are overtaxed and therefore unavailable.

Operational Plan

Mitigation/Risk Assessment

The QF Emergency Response Team collects, records and evaluates information about past disasters and known vulnerabilities in order to identify the need for mitigation efforts and to take steps to implement them. Inspections and maintenance schedules are assessed to ensure that areas considered problematic, such as roads and property prone to flooding, or trees that have low hanging branches or are diseased, are monitored on a regular basis and risks eliminated or lessened. The QF Board will take and store photographs or video recordings of the pool area and common property. Individual residents are responsible for photographs or video recordings of their own property, interiors and exteriors.

Preparedness

Preparedness involves identifying and prioritizing key assets and functions, as well as identifying the resources needed both to support response activities and to minimize the damage caused by the emergency. The top priority is human safety. Other priorities are prioritizing the order of assets or processes to assess and

recover, establishing minimum resources necessary for essential functions and developing alternate sources of critical resources. The QF Board, in conjunction with the Maintenance Manager, regularly identifies vulnerabilities such as clogged storm drains, clogged gutters and diseased or weak trees and takes steps to minimize the risks posed by these problems. Call the Service Coordinator at M&A, Rick Limbert at 813-433-2001, if you notice such problems, even on someone else's property. If the problematic trees are on common grounds, the QF Association assumes responsibility for removing or trimming them. If they are on residents' property, the QF Association will notify the resident of steps to be taken to reduce the risk. These steps are itemized in a list of **pre-disaster actions for emergencies** for which there is advance warning, prepared by the Emergency Response Team.

Other Appendices include a communications plan (Board/Property Manager/residents), local and state emergency management agencies, a list of QF Emergency Response Team members, and resources for cleanup and repairs. Also included in the Appendices is information about steps to take in the event of a hurricane or storm surge.

The QF Emergency Response Team also assure that copies of the QF Association's insurance documents and contracts are in a secure location and identifies the documentation needed to file an insurance claim.

Additionally, the QF Emergency Response Team assesses the sufficiency of the QF Association's contingency funds in the case of an emergency. The recommended amount of contingency funds is three months of operating expenses. The Team will address simplified or alternate accounting procedures that may be needed in the case of unavailable personnel or issues with accessing funds.

In the case of a catastrophic event, financial planning will take account of the fact that FEMA reimbursement will cover only expenses that are not covered by insurance. These expenses include but are not limited to stabilization emergency protective measures and sometimes debris removal. (Note that FEMA usually won't enter gated communities or private roads.) FEMA can only get involved in a **declared** disaster.

Response

This plan will be activated, and personnel mobilized at the direction of the QF Emergency Response Team, which reports to the QF Board with assessments and action plans.

Minor Incident:

- The Emergency Response Team:
 - ✓ Follows and directs emergency procedures, coordinating with County services
 - ✓ Will use equipment and supplies on hand if possible
 - ✓ Documents incident
 - ✓ Communicates internally and/or externally about the incident
 - ✓ Restores business as usual
 - ✓ Handles salvage internally or with a contracted service
 - ✓ Revises emergency procedures if needed

Major Disaster

- The Emergency Response Team:
 - ✓ Directs the elimination of hazards
 - ✓ Accounts for all known residents, visitors, staff and employees
 - ✓ Establishes security procedures in concert with County services
 - ✓ Inspects and documents damage
 - ✓ Assembles and allocates needed supplies

Catastrophic Event

- The Emergency Response Team:
 - Attends to safety issues first
 - Contacts County and other emergency response services
 - Local fire and sheriff's departments
 - County Office of Emergency Management
 - State Emergency Management

- Federal (FEMA regional representative)
- Allows staff and volunteers to deal with personal situations
- Contacts vendors and insurance agents
- Assembles supplies
- Establishes security procedures
- Eliminates hazards and obtains clearances

Recovery

- The Emergency Response Team:
 - ✓ Implements communications plan
 - ✓ Establishes priorities
 - ✓ Implements and directs clean-up and damage repair with volunteers and vendors
 - ✓ Determines when governance and operations return to normal

