

Okaloosa County Hurricane Guide



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for picking up this booklet on Hurricane safety. By doing so, you have already made an investment in your safety during one of the most serious of Mother Nature's threats to our area: Hurricanes.

You will find a great majority of these pages are dedicated to preparation long before a storm is in our area - or in the Gulf. This reality stems from the fact the most you can do takes place way before a storm is even a threat. Many young people were in scouting organizations, where the motto was 'be prepared.' The same holds true today: the more you do before the storm season arrives, the better off you will be to protect yourself and your family.

Make the time, one Saturday or Sunday a year to go to your local hardware, grocery and home goods store, stock up on the items you will need (many years, Florida's governor will declare a tax-free holiday on the goods

necessary to defend against a hurricane or other natural disaster) and rest in the peace of mind you will have for the entire storm season.

When a storm system does threaten The Gulf, remember not to panic - you have the answer key to the problems you might face right in your hands (or on your screen as the case may be!) Don't be afraid to refer to this guide, or to your neighbors and city or county officials. We all want to help make this process as safe, manageable and easy as possible. We are Floridians, we will get through this together.

In the aftermath of any storm, caused by a hurricane or otherwise, your county government will be out clearing the streets, helping to restore any services affected and checking on you. Like Mr. Rodgers always said, "when you see scary things in the news, look for the helpers." During these times, they will be wearing Sheriff's Green, Okaloosa Helmets and fluorescent vests. Let us know what we can do to help you. It's what we

are here for in emergencies.

If there is something you can think of, or an experience you have to share which would improve this booklet, email our County Public Information Officer at csaul@myokaloosa.com. He will be happy to take your questions, comments and concerns about the book or any other problems you have.

- Once again, thank you for taking an active role in the protection of your own life and the lives of your family members and neighbors.

John Hofstad
Okaloosa County Administrator

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

What We Do

The Okaloosa County Division of Emergency Management helps the county prepare for and respond to natural disasters, such as hurricanes. These are the people who prepare year-round for hurricanes and tropical storms with training, development and emergency response to make sure our county is safe when mother nature bears down on us.

The Okaloosa County

Emergency Operations Center is located on the campus of Northwest Florida State College. The building is the ark where emergency personnel can ride out a category-5 hurricane and be best positioned to get right into action and begin the recovery process once the storm leaves the area. The facility is designed to house local, regional, state and federal response agencies and coordinate recovery efforts so precious

BELOW: The Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center



resources are used efficiently.

How Can I receive Information From Officials?

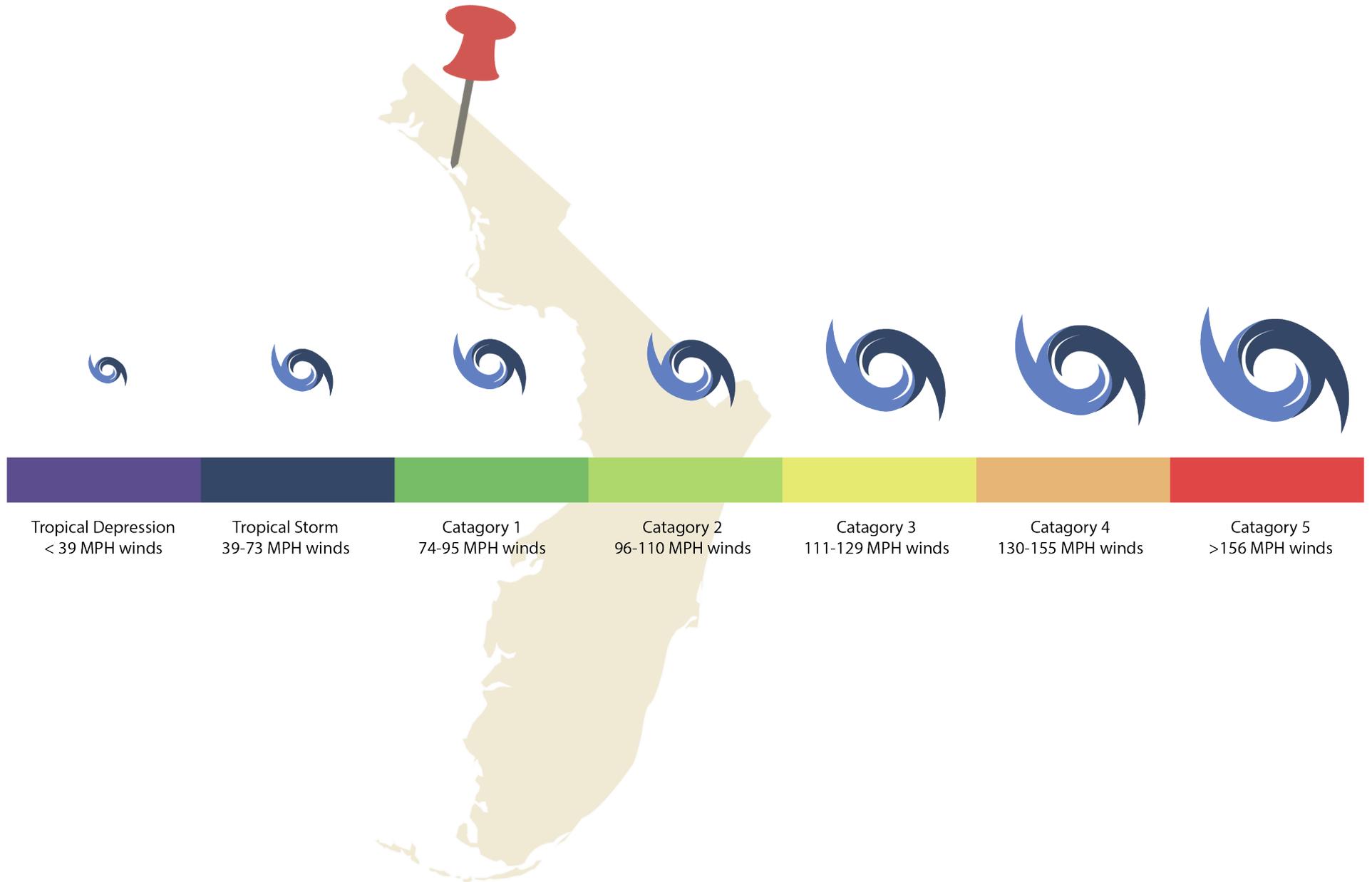
The county has information available to help you and your family before, during and after a storm. Log on to <http://www.co.okaloosa.fl.us/ps/emergency-management>. You can also go to the Alert Okaloosa website. Local, national and international media will coordinate, and in some cases be embedded with, the Public Information Officer at the Emergency Operations Center. The media will learn the latest from the PIO and spread along their conduits of information to

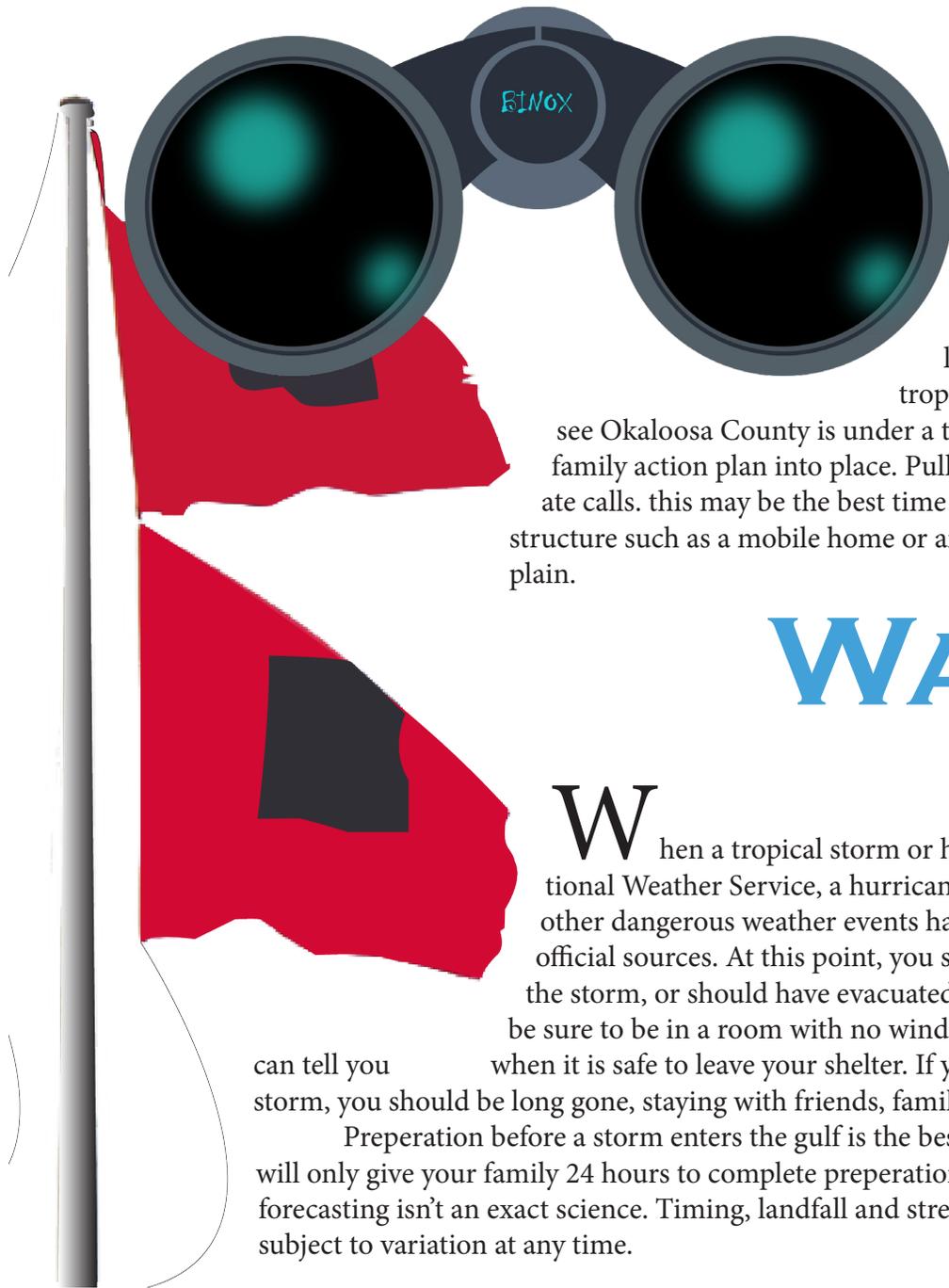
ABOVE: Alert Okaloosa allows county officials to let you know what is happening during a crisis in real time.

