

Emergency Planning

Events during the past few years have highlighted the importance of being prepared for emergency situations. Because we live in Florida, most of our disaster planning efforts involve preparing for hurricanes. It is important to remember that hurricanes are not the only disasters that could strike our area. Power outages, tornadoes, flooding and wildfires are all possible threats in Florida.

Having an evacuation strategy, keeping an emergency kit in your home, having a list of contact numbers and anticipating what the loss of electricity would mean to your household will help you be better prepared for any unexpected threats that arise.

Your Empath Health care team will help you develop a disaster plan that fits your care needs and your living situation. It is important to understand that Empath Health staff members are asked to shelter during a hurricane and are not available to visit.

You and Your Family:

Make a family plan and be sure your Empath Health care team knows your plan. Inform your care team any time your plan changes. If you reside in a skilled nursing or assisted-living facility, you will follow the protocols of your facility.

- Develop a disaster supply kit. If not evacuating, include a 14-day supply of non-perishable food, a gallon of water per person per day and a 14-day supply of medications and supplies.
- Anticipate what the loss of electricity might mean for you and your family. Consider the purchase of a generator for your home.
- Make plans to protect your home before any storm. Empath Health staff are not able to assist in securing your home.
- Purchase a battery-powered weather radio.
- Be sure to have a landline, non-electric phone.
- Take inventory of your possessions and store important papers such as insurance, titles and ID in a safe, dry place. Send copies to a friend or relative outside the area.
- Review your insurance policies for your home and possessions.
- During hurricane season (June–November) work with your care team to be sure you have at least a two-week supply of medications on hand.

1. My evacuation zone is _____
2. If you live in an evacuation zone, make a plan for where you and your family will evacuate.

Call Empath Health with any questions (888) 855-2838: _____

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- Your physical condition and needs should guide you in determining where you need to go and how you get there. Evacuation options to discuss with your family and your care team include:
 - o Family or friends in a non-evacuation zone
 - o Hotel in a non-evacuation zone
 - o General population shelter (above options are preferred to shelters)
 - o Special needs/medically dependent shelter
 - o Other options based on condition and needs, such as skilled nursing facility or hospital

My evacuation destination is _____

Contact name/location _____

Address _____

Phone number(s) _____

My transportation is ☐ Self ☐ Family

☐ Registered with Special Needs Transport or Medically Dependent Person Transport

☐ Other _____

Special Advice for Evacuees to Special Needs or Medically Dependent Shelters:

Special needs/medically dependent shelters are intended to be a place of last refuge and the conditions in a shelter may be very stressful. **You must be pre-registered with your county for the special needs/medically dependent person shelter.** A member of the Tidewell team can assist you with this. Approval of your application will be up to the county health department. Transportation to the shelter is provided by the county, if needed. Your caregiver must accompany you to the shelter and remain with you. If space is limited, only one caregiver will be able to stay with the registrant and the rest of the family will be asked to stay in a general population shelter.

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About Pets:

A pet-friendly shelter should be your last choice in the event of an evacuation with your pet.

Pet-friendly shelters are not equipped as special needs/medically dependent shelters and:

- Space is extremely limited. These shelters are only open for mandatory evacuations and may only accommodate a portion of citizens.
- These shelters accept cats and dogs only.
- Pets must have a current license and rabies vaccination.
- Animals may need to be placed in a crate or contained per shelter guidelines.

County Emergency Management Websites:

Charlotte County: CharlotteCountyFL.gov/Services/Emergencymgmt/Pages/Default.aspx

DeSoto County: DesotoBOCC.com/Departments/Emergency_Management

Hardee County: HardeeCountyfl.gov/Emergency-Management

Highlands County: HighlandsFL.gov/Departments/PublicSafety/Emergency_Management

Hillsborough County: HCFL.gov/Residents/Public-Safety/Emergency-Management

Manatee County: MyManatee.org/Home/Government/Departments/Public-Safety/Emergency-Management.html

Marion County: MarionFL.org/Our-County/Emergency-Preparedness

Pinellas County: Pinellas.gov/Department/Emergency-Management/

Polk County: Polk-County.net/Public-Safety/Emergency-Management

Sarasota County: SCGOV.net/Government/Emergency-Services/Emergency-Medical-Services

**Empath Hospice | Hospice of Marion County | Suncoast Hospice | Suncoast Hospice of Hillsborough
Tidewell Hospice | Trustbridge Hospice**

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