Appendices

- A. Emergency Contact Information
- B. Resources for Cleanup, Repair and Hazards
- C. Communications Plan
- D. Evacuation Routes, Resources and Items to be Gathered in an Emergency.
- E. Emergencies Other Than Major Storms
- F. After the Disaster
- G. American Red Cross Preparedness Guide for Hurricane Season

A. Emergency Contact Information

Emergencies in Pinellas County 911

(police, fire, ambulance)

Quail Forest Emergency Contacts

Property Management Company, Management & Associates	813-433-2000
Property Manager, Peggy Semsey	(O) 813-433-2008 (C) 727-207-0588
Service Coordinator at M&A, Rick Limbert	(O) 813-433-2001
Quail Forest President, Richard Burgin	(C) 618-246-3872
Quail Forest Emergency Response Team	
President, Richard Burgin	(C) 618-246-3872
Property Manager, Peggy Semsey Management & Associates	(O) 813-433-2008 (C) 727-207-0588
Maintenance Manager, Bruce Conway	(C) 727-656-1835 QFmaint@gmail.com
Emergency Plan Managing Editor, Eleanor Cicerchi	(C) 607-382-1781
Treasurer, Tom Perry (<i>ex officio</i>)	(C) 954-295-6032

Pinellas County Emergency Contacts

Pinellas Office of Emergency Management	727-464-3800
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This number is for non-emergency calls only, for example, to add or delete the name of a disabled person to the County's special needs evacuation database (See page 20, first full paragraph) for evacuation to an accessible shelter when evacuation is mandatory.

In an emergency, the 911 Dispatcher will decide whether to involve the Office of Emergency Management. Do not call this number yourself in an emergency. The most important call is to 911.

Website - <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency>

Pinellas County Hurricane Evacuation Inquiry Line 727-453-3150

Pinellas County Automated Evacuation Alerts to your phone
<http://www.pinellesscounty.org/alertpinellas/>

East Lake Woodlands Community Association Emergency Contacts

ELW Controlled Access (Gates) and Rover 813-382-9997

ELW Property Manager 813-433-2004

North Gate 813-749-0710

Main Gate (Tampa Road) 727-785-7384

B. Resources for Clean Up, Repairs and Hazards

- Removing or trimming trees or bushes
Landscape Design 727-859-9119
- Emergency roof repairs 727-938-9565
Arry's Roofing
401 East Spruce Street
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
- Removal of bulky items – Waste Connections 727-572-6800
(at the resident's expense)
- Alligator Trapper 813-433-2007
Since our former trapper has retired, all requests for the removal of aggressive alligators must now be handled by Peggy Semsey, QF property manager.
- Water/Sewer - Pinellas County Utilities 727-464-4000
- Power - Duke Energy 727-443-2641
- Internet/cable) Spectrum 855-657-7328
- Pest control – Haskell Termite and Pest Control 941-737-0015

C. Communications Plan

Preparedness: Before Hurricane Season (June 1 – November 30)

- Board reminds owners via the Quail Forest website and a notice at the pool to trim trees on their properties
- Residents notify the Property Management Company (Management & Associates) of any exterior loose boards, soffits, gutters, potholes, broken sprinkler heads and damaged or dying trees on common property.
- Residents assure that their emergency contact (as listed in Management & Associates' database) is current.
- Board distributes essential information for residents (by posting at the pool and on the Quail Forest website)
 - ✓ Evacuation route
 - ✓ Closest evacuation shelters
 - ✓ List of items to have in the case of evacuation (your “go bag”)
 - ✓ Full hurricane preparedness article in the Community Corner of the Quail Forest website

Know the Terms You Hear: **Storm Watch vs. a Warning** (See below and page 16)