you. In an emergency situation, stay tuned to local radio, television and social media outlets for

the latest. Only pay attention to information stream you can trust, such as our Twitter, Facebook and official county correspondence through email and our website. NOAA weather radio also broadcasts continuous weather reports from the National Weather Offices in Tallahassee and Mobile.

HURRICANES





WATCH

A hurricane WATCH implies people should be on the lookout for possibility of severe weather, negative effects from tropical events, other severe weather or flash flooding. When you see Okaloosa County is under a tropical storm or hurricane watch, you should begin to put your family action plan into place. Pull out your hurricane kit, fill sandbags and make the appropriate calls. This may be the best time to decide whether or not to evacuate if you are in a vulnerable structure such as a mobile home or any structure without a foundation, or if you live near a flood plain.

WARNING

When a tropical storm or hurricane WARNING is issued by the National Weather Service, a hurricane (and subsequent, flooding, tornados and other dangerous weather events have been detected on radar or observed by official sources. At this point, you should be where you will want to ride out the storm, or should have evacuated. If you have decided to stay in your home, be sure to be in a room with no windows with a battery-powered radio, so we can tell you when it is safe to leave your shelter. If you have decided to leave ahead of the storm, you should be long gone, staying with friends, family or in a hotel away from the water.

Preperation before a storm enters the gulf is the best option. Waiting until a warning is issued will only give your family 24 hours to complete preperation and evacuate if necessary. Hurricane forecasting isn't an exact science. Timing, landfall and strength of a hurricane or tropical storm are subject to variation at any time.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

County Government

Board of County Commissioners 850.689.5030

PAWS 850.243.1525

Building Inspections/ Permits 850.651.7180

Code Compliance 850.651.7531

Emergency Management 850.651.7150

Public Works 850.689.5772

Tourism Development 850.651.7131

State Government

Attorney General - (866).966.7226

Dept. of Children and Families - 595.8200

Dept. of Enviro Protection - 245.2118

FDOT - 981.3000

Dept. of Health in Okaloosa County - (850).833.9240

West Fl. Reg. Planning Council - 332.7976

Federal Government

FEMA - (800).621.3362

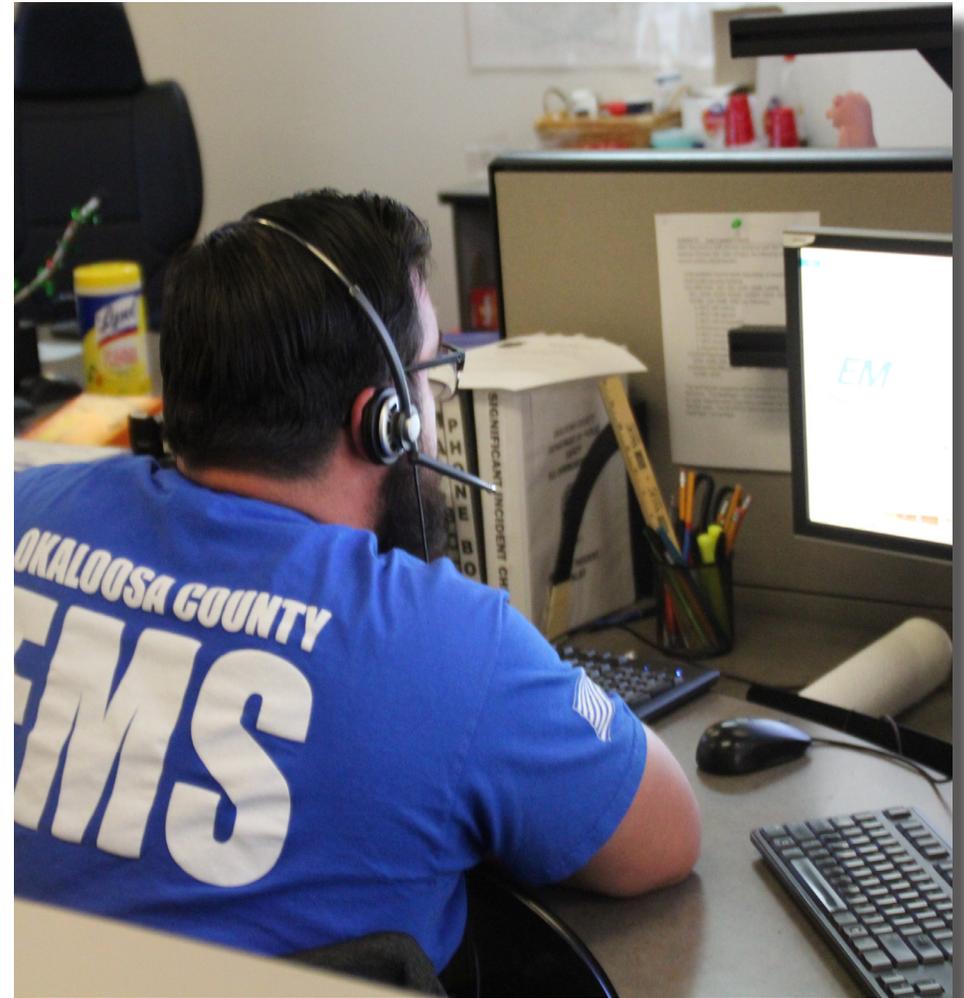
NWS (Mobile) - (251).633.6443

US Army Corps of Engineers - (251).690.2505

Law Enforcement

Sheriff's Office

FHP - 484.5000



The County 911 Operators along with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Dispatchers will answer phones round the clock and send county resources to places with the greatest need during a hurricane.

BEFORE A STORM IS ON THE HORIZON

High Risk Times

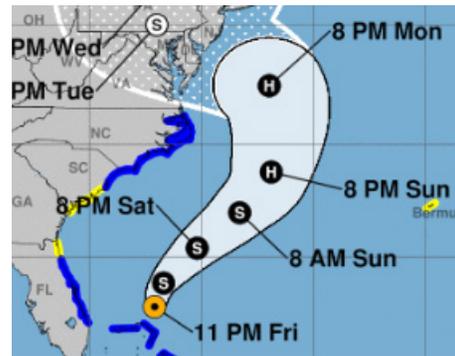
According to local meteorologists at WJHG, midsummer (July, August and September) are traditionally the months with the highest amount of tropical activity for the Florida Panhandle.

It is advised you watch all storms carefully, but statistically, storms which form off Cape Verde in Africa have a lower chance to reach our area than storms which form later and farther west.

Currently, the Pacific Ocean is experiencing El Nino, a weather

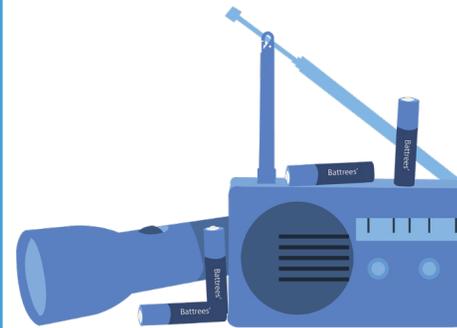
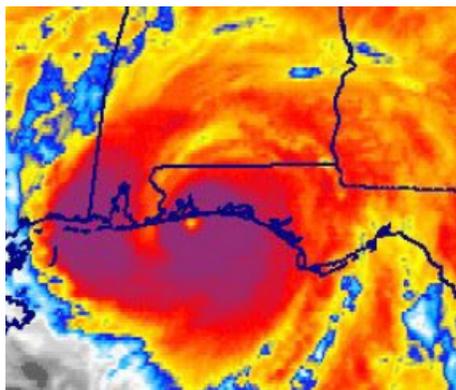
pattern which warms waters to our west in the Pacific ocean. El Nino patterns typically make it harder for storms to form. Good news for us on the Gulf Coast! But it doesn't mean we are allowed to be complacent.

This year, the 'Cone of Uncertainty' will shrink once again, thanks



ABOVE: The National Weather Service uses a projection cone, commonly called the 'Cone of Uncertainty' to project the possible path of a storm.

LEFT: a NOAA Map shows hurricane Dennis making landfall on Northwest Florida in 2005. The storm left power poles on the ground and communication lines cut throughout the panhandle.