- Hurricane/tornado/flooding **watches** are issued by the National Weather Bureau Storm Prediction Center for counties where powerful storms or tornadoes may occur, usually 48 hours in advance. The watch area is typically large, covering numerous counties or states. The watch is an early alert; there is a chance the storm will dissipate or change direction before it reaches our area.
- A **hurricane/tornado warning** means hurricane/tornado conditions are expected in an area within 36 hours. **If a hurricane or tornado warning is issued: Take Action! A storm or tornado has been sighted or is indicated by weather radar.**

Operational Plan when a watch is issued:

- Announcements of the watch are communicated to residents via:
 - ✓ Quail Forest website: Quailforest.info
 - ✓ Nextdoor: nextdoor.com
 - ✓ Email blast from M&A and/or from bod-qf@outlook.com
- The communications include evacuation routes, the locations of nearby shelters and items to include in a “go bag.”

When a **warning** is issued:

- The Team alerts all residents about the warning, using the lines of communication listed above, and advises them to move outdoor furniture, garbage cans and exterior decorations to the inside of their homes.
- Owners who have hurricane shutters or plywood covers for windows should install them.
- Residents communicate with their emergency contact(s) about their plans if they need to evacuate.

When an **evacuation order** is issued:

- Pinellas County Emergency Management and other County emergency responders will utilize the communication devices issued to them by their agencies.
- The Emergency Response Team communicates with QF Board members, the Property Manager, Maintenance Manager and Street Captains using personal land lines, cell phones, email or walkie-talkie (if available).
- The Team communicates with residents using email, Nextdoor, the Quail Forest website and/or eblasts. Facebook Messenger, Twitter and Instagram may also be used.
- The communications will include the emergency information listed above as well as any additional and relevant advice for personal safety and **securing homes**.
- **When an evacuation order is issued, please comply with the order.**

D. What to Do When You Need to Evacuate

Gather Essential Items

Many disaster guides recommend that you have a “go bag” in a front closet or near the door. This should include a flashlight and batteries, drinking water, medications (in a container provided by a pharmacy showing your name, the medication and prescribing physician’s name), power bars or nuts, a rain poncho, small pillow and cash. If you have pets, pack what they will need (see more below). A new recommendation is to purchase at least one of the new LED, battery-operated lights that provide up to 5,000 lumens of light, enough to illuminate an entire room. And don’t forget extra batteries.

Put fuel in your car and do not park it under or close to tree or carports that could damage your vehicle. Also, be sure you have the number for AAA or other roadside assistance service you use.

If evacuation seems likely, here is a handy checklist for items to gather and put in your car:

- Flashlight, a high-powered Halo light and batteries or a battery-operated lantern
- Medications for 7 days in zip-lock bags (the plastic 7-day containers are handy and don’t take up much room)
- Cash
- Sleeping bag or blanket(s) and pillow(s)
- Shelf-stable food for several days, such as power bars, camping or military packets, or canned goods and a non-electric can opener
- Portable freshwater container that will last 2-3 days, water purification tablets, portable camp stove, water-proof matches or a lighter, and a cooler or ice chest
- Rain poncho
- Insect repellent
- Portable battery-operated fan

- Solar-panel charger for your phone or tablet or a small battery-powered radio
- Extra clothes
- Books, small games

Also, remember to keep with you your government-issued photo ID, passport, immigration documents (if relevant), a copy of your insurance policy with the agent's name and contact information and other important documents, such as a bank account statement and medical records. It's a good idea, too, to scan these documents into a cloud-based service such as Google Drive, iCloud or Dropbox in advance so that they are available to you off-site.

If you have pets, see below for advice on being ready to evacuate them.

Make an Emergency Plan

Often you need go no further than 8 to 10 miles inland or to higher ground to be out of harm's way. The QF community's evacuation route is north and east, away from the coast and Tampa Bay (see below). Identify family or friends with whom you can stay for a few days or, if a storm is imminent, make a hotel reservation in advance if you are not planning to go to a shelter. Tell the person or persons whom you have identified as your emergency contact(s) – on the Resident Contact Sheet requested of all residents by the QF Association – what your plans are.

Evacuation Route

Our evacuation route is north on East Lake Road (# 611) and east on Keystone Road or Trinity Road or north on Route 19 and east to Keystone Road. Most people will continue to head northeast on I-75 toward Ocala. How far you go will depend on the advance plans you have made or the advice you receive on your phone, TV, computer or radio. You may also seek shelter in a designated North Pinellas Evacuation Shelter, although local, state and Federal emergency management offices advise that an emergency shelter should be your last resort.

Closest Evacuation Shelters

The closest evacuation shelters are East Lake High School, 1300 Silver Eager Drive in Tarpon Springs, west off East Lake Road, and Brooker Creek Elementary School at 3130 Forelock Road, Tarpon Springs, east off East Lake Road. Both are well marked. There you will find food, water, cots, rest rooms, and volunteers to make you comfortable. If the shelter is full, you will be redirected to another.

In an evacuation shelter, expect no privacy and a space no larger than 6' x 5' for you and your belongings. For that reason, you are advised not to bring bulky items. Also, don't bring expensive jewelry or other valuables, because the shelter may not have police officers on-site. If you have a firearm, secure it in your home before you leave, since firearms are not permitted in shelters.

Former QF Board member the late Mike DiFabbio, who helped organize and run pet-friendly evacuation centers and was active in rescuing pets after Hurricane Katrina, reminds us, "Evacuation shelters are not a resort; they are a last resort." Plan accordingly.

Protecting Pets

Pets (generally dogs and cats only) are welcome at Dunedin Highland Middle School, 70 Patricia Avenue, Dunedin, or Oak Grove Middle School at 1370 South Belcher Road, Clearwater, but only on a first-come, first-served basis. Remember to take a pet ID and photo (ideally, your pet will be micro-chipped, too), your contact information and updated records for proof of shots or county license, which most pet-friendly shelters require. Also take a pet carrier, a 7-day supply of pet food and medications, dishes for food and water, a leash, and a non-electric can opener or litter box, if appropriate. Comfort items such as a blanket or toy can help your pet get through the disruption.

Options other than shelters include arranging to go to a family member or friend's home on higher ground or a pet-friendly hotel or motel.

If you have other animals, such as birds or even horses, the Humane Society of Tampa Bay has checklists to help assure than you don't overlook any important item. See www.humanesocietytampa.org.

Options for Wheelchair Users or the Mobility Impaired

All shelter *entrances* are handicapped accessible. The two nearest shelters with ADA-accessible *restrooms*, as well, are Dunedin Highland Middle School, 70 Patricia Avenue, Dunedin, or Oak Grove Middle School at 1370 South Belcher Road, Clearwater.

The County and East Lake Fire Rescue (Station 56 is at East Lake Road near the North Gate to East Lake Woodlands) are also resources for ensuring that people with physical disabilities get to safety before or after a hurricane or other emergency. A special needs evacuation database is managed by the Pinellas County Department of Health and is updated by the Department of Health, County Department of Emergency Management Services and East Lake Fire Rescue. **People with disabilities who will need transportation during an emergency need to be pre-registered.** To check if someone is on that list or to add or remove a name, call the East Lake Fire Rescue at 727-784-8668 or the County Department of Emergency Management Services at 727-464-3800 (follow the prompts). East Lake Fire Rescue telephones people on that list annually to check on current status. Transporting disabled people in emergencies is ultimately the responsibility of the County. Remember that such trips are done before and after the emergency but not at its height if winds are severe.

Advance Notice of a Hurricane

Those of us with smart phones will likely receive push texts notifying us of a **hurricane watch** (hurricane conditions are *possible* in our region within 48 hours) or a **hurricane warning** (hurricane conditions, or sustained winds of 74 mph or more, are expected in our area within the next 36 hours). Local television stations run these warnings at the bottom of the screen as a hurricane-strength storm approaches and often have round-the-clock coverage of the storm instead of network feeds. You can also follow a storm's progress on The Weather Channel

or go to one of the popular smart phone weather apps such as WeatherBug, apps for local television stations and the Tampa Bay Times mobile app. Additionally, you can use your PC or laptop to register for breaking news and text alerts at www.tampabay.com or www.tbo.com. If you prefer social media, the Tampa Times Facebook account is www.facebook.com/tampabaycom/ and its Twitter handle is @TB_Times. Its Instagram account is @tampabaytimes. **Every media outlet in our area is likely to be tuned to the storm's progress, so check frequently.** You'll also find up-to-date reports on major national media.