ABOVE: Have a kit prepared to deal with power outages right now, before a storm hits. Include essential items like a battery powered radio, batteries a powerful flashlight and glow sticks to find your way in the dark.

to more accurate data. Additionally, wind arrival data, which was unofficial in 2017, will now be a part of the NWS battery of information to give to the public.

Emergency Needs

- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and NOAA weather radio with tone alert, extra batteries.
- First aid kit and manual

Sleeping bags and blankets for each person.

• Manual can opener
Waterproof matches or matches in a waterproof container

• Non-perishable food items
Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels

• Flashlights and extra batteries
• Emergency battery operated candles or light sticks

• Water (one gallon per person per day for at least three days)
• Water purifications tablets

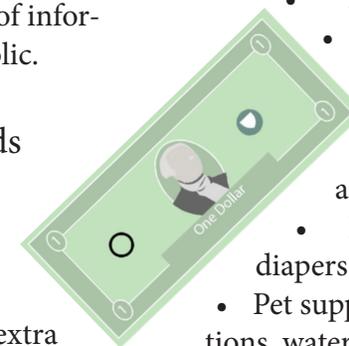
• Utility knife
• Whistle to signal for help
• Essential medications and eye-glasses

• Dust mask
• Complete change of clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes.

• Infant formula and diapers

• Pet supplies - food medications, water, carrier, etc.

• Cash, credit cards, checks and change



- work gloves
- Basic tools, including a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps
- Cell phone and chargers as well as an extra power pack
- Emergency reference material, such as a first aid book or this hurricane guide
- Fire extinguisher
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children
- Important family documents, such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a water-proof, portable container

Sanitation Kit

Plastic Bucket with a tightly-fitted lid
Plastic bags and ties

Talk to your Homeowners association about any policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of homeowners.

- Disinfectant
- Improvised toilet seat
- Personal toiletries and hygiene items
- Moist towelettes
- Paper Towels
- Soap and hand sanitizer
- Household chlorine bleach and

Your sanitation kit will allow you to sanitize water and stay clean in healthy in a harsh, post-hurricane environment.



medicine dropper for sanitizing water. Do not use scented,color safe products or bleaches with added cleaners.

Homeowners

Homeowners need to have their home insurance purchased before the beginning of the storm season in June. additionally, they need to seriously consider flood insurance, no matter where they live in Okaloosa County. Make sure you have an adequate supply of sandbags, plywood or other hurricane preparation supplies or are able to

get them if a storm threatens the area. Talk to your Homeowners association about any policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of homeowners. Decide which room in your home will serve as a shelter room and keep it clear of clutter so it can be easily accessed in an emergency. Make a list of all outdoor furniture and make sure it is inside before the storm hits.

Renters

Renters also need to make sure they are ready if disaster strikes. Have a plan: who will you stay

BELOW: renters need to make sure they have renter's insurance to protect their property during a hurricane or tropical storm.

with if you leave your home? If you decide to leave or stay, who will you tell? how often will you check in with them? Build a hurricane kit. (instructions are included in this booklet.) Know if you live in an evacuation or a flood zone. (pages 11-13) and be ready to take action if you are told to leave the area. Talk to your landlord. what steps are they taking to protect your home? Will they supply protective supplies (shutters, plywood, et al?) Renter's personal property isn't covered by a landlord's property insurance. you need to look into personal renter's insurance. Plans typically cost as little as \$10-\$20 a month



Disaster planning for Medical and special needs.

When hurricanes hit, people with special or medical needs have additional concerns. But with proper planning, extra needs can be a minor inconvenience. Take the following steps if you or someone you love has special or medical needs. Have at least a three-day supply of necessary medical supplies, for medical equipment which requires electricity, inquire with your medical supply company and ask about a backup power source such as a battery or a generator. If you use oxygen, have an emergency supply which will last you 72 hours. Make sure the tanks are securely braced. Make copies of medical records and store them in an easily accessible, dry place. Store extra batteries for hearing aids, implants, TTY and light phone signaler. Always have a three day supply of

medication on hand. In some emergencies you might need to have enough for at least a week. Store your medicine in one location in their original containers. Service animals may become confused, frightened, or disoriented during a storm. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed.

Disaster planning for your pet.

If you are evacuating, Fido and Fluffy should be going with you. Pet abandonment is illegal. Pets should not be left in empty houses, or be allowed to roam free.

Animals left behind could die of starvation, get eaten by predators, or eat or drink contaminated food or water.

The first few days after a disaster, it's recommended that you put a leash on your pets when they are out of doors until they are once again familiar

with the area. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become disoriented and get lost. Furthermore, your pet's behavior may change after a disaster. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive. Watch your animals closely, especially when outdoors, as predators may move into your area seeking a new habitat. Finally, keep an eye out for downed power lines, you may know they are dangerous, but your pet does not.

Pool Preparation

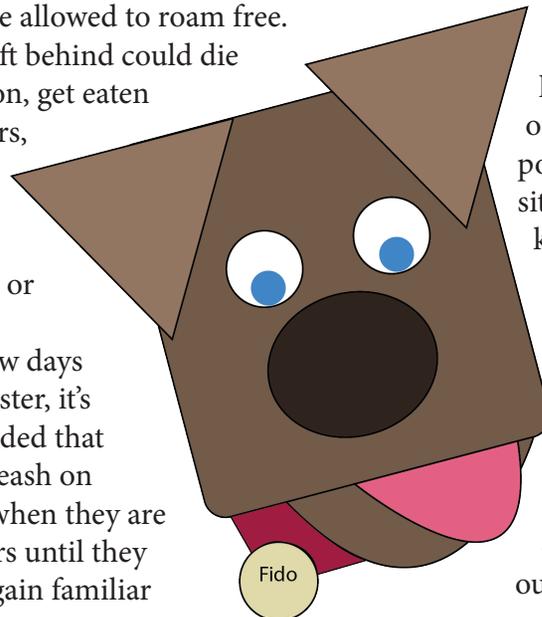
While your pool should be low on the list of your concerns when a storm is on its way, there are several things you can do to protect it - if you have time. Do not lower the water level of the pool. Allow the pool overflow in this situation. This helps keep the pool from being forced out of the ground due to a high water table. NEVER completely drain your pool - heavy rains can cause a pool to pop out. Turn off all elec-

trical power to the swimming pool when a storm is incoming. If your pump is open to the sky, remove the motor and seal it in a waterproof plastic bag to preserve it. Remove loose items from the pool area to prevent them from become missile-like debris. Items which



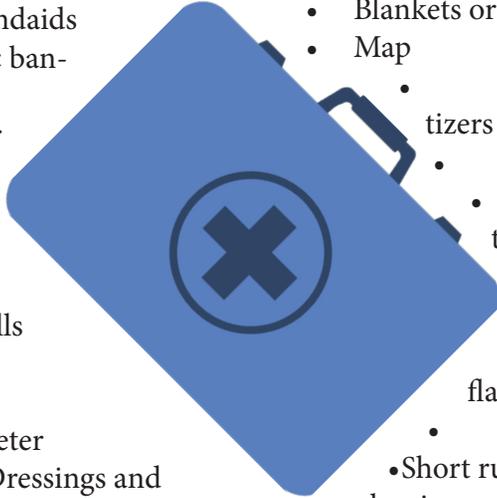
ABOVE: Pools can be an excellent source of non-potable water in the days after a storm; especially if municipal services are interrupted.

are left out can damage the pool or your home. Add extra chlorine to the pool to prevent contamination - WHILE THIS WATER WILL NOT BE DRINKABLE - it can be used to clean clothes and flush toilets in an emergency. If you have a screened in pool area, remove panels of the screen above the chair rail in order to allow the wind to blow through.



Standard First Aid Kit

- First aid manual
- Pain relievers
- Rubbing alcohol
- Diarrhea, Medicine, Soap and hand sanitizer
- Gauze, bandaids and elastic bandages
- Triangular bandages and safety pins
- Cotton balls and swabs
- Scissors
- Thermometer
- Pressure Dressings and splint padding
- Microspore adhesive
- Matches
- Needles and tweezers
- Finger splints
- Syrup of Ipecac



- manual
- Class ABC fire extinguisher
 - Radio and Batteries
 - Non-perishable food stored in a coffee can
 - Bottled water
 - Bag of sand, shovel and tools
 - Blankets or sleeping bags
 - Map
 - Tissues, hand sanitizers and towellets
 - Plastic bags
 - Essential medications
 - Flashlights and extra batteries
 - Reflectors or flares
 - Jumper cables
 - Short rubber hose for siphoning
 - Seasonal Supplies

Work Survival Kit

- Food and Water

- Comfortable walking shoes
- rain jacket/lightweight jacket

Make copies of all legal papers

- Marriage license, adoption and guardian paperwork
- House mortgage
- Property Ownership
- Automotive/Motorhome/Boat ownership
- Wills
- Jewelry Appraisals
- Drivers Licenses and passports
- Insurance policies
- Bank Accounts