Protecting Your Home in Your Absence

The local police are responsible for protecting abandoned homes and businesses until the Governor calls in the National Guard. The most vulnerable time is during the high point of the storm before the National Guard arrives. Do not stay in your home if ordered to evacuate. **Remember, local first responders such as police, ambulance, and fire trucks may not be available to respond at the height of the storm (when winds are 45 mph or higher) because of the risks to them.** Stories about the risks of remaining in your home despite an evacuation order abound (remember the photos and stories from Katrina and Michael for example). The most important priority is keeping people and pets safe and out of harm's way. If you are told to evacuate, do it promptly.

Additional advice for securing your home if you evacuate includes:

- Secure all property.
- Move furniture/items from windows and sliding glass doors.
- Fill refrigerator and freezer with ice in case the power goes out.
- Electrical appliances and devices:
 - ✓ First, unplug any unnecessary electronics
 - ✓ Then switch off all circuit breakers
 - ✓ Finally, switch off the main circuit breaker. **It is important to switch off all other circuit breakers before turning off the main circuit breaker because a power surge that reaches all circuit breakers can damage appliances and devices**

- Discard ice cream and any other item in the freezer that can melt
- Turn off the main water line to the unit
- Let your emergency contact know if you plan to stay or evacuate and, if so, where you plan to go.

If you are away for an extended period, ask a friend or neighbor to check your unit, give them a key and directions, and let them know how you can be reached.

E. Emergencies Other Than Major Storms

For emergencies other than major storms – floods, fires, terrorism, and such – the Emergency Response Team will be activated as described above. The first step is always to call 911, which will contact other first responders as needed and appropriate.

The Communications Plan as described in Appendix C will be followed. If the County Emergency Management Office, State Division of Emergency Management, FEMA or National Guard are involved, they will direct the response.

Follow directions that come in the form of phone alerts, and stay tuned to news outlets, Next Door, and email.

F. After the Disaster/Hurricane

Returning to Your Home: If you are evacuated, delay your return until it is authorized or recommended by local authorities.

Beware of Outdoor Hazards: Watch out for loose or dangling power lines and report them to the proper authorities.

Drive Cautiously: Flooded and debris-filled streets are dangerous. Washouts may weaken roads and bridges, even causing collapse under your vehicle's weight.

Walk Cautiously: Snakes, alligators and poisonous insects may be hazardous. Be cognizant of your surroundings.

Flooded Areas: Never allow children or animals to play in flooded areas. Hidden, sharp objects, electrocution, pollution, snakes and alligators are serious hazards.

Spoiled Food: Food may spoil if power is off more than a few hours. Freezers typically keep food several days if doors are not opened during a power outage. Food should not be re-frozen after it has thawed.

Tip for Knowing if Your Refrigerator/Freezer Power Has Been Off: If you go away without turning your power off, fill a cup with water in advance and freeze it. Put a penny on top. If the penny has sunk to or near to the bottom of the cup when you return, your power has been off, and perishable food should not be eaten.

Tap Water: Do not use tap water until local authorities announce it is suitable for consumption. Use your emergency supply or boil water until receiving official word that the water is safe to drink. Report water main breaks to Pinellas County Utilities (727-463-4000).

Sanitary Sewers: Report broken sewer line to Pinellas County Utilities (727-463-400).

Fire Prevention: Take extra precautions to prevent fire. Lowered water pressure in main lines, combined with the interruption of other services, may make fighting fire extremely difficult after a hurricane or other disaster.

Do not use candles, a gas generator or grill inside the home or close to a building.

Red Cross Preparedness Guide for Hurricane Season



TOGETHERWE PREPARE™

G. American Red Cross preparedness guide for hurricane season

What To Do Now

- Read this guide carefully.
- Decide where you plan to go if you are requested to evacuate. You may go to a hotel or motel, stay with friends or relatives in a safe location or go to a Red Cross shelter.
- Put together your disaster supplies kit as recommended in this guide.
- Plan for pets. Pets are not allowed in public shelters. If you need to make arrangements for your pet, contact your local SPCA or Humane Society.

When the Storm Approaches

- Listen for weather updates. Hurricanes are unpredictable, so remain informed.
- Have your car ready. Check gas, oil, water and maintenance.
- Check your emergency evacuation supplies.
- Board up or put storm shutters on windows. When windows break, homes are destroyed.
- Clear your yard of loose objects, bicycles, lawn furniture, trash cans, etc.
- Secure your boat. Remember that most drawbridges and swing bridges will be closed to all boat traffic after the evacuation order is issued.
- Leave swimming pools filled. Super-chlorinate the water and cover pump and filtration systems and intakes.



If You Can Stay Home

- Obtain and mark clean containers for storing water. You should have a minimum of one gallon per person per day for seven days.
- Obtain a week's supply of non-perishable foods. Don't forget a non-electric can opener.
- Check your disaster supplies kit.
- Be a good friend. Offer your home as shelter to friends or relatives who live in vulnerable areas or mobile homes.
- Stay inside, away from windows.
- Wait for official word that the danger is over. Don't be fooled by the storm's calm eye.

If a Warning Has Been Issued

In the event of a hurricane warning for this area, your local TV will provide frequent updates about the storm as well as advice from local officials. Keep listening to local radio and television for information, as the intensity and the path of the hurricane can change quickly, and without notice.



If You Must Evacuate

- Pack what you will need.
- Turn off water and electricity at the main valve, breakers or fuses.

Build Your Disaster Supplies Kit

Water

- Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation)
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household

Food

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples: sugar, salt, pepper
- High-energy foods: peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Food for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods: cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

Tools and supplies

- Mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Emergency preparedness manual
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
- Table tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil, plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil, needles, thread and medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench (so turn off household gas and water)

Keep disaster checklist in your disaster supplies kit.

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towlettes, soap, liquid detergent, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items, plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses), plastic bucket with tight lid, disinfectant and household chlorine bleach

Clothing and bedding

- Sturdy shoes or work boots and rain gear
- Hat and gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses
- Blankets or sleeping bags

Special items

- For babies:**
 - Formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk and medications
- For adults:**
 - Heart and high-blood pressure medication, insulin, prescription drugs, denture needs, contact lenses and supplies, extra eyeglasses, entertainment games and books and important family documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passport, Social Security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers and companies, credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

- Turn off propane gas tanks that serve individual appliances like a stove or grill. Do not turn off natural gas unless local officials advise to do so.

After a Storm

- Have valid identification. You will not be allowed back into your area unless you can show proof of residency.
- Stay at home and avoid sightseeing, which can impede emergency and recovery response from officials.
- Beware of snakes, insects and animals driven to higher ground.
- Avoid downed or sagging utility wires.
- Enter your home with caution.
- Be cautious with fires. Do not strike matches until you are certain there are no gas leaks.
- If a power outage occurs, turn off or disconnect all motor-driven appliances and fixtures to avoid damage from sudden surges when power is restored.
- Avoid using candles, as they may result in fire. Use a flashlight.
- Fill clean containers with water for drinking and cooking. Store water in a bathtub for washing and to flush toilets.
- Turn the refrigerator and freezer controls to the coldest settings.
- To keep cooking and thawing of food to a minimum, open the refrigerator or freezer as seldom as possible during a blackout. Food will stay frozen for up to 48 hours if a freezer is full and tightly packed and the door is kept closed. Food in a partly filled freezer may keep for 24 hours.
- Fill empty freezer spaces with reusable ice containers, or fill empty milk containers about four-fifths full of water; cap the containers loosely and place in empty space.
- If food in freezer does defrost, use it within one or two days. Never refreeze food that has thawed completely. How do you tell if food has gone bad? The rule of thumb is, "If in doubt, throw it out!"