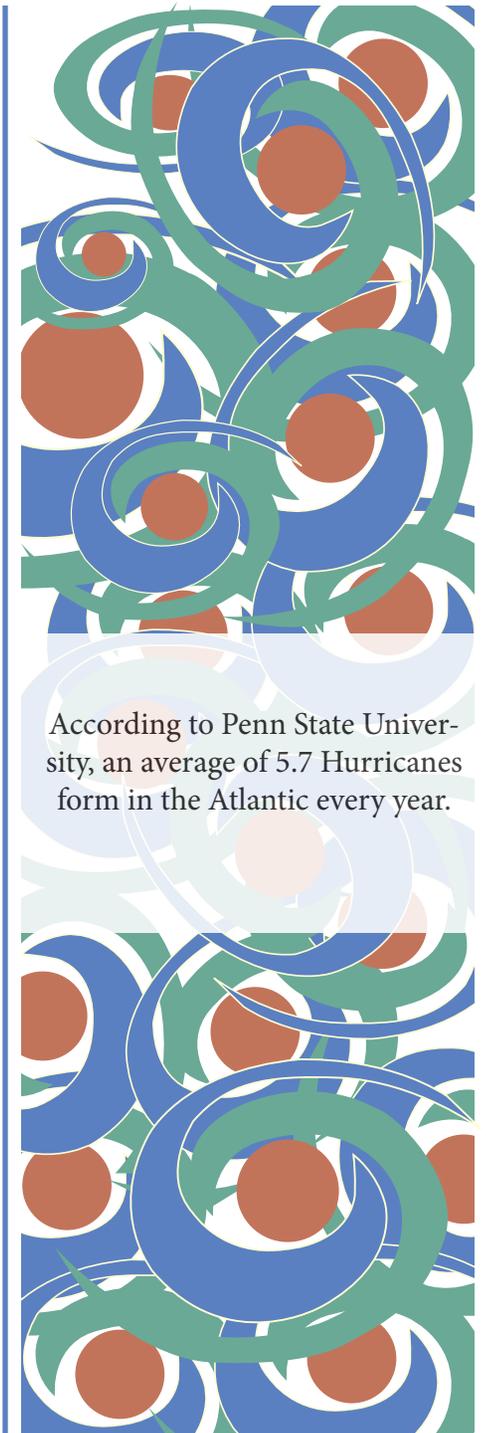


ABOVE: Keep all of your important documents in one place, so they are easily collectable during a hurricane situation.

LEFT: During a storm, your car can quickly become your most valuable asset. make sure it has at least a half tank of gas at all times and it's oil is changed every 3,000 miles.

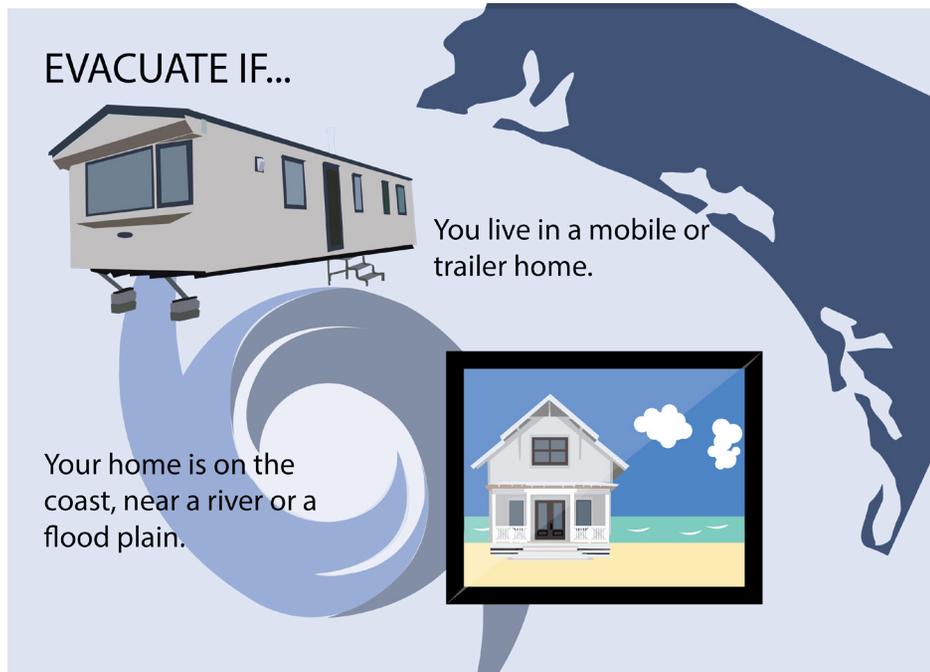
Car Survival Kit

Always maintain at least half a tank of gas First aid kit and



According to Penn State University, an average of 5.7 Hurricanes form in the Atlantic every year.

WHEN A HURRICANE MAY BLOW THROUGH



Buy a NOAA weather radio, have a car charger for your phone and keep your gas tank at least half-full during the summer months. Make sure your street address number is clearly marked on your home, so first responders know where to go. Review your insurance policies every May.

Have an evacuation location selected before storm season. Let friends and family know where you will go, in case of an evacuation order.

When you leave, don't go hundreds of miles away. Stay as close as you can, without being in danger from the storm.

Before a Hurricane Hits - In the Know Before a Disaster:

Know if you are in an evacuation zone. Check out gis.okaloosafl.com/publicsafety/downloads.maps. This site can tell you what evacuation zone you live in, or continue reading this guide, the maps are included on

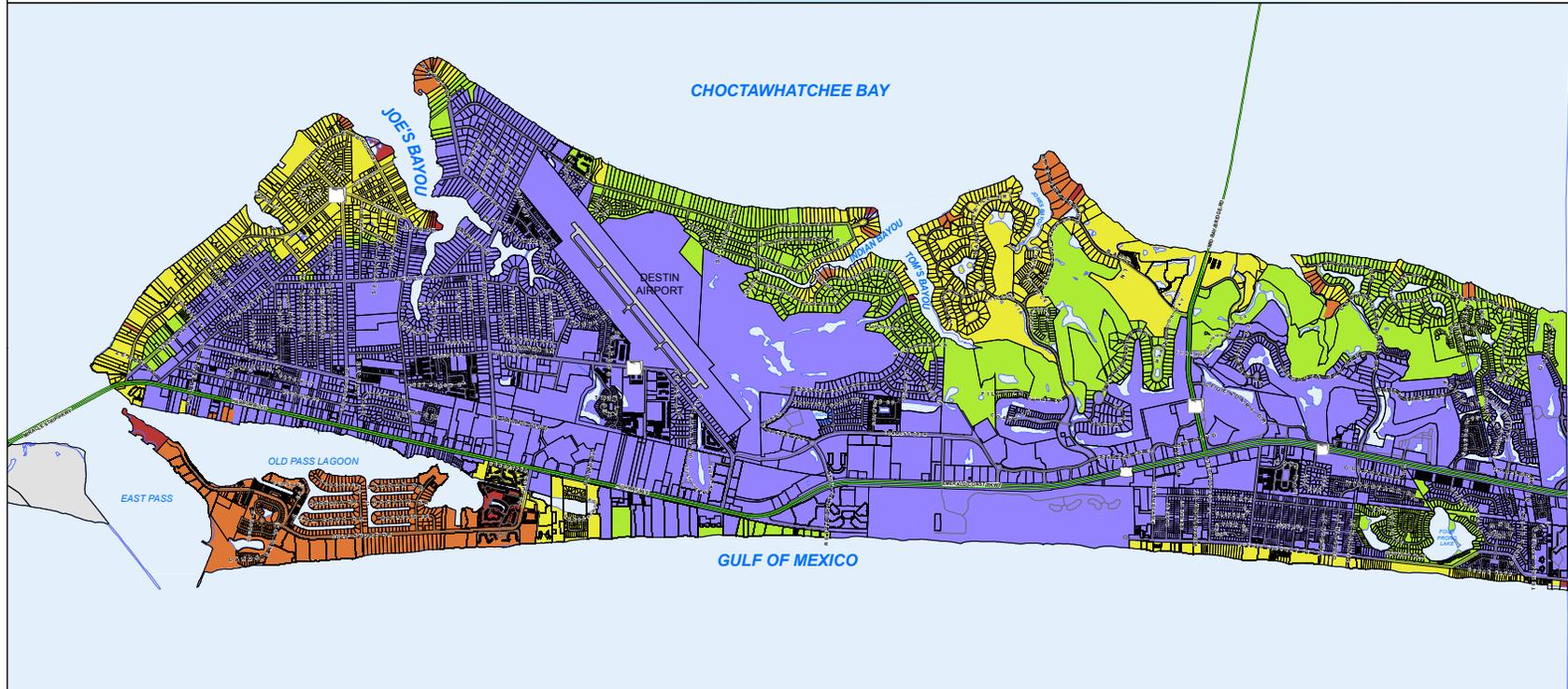
pages 13-16. All Mobile Home Residents are encouraged to evacuate for all storms. Decide BEFORE Hurricane season where you would go in the event of a tropical threat. If you are going to leave, do so as early as you are able. When you leave, don't go hundreds of miles away. Stay as close as you can, without being in danger from the storm.

Flood Zones v. Evacuation Zones

Flood zones are areas designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for use in the National Flood Insurance Program. These maps show homeowners what their risk is for flooding.

Evacuation zones are based on storm surge estimates supplied by the National Hurricane Center. Okaloosa County uses a colored system to alert people to their evacuation zones. A home could be outside of an evacuation zone but still in a flood zone and vice versa. Knowing your evacuation zone and if you are in a flood zone can save you time and hassle in the future.

Vicinity of Destin, Florida ~ Evacuation Zones



Evacuation Zones

- ZONE A (CAT 1)
- ZONE B (CAT 2)
- ZONE C (CAT 3)
- ZONE D (CAT 4)
- ZONE E (CAT 5)

Other Features

- EGLIN AFB
- HURLBURT FIELD
- PROPERTY LINES

CONTACT OKALOOSA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AT 850.651.7560 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

ZONE A
HURRICANE CATEGORY 1, TROPICAL STORMS, PLUS ALL MOBILE HOMES, CAMPSITES, AND OTHER HIGH-RISK SURGE AREAS SHOULD BE EVACUATED.

ZONE B
HURRICANE CATEGORY 2, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE A SHOULD BE EVACUATED.

ZONE C
HURRICANE CATEGORY 3, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE A & B SHOULD BE EVACUATED.

ZONE D
HURRICANE CATEGORY 4, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONES A, B & C SHOULD BE EVACUATED.

ZONE E
HURRICANE CATEGORY 5, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONES A, B, C & D SHOULD BE EVACUATED.

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE
CONTACT EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE EOC FOR BASE EVACUATION INFORMATION. IF ON EGLIN 850.882.3173

HURLBURT AIR FORCE BASE
CONTACT HURLBURT EOC FOR BASE EVACUATION INFORMATION IF ON HURLBURT 850.884.1149



1 inch = 2,500 feet

Produced by:
Okaloosa County GIS
June 2018

MAP PROJECTION:
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection
Stateplane: Florida North (9903)
NAD 1983(80), NAVD 1988.

PUBLIC RECORD:
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PARCEL DISCLAIMER:
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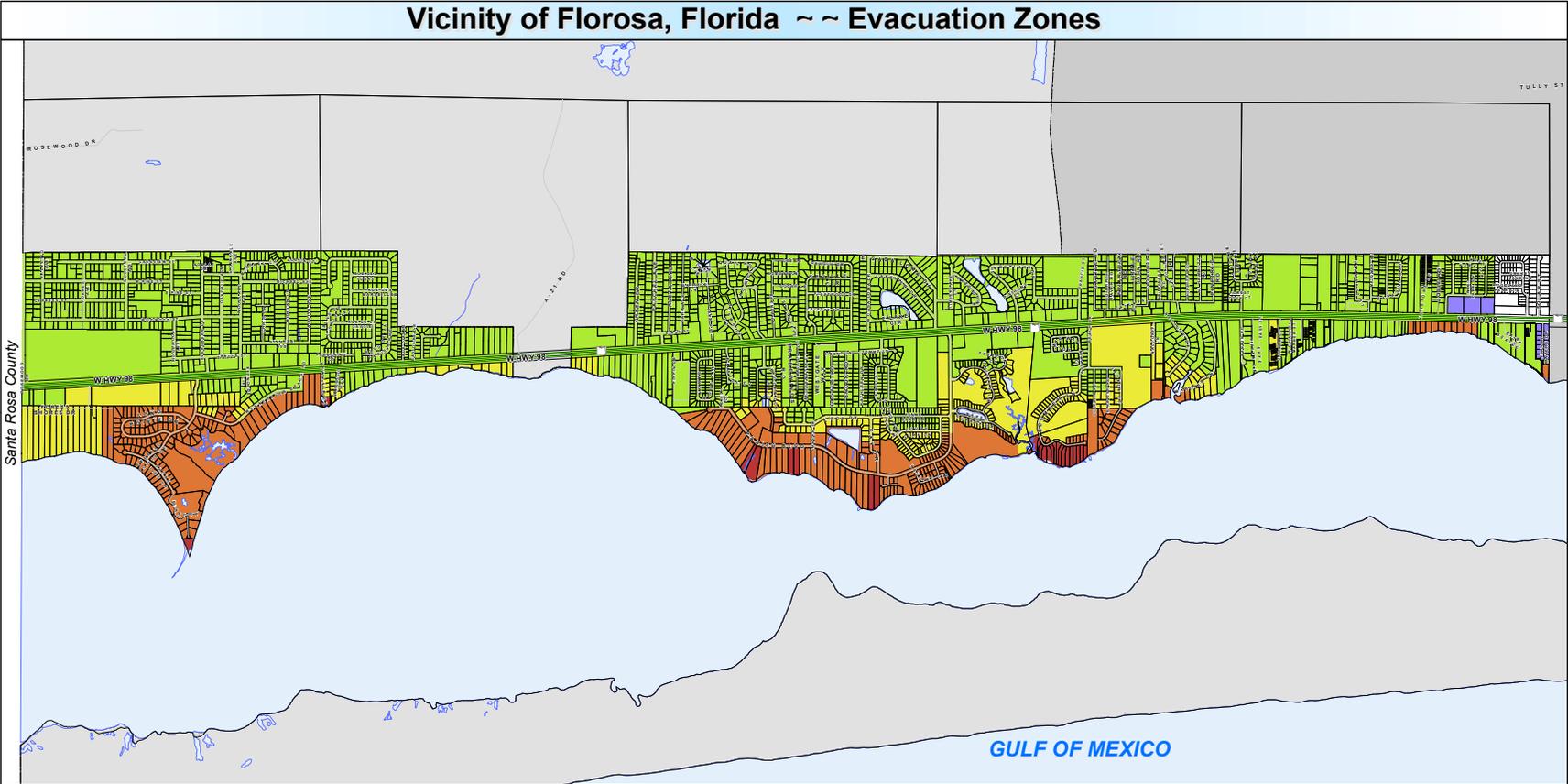
EVACUATION ZONES AS OF 5/21/2010

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KNOW YOUR ZONE

KNOW YOUR ZONE

Vicinity of Florosa, Florida ~ ~ Evacuation Zones



Evacuation Zones	Other Features
ZONE A (CAT 1)	EGLIN AFB
ZONE B (CAT 2)	HURLBURT FIELD
ZONE C (CAT 3)	PROPERTY LINES
ZONE D (CAT 4)	
ZONE E (CAT 5)	

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HURLBURT AIR FORCE BASE
CONTACT HURLBURT EOC FOR BASE EVACUATION INFORMATION IF ON HURLBURT 850.884.1149



1 inch = 1,667 feet

Produced by:
Okaloosa County GIS
June 2018

MAP PROJECTION:
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection
Stateplane: Florida North (8903)
NAD 1983(90), NAD 1983

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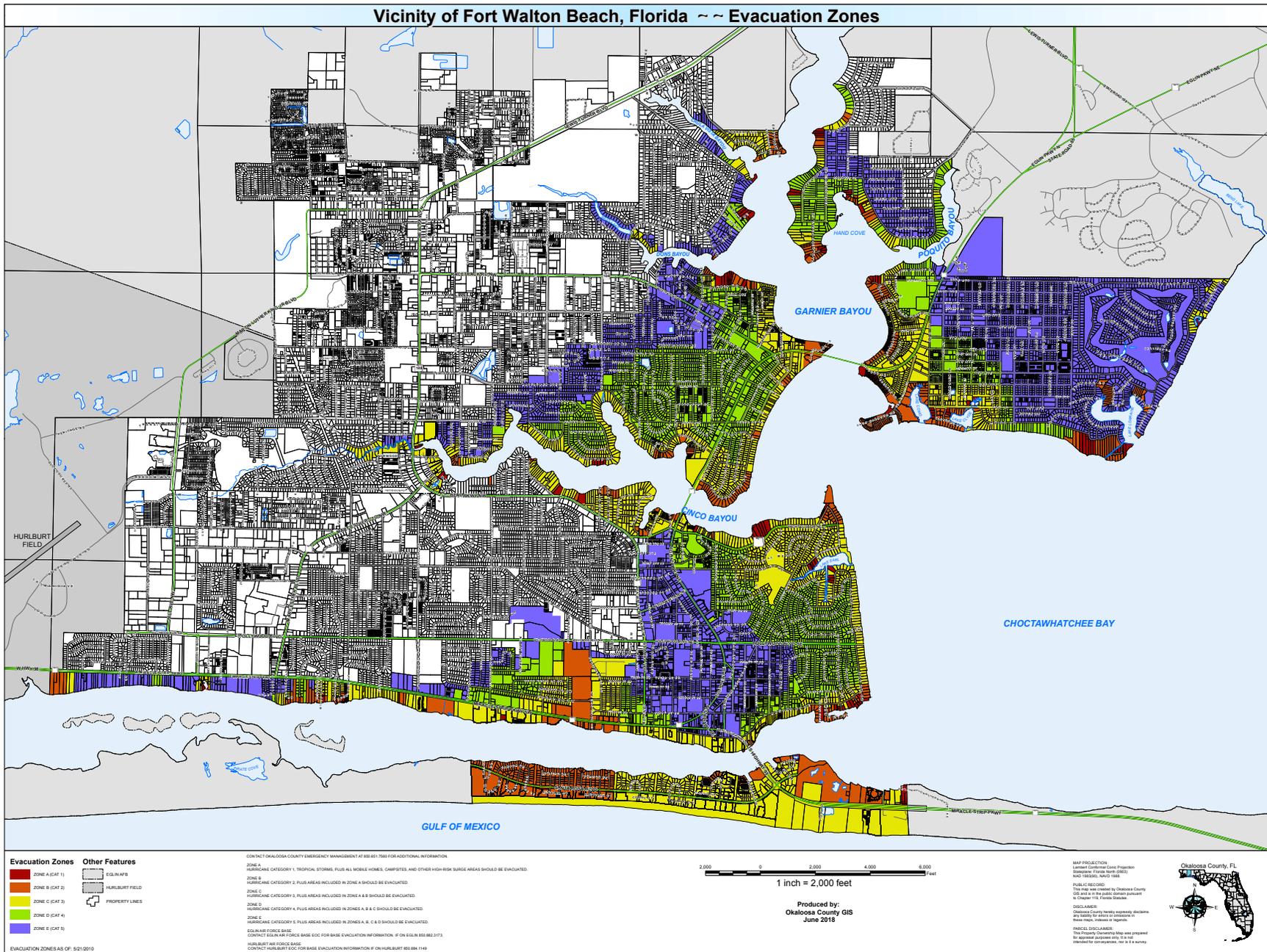
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EVACUATION ZONES AS OF 5/21/2010