American Red Cross preparedness guide, continued

Helping Children Cope With Disasters

- During a disaster, your family may have to leave your home and daily routine.
- As an adult, you'll need to cope with the disaster in a way that will help children avoid developing a permanent sense of loss.
- How you react to an emergency gives them clues on how to act. If you seem overcome with a sense of loss, a child may feel losses more strongly.
- Children's fears may also stem from their imagination, and you should take these feelings seriously. A child who feels afraid is afraid.
- When talking with your child, be sure to present a realistic picture that is both honest and manageable.



Lessons Learned From Past Hurricanes

- Remember that some areas of your state may have been asked to evacuate before yours, so even if you leave early, roads may be congested.
- If possible, you should know where you are going and how you plan to get there before you leave home.
- Using alternate routes may lessen your travel time. Know what alternate routes are viable before you leave.
- Leaving early will shorten your travel time. Leaving later may not allow you enough time to reach safe shelter.
- You will need a full tank of gas, and cash.



How to Prepare for a Tornado

What to listen for

Tornado watch: Tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms.

Tornado warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety.

Severe thunderstorm watch: Severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.

Severe thunderstorm warning: Severe thunderstorms are occurring.

What you can do before the storm

- Develop a plan for you and your family for home, work, school and when outdoors.
- Have frequent drills.
- Know your county and keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins.
- Have a NOAA weather radio with a warning siren tone and battery backup to receive warnings.
- Listen to radio and television for information.
- If planning a trip outdoors, listen to the latest forecasts and take necessary action if threatening weather is possible.

If a warning is issued or if threatening weather approaches

- In a home or building, move to a designated shelter.
- If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Get out of automobiles.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car.
- If caught outside or in a vehicle, lie flat in a ditch or depression.

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- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes and should be abandoned.

Tips on Flooding

Before the flood

- Know the elevation of your property in relation to nearby streams and other waterways.
- Make plans of what you will do and where you will go in a flash-flood emergency.

When a flash-flood watch is issued for your area

- Listen to area radio and television stations and NOAA weather radio for possible flash-flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress from the National Weather Service and public safety agencies.
- Be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice.
- If you are on a road, watch for flooding at highway dips, bridges and low areas.
- Watch for signs (thunder, lightning) of distant heavy rainfall.

When a flash-flood warning is issued for your area

- Act quickly to save yourself and those who depend on you. You may have only seconds.
- Do not attempt to cross a flooding stream on foot where water is above your knees.
- If you are driving, don't try to drive through water of unknown depth. If your vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground. Rapid rising water may sweep the vehicle away. Many deaths have been caused by attempts to move stalled vehicles.
- Keep children away from floodwaters near culverts and storm drains.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood danger.
- When you are out of immediate danger, tune in to area radio and television stations and NOAA weather radio for additional information.

TOGETHERWE PREPARE

The American Red Cross Together We Prepare campaign challenges individuals, businesses and communities to take responsibility for their safety and that of their families, homes and neighborhoods. By following five basic steps, we can all move toward greater safety. To find out more, visit www.redcross.org.



Make a plan
Design a family (home) disaster plan. Work with neighbors and co-workers to create community and workspace disaster plans.



Build a kit
Assemble a disaster supplies kit, which contains items that you may need in an emergency.



Get trained
Learn to save lives. The Red Cross offers classes you can attend in individuals and businesses on first aid, CPR, defibrillator use and much more.



Volunteer
Give of yourself. Sharing your time or money means that the Red Cross will be there to respond whenever needed.



Give blood
Become a regular and frequent blood donor to ensure a blood supply that means all needs, all of the time.