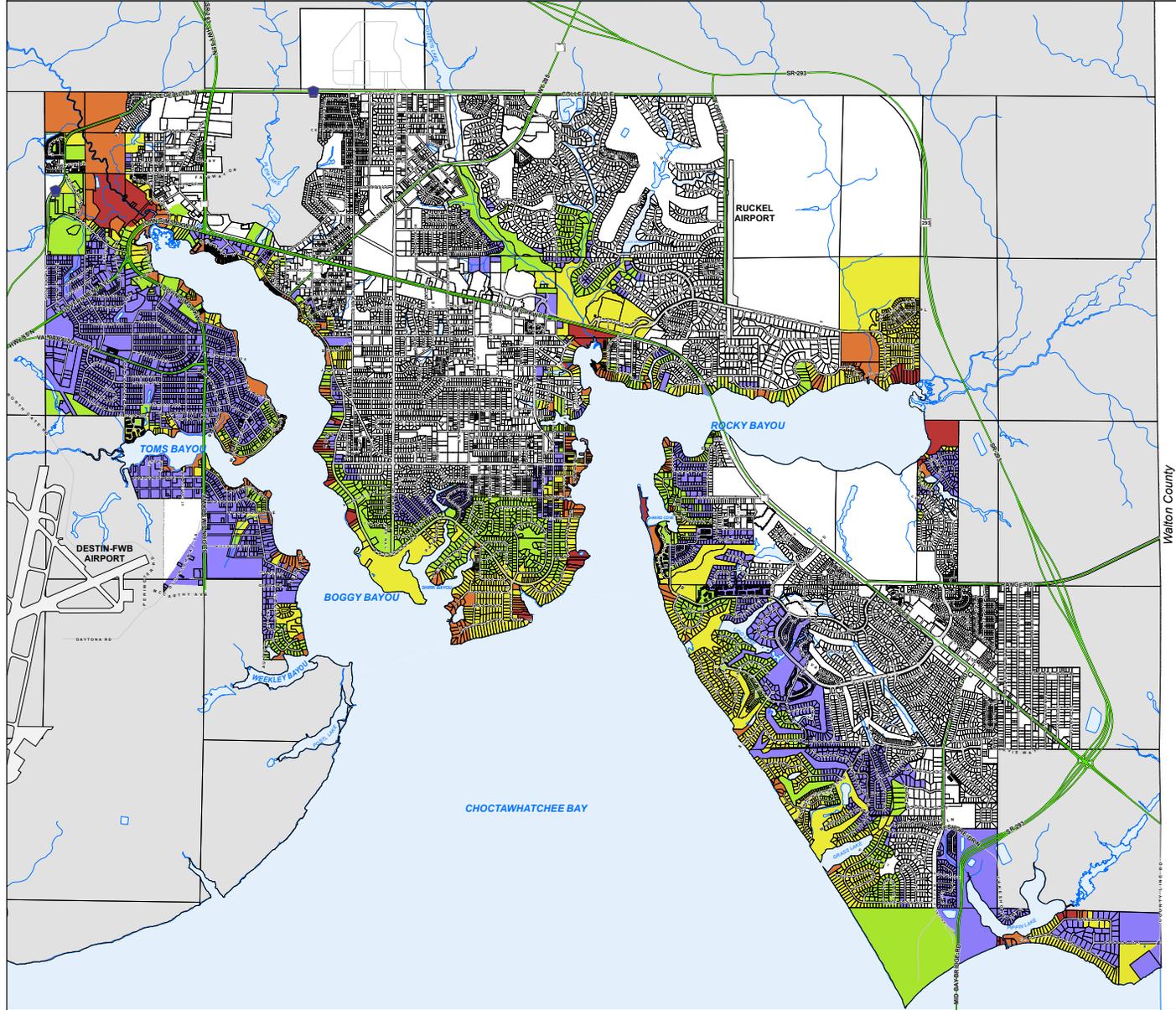
Vicinity of Fort Walton Beach, Florida ~ Evacuation Zones



KNOW YOUR ZONE

KNOW YOUR ZONE

Vicinity of Valparaiso & Niceville, Florida ~ ~ Evacuation Zones



<p>Evacuation Zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ZONE A (CAT 1) ZONE B (CAT 2) ZONE C (CAT 3) ZONE D (CAT 4) ZONE E (CAT 5) 	<p>Other Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EGLIN AFB HURLBURT FIELD PROPERTY LINES 	<p><small>CONTACT OKALOOSA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AT 900.651.7860 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.</small></p> <p><small>ZONE A HURRICANE CATEGORY 1, TROPICAL STORMS, PLUS ALL MOBILE HOMES, CAMPSITES, AND OTHER HIGH-RISK SURGE AREAS SHOULD BE EVACUATED.</small></p> <p><small>ZONE B HURRICANE CATEGORY 2, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE A SHOULD BE EVACUATED.</small></p> <p><small>ZONE C HURRICANE CATEGORY 3, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE A & B SHOULD BE EVACUATED.</small></p> <p><small>ZONE D HURRICANE CATEGORY 4, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE A, B & C SHOULD BE EVACUATED.</small></p> <p><small>ZONE E HURRICANE CATEGORY 5, PLUS AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE A, B, C & D SHOULD BE EVACUATED.</small></p> <p><small>EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE CONTACT EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE EOC FOR BASE EVACUATION INFORMATION: IF ON EGLIN 850.882.3173</small></p> <p><small>HURLBURT AIR FORCE BASE CONTACT HURLBURT EOC FOR BASE EVACUATION INFORMATION: IF ON HURLBURT 850.884.1149</small></p>	<p>1,200 0 1,200 2,400 3,600 4,800 Feet</p> <p>1 inch = 2,400 feet</p> <p>Produced by: Okaloosa County GIS June 2018</p>	<p><small>MAP PROJECTION: Lambert Conformal Conic Projection Standard Parallel North (SPO) NAD 1983(83), NAVD 1988.</small></p> <p><small>PUBLIC USE NOTICE: This map was created by Okaloosa County GIS and is for public use pursuant to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.</small></p> <p><small>DISCLAIMER: Okaloosa County hereby expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility for errors, omissions, or legends.</small></p> <p><small>INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: This Property Ownership Map was prepared by Okaloosa County GIS and is not intended for commercial use.</small></p> <p>Okaloosa County, FL</p>
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EVACUATION ZONES AS OF 5/21/2010

Hurricanes are the number one reason for mass evacuations on the Gulf Coast. When evacuation orders are given, residents and visitors must adhere to evacuation guidelines and leave the evacuation zone.

A mandatory evacuation means residents in a specific zone must evacuate the area of danger. It is unwise to stay in a home under a mandatory evacuation order. Subsequently, access to areas under a mandatory evacuation order may be restricted for a period of time after the effects of the hurricane have subsided. Shelters will open in conjunction with Mandatory Evacuation orders. It is important to note that not every shelter will open during an evacuation order. Check with Public Safety if you are unsure about which shelter has opened during an emergency. They are opened based on expected evacuating population. The shelter furthest from the shore (Davidson Middle School) opens first, followed by the next furthest away from the storm and so on. Additionally, traffic control measures are instituted by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office when mandatory evacuation orders are issued.

During a recommended evacuation, residents

and visitors are encouraged to seek refuge, ideally with family or friends who do not live inside the evacuation zone.

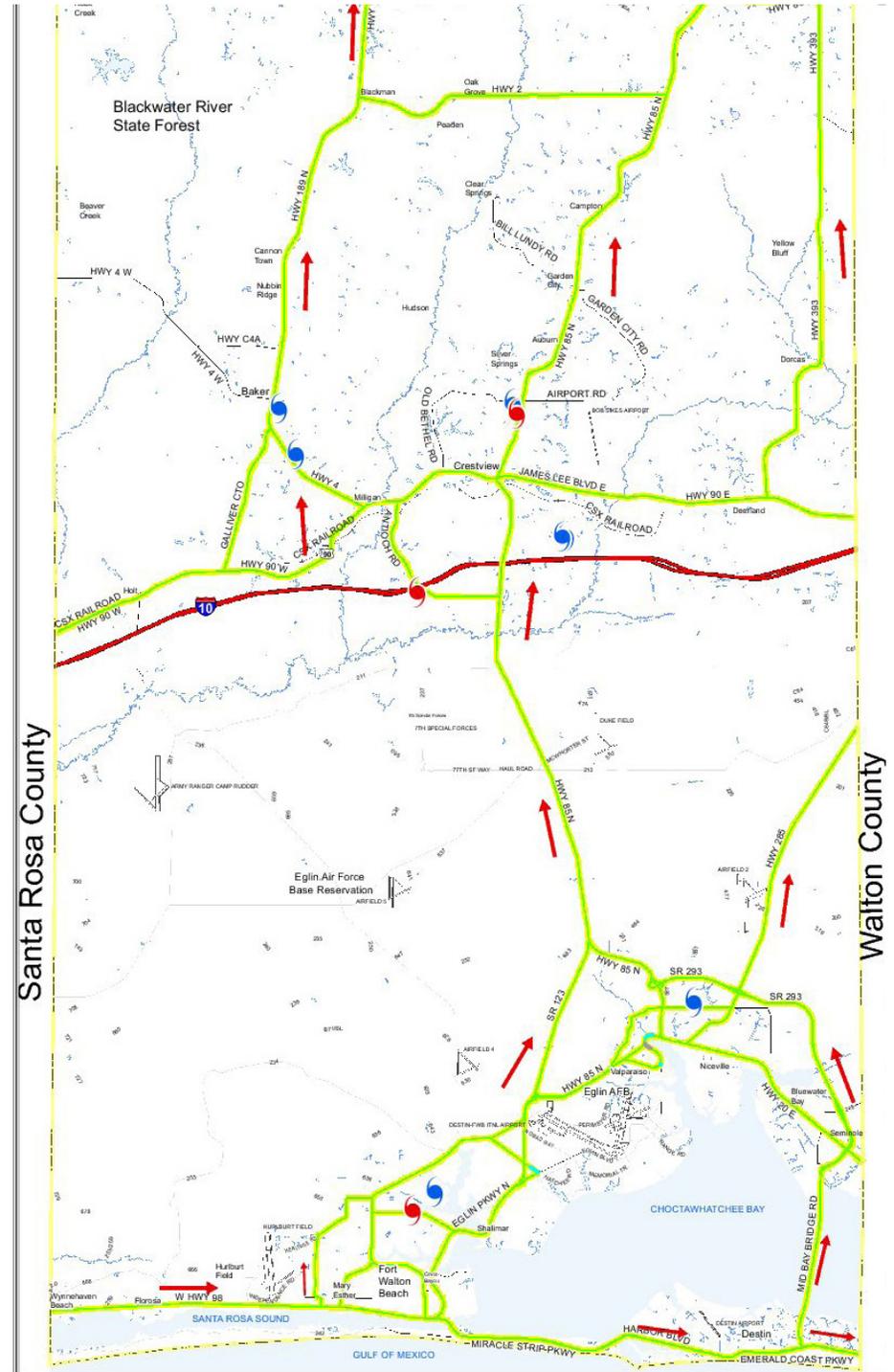
Should I Evacuate?

You need to determine what your responsibility is when it comes to evacuating as soon as possible. Remember, bridges are closed by the Florida Department of Transportation once sustained wind speeds pass 40 MPH. If you are evacuating a short distance, the county's main shelter is in Crestview at Davidson Middle School. The shelter has its advantages, including avoiding traffic as others in the area flee the oncoming path of the storm. Remember, leaving does not guarantee the storm will not shift track. It will also be a shorter trek home after the storm if you stay locally.

Ask yourself these questions:

Before you decide what you are going to do as the tropical depression, storm or hurricane approach-

RIGHT: Follow the evacuation maps, should you decide to evacuate. If you have made the decision to stay put, stay off the roads to allow others who are leaving to make their way north. Hurricane evacuation routes will be marked with blue signs with a hurricane in white.



es the Gulf Coast, make sure you are making the correct decision for your family and your circumstances. Do you live in a mobile or manufactured home? - if yes, then you should ALWAYS evacuate. Do you live in an evacuation zone? - check the maps on pages 11-13 to determine if you live in an evacuation zone. prepare to leave if you do live in a zone.

Where are public shelters? - Okaloosa County's main shelter is at Davidson Middle School in Crestview. Shelters are opened in order of the distance they are from the shoreline.

Do you need to go to the pet-friendly shelter? -

Okaloosa County's pet-friendly shelters are Antioch Elementary School, Davidson Middle School and Northwest Florida State College's Raider Arena. REMEMBER:



pet friendly, does NOT mean you will be able to keep your pet with you. Other evacuees may have allergies, which means pets and people will have to be separated for the health and well-being of others. The Panhandle Animal Welfare Society will check in your animal, and take it to the pet shelter area where they will care for it until you check out of the shelter. No exotic pets are allowed in the shelter.

If someone has a certified service animal, the animal will be allowed to stay with the owner. Owners will need to bring the service animals paperwork, their shot records and their service vest with them to the shelter for verification. Do you require transportation to a shelter? - Citizens with special needs need to sign up on the Okaloosa County Special Needs Registry and indicate they may need assistance making it to a storm shelter. Prior to any storm making landfall, they or their caregiver must call County Dial-a-Ride at 850.833.9168 and schedule a pick up place and time.

LEFT: County Administrator John Hofstad reads an emergency declaration for commissioners to vote on immediately before Subtropical Storm Alberto made its presence felt in Okaloosa County. County leadership meets regularly during a tropical event to assess the situation and make important decisions to protect and serve the citizens and visitors to the county.

If you decide to stay in your home, plan ahead to have a safe place to shelter.

Know where the nearest shelter is and have a plan to get there should the storm warrant your evacuation.

If you do decide to evacuate do so quickly and in daylight if at all possible.

Tell someone outside of the warning area where you are going. if you can't get through on a voice call, try texting. Follow official evacuation routes.

Should something not go to plan, have a plan b.

Keep your gas tank as full as possible.

Stay on constant alert for washed out roads or bridges. Never drive through standing water, especially at night. It only takes six inches of standing water to sweep a car away. While driving, avoid downed power lines.

When in doubt, log on to www.floridaevacuates.com for the latest information from the state.

In conjunction with the Okaloosa County School District, Okaloosa County will open



up shelters around the county. Evacuation shelters are provided for public use in the event of a hurricane or tropical storm. Shelter openings will be announced through social media, the traditional media and on our website: co.okaloosa.fl.us.

Shelter openings will vary depending on the hurricane. If you are unable to find the information via our social media, media reports or are unable to connect to the internet, call 850-609-7000 or 311 on most phones.

If you decide to stay

Find a reinforced part of your home, such as an interior room with no windows like a closet or bathroom which you can seek shelter in. Listen to local radio and television stations for instructions from the county and for the latest weather updates. Consider offering your home as a place to stay for friends or family members who live in vulnerable coastal areas or mobile homes. Get cash, banks may not be open, and ATMs will not work without electricity.

If you decide to stay despite an evacuation order, you need to know there is a good chance you will be on your own for several days and no one will be able to help you or your family, no matter how desperate your situation is. **YOUR LIFE IS IN YOUR OWN HANDS.** First responders **WILL NOT** leave their stations during the passing of a storm. Furthermore, after the immediate aftermath of the storm, the vast majority of first responders will be at work clearing debris from the roads so they can travel to emergencies. This will almost certainly cause delays in response time.

Preventing Tree, Flood and Wind Damage

Hurricanes and tropical storms mean potential damage to property from a variety of threats. While no amount of preparation can prevent damage, taking these steps will reduce your risk:

Tree Damage

inspect your trees annually. look for cracks in the trunks or major limbs. Know what kinds of trees you have on your property. sand and live oaks, sabal palms



ABOVE: In the wake of Hurricane Dennis in 2005, many trees were cracked, shattered and scattered along the roadways of Okaloosa County. County Maintenance spent days clearing the roads to make the passable for emergency medical services, sheriff's deputies, other first responders, residents and tourists.

and southern magnolias do well against the forces of mother nature. Don't cut your branches back to the stubs. the trees will grow back with less strength and are more likely to become projectiles during a storm, according to the international society of Arborculture.

Flood Damage

The best thing you can do to avoid damage to your home is elevate it. Most types of homes can be elevated above floodwaters. Ideally, if you are building a home, it should

RIGHT:: your front door should have two locks, a bolt and three hinges in order to reduce the risk of it becoming a projectile.

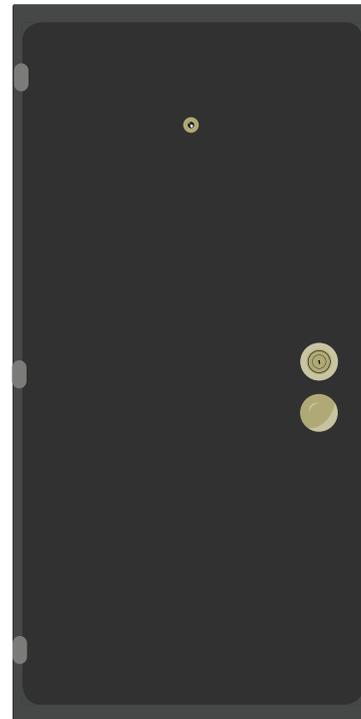
elevated above the level at which a so-called '100 year flood' could not reach it.

Wind Damage

Roofs - ensure your roof covering and the sheathing it attaches to will resist high winds.

Gables - Brace the end of the wall of a gable roof properly to resist high winds.

Garage doors - because of their size and the way they are built, they're easily damaged in a storm. some doors can be re-enforced with aftermarket kits.



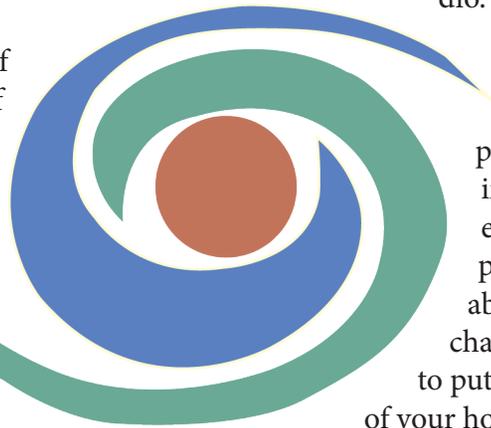
Ideally, if you are building a home, it should be elevated above the level at which a so-called '100 year flood' could not reach it.

Exterior Doors and Windows - the exterior walls, doors and windows are the protective shell of your home. You can protect your home by strengthening doors and windows.

Entry doors - Make certain your doors have at least three hinges and a dead bolt security lock with a bolt at least one inch long. Anchor door frames securely to wall framing.

Patio doors - sliding glass doors are more vulnerable to wind damage - so make sure to install shutters or impact-resistant patio doors.

Residents of the Florida Gulf Coast should keep an eye on every storm which forms during hurricane season.



When a storm forms, weather forecasters will start talking about something called the “forecast cone” or “Cone of uncertainty.” This cone, measured out to three or five days gives the most likely projected path of the storm in order to help emergency managers and citizens figure out what their next step needs to be. Because the storm’s landfall is still imprecise, all people who live in the cone should begin preparations as if the storm was coming to their doorstep.

Before you are in the cone

Have a plan. Know how you are going to take care of elderly or children you are responsible for. Additionally, have a plan for your pets. Make and store an emergency supply kit. Understand ‘watch’ and ‘warning’ terms. Make sure you know your evacuation zone and have a NOAA weather ra-

dio. Trim trees and shrubs around your home and document your possessions for insurance purposes. Make sure your property is securable. If possible, purchase storm shutters to put over the windows of your home. If storm

shutters aren’t an option, fit and cut marine plywood over your homes windows. Brace double entry garage doors. Purchase extra gas tanks if possible to keep emergency supplies of gasoline. Use the gasoline in the tanks at the end of the storm season every December. Gas goes bad after about a year; you will need to replenish your supply accordingly. Refill your prescriptions, especially if they are something you cannot live without. Finally, test your generator on the first of June every year. Better to know it doesn’t work and have to buy a new one, than to have a broken one during a storm.

Five-Day Cone Actions

- Review and update your family action plan.
- get your survival kit and import-

ant papers ready.

- If you have a special needs family member, be prepared to institute your action plan.
- Take pictures of your home from all angles. The storm could change your property in ways you may not notice.
- Begin to move all objects in your yard or on your house which are not secured and could become windburn.
- if you live in an evacuation zone, know when you will leave and how you will get there.

Three-Day Cone Actions

The three day cone is significantly more accurate. If Okaloosa County is within the cone, residents should mobilize all of their efforts to prepare for the storm.

- Double-check your hurricane kit. See if there are any last-minute purchases you may need to make. It will help you avoid lines.
- Gather supplies you may need for infants, children, the elderly and pets.
- be certain you are able to shutter your

windows and you have the tools to do it.

- If you plan to evacuate, make sure you have a place to stay once you leave.

About 48 hours ahead of the storm, forecasters will send out a hurricane watch for areas they believe will be affected by the storm. Because hurricanes and tropical storms can be erratic, people within the hurricane watch zone must prepare as if the storm is coming directly for their home. If the hurricane or tropical storm changes direction or speed, the difference between a watch and a warning could be as little as six hours. If you live in a mobile or

BELOW: Okaloosa County was in the 5-day cone of Tropical Storm/Hurricane Nate as it approached the Mobile area.



manufactured home or if you live on the coastline you should, ideally, be ready to leave your home 1-2 hours AHEAD of the hurricane warning being issued. If you live in a non-evacuation zone, the goal is to be finished with your preparations one to two hours AFTER the hurricane warning is issued.

Hurricane Watch Actions

- Ensure that your gas tank is full.
- get cash and secure important papers and valuables.
- Refill all Medications
- fill containers and tubs with water, even if you are evacuating. You may need water when your return.
- Bring in outdoor objects, such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools.
- Shutter your windows.
- Prepare boats.
- If you plan to evacuate out of the local area, make final preparations to secure your home so you can leave as soon as an evacuation order is issued.
- If you are registered for transportation to a public shelter, be sure you have everything you need for your 'Go bag.'

RIGHT: When Hurricane Nate came ashore, all of the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coasts were under a hurricane warning.

Hurricane Warning Actions

A storm will be about 36 hours away from landfall when a hurricane warning is issued. Okaloosa County Emergency Management may issue official evacuation orders not long after that. When an evacuation is ordered, all manufactured home residents should evacuate. For others, know your zone. This way, you know, understand and follow official emergency instructions.

- Stay tuned to local news and get your weather radio ready. If a blackout occurs, listen on a battery-powered radio.
- Complete any final preparations
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep the doors closed. Turn off

electricity if flood waters threaten your property.

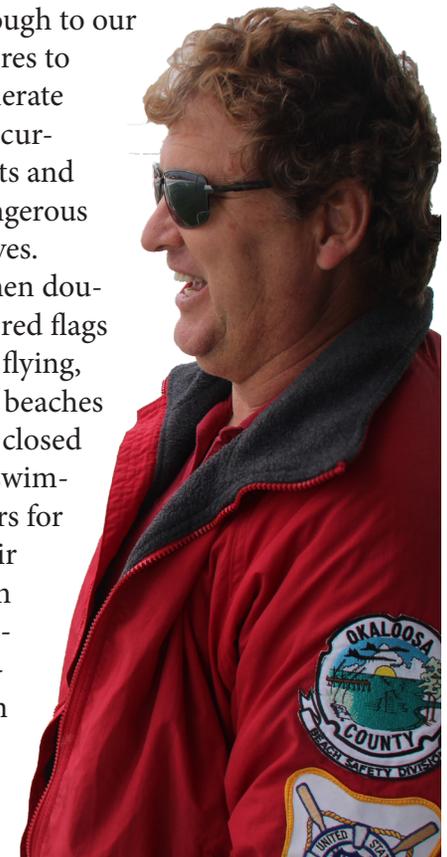
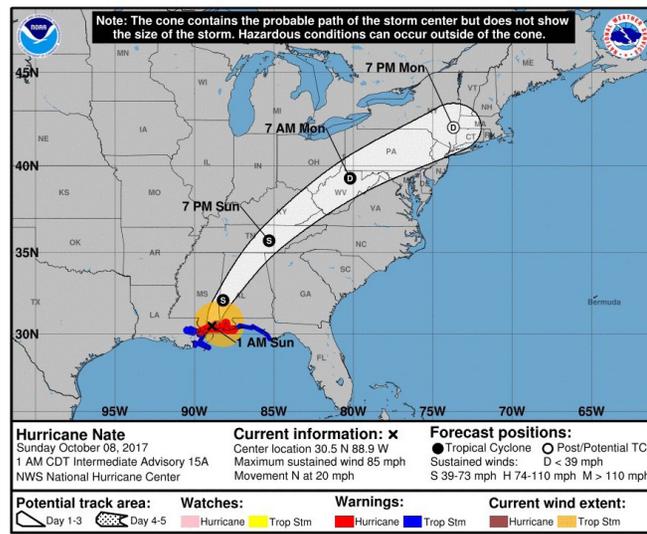
- Turn off all major appliances if you lose power. This will prevent power surges from overloading the grid when power is turned back on.
- If your plan is to leave, do so as early as possible.
- If you are registered to be taken to a shelter, have your 'go bag' ready.
- If evacuation orders are issued, check to see if you are included in those orders.
- If you are evacuating locally, leave for your designated safe location. If you are going to a shelter, know which shelters are open before you go.
- If you aren't required to evacuate, prepare a safe room in your home and stay off the roads, in order to

- allow those who are evacuating the ability to leave in timely manner.
- Notify your designated out-of-town contact as to what is going on, what you are doing and any other information they may need to contact you after the storm.
- Save power on

your phone, only use it for emergencies.

Closing the Beaches

It is the beach safety division's responsibility to keep the shores of the Emerald Coast safe for locals and visitors alike year round; this includes crisis situations like Hurricanes and Tropical Storms. Beach Safety Division Chief Rich Huffnagle will close down the beaches by flying a double red flag once the storm is close enough to our shores to generate rip currents and dangerous waves. When double red flags are flying, the beaches are closed to swimmers for their own protection



What to take to a shelter

- A change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes. Take what is necessary clothing-wise. Do not bring your entire wardrobe.
- Toiletries and personal items
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Identification and any important papers
- Games or toys for children, books for adults
- Special items for infants or elderly family members
- Any special dietary needs and nonperishable foods for snacks
- Prescription medications or any over the counter medications you normally need
- Health insurance and pharmacy cards

What to know if you are going to stay in a shelter.

Evacuation shelters are provided for public use in the event of an evacuation becomes necessary and

if you have no other place to go. It's recommended that other arrangements be made with a friend or a relative who lives in a well-constructed home, out of the evacuation area, and properly protected to withstand hurricane force



winds. You will be more comfortable and feel less crowded among friends. No alcohol or weapons are allowed

in the shelter. This is for the protection of all evacuees.

Shelters are a last resort. They are normally public school buildings that are staffed by specially-trained American Red Cross Volunteers and staff. They are usu-

ABOVE: Davidson Middle School serves as Okaloosa County's main hurricane shelter. The shelter is located on the north side of Crestview, alongside SR-85 at 6261 Old Bethel Rd, Crestview, FL 32536.

ally crowded, uncomfortable, have long restroom lines and food lines and are very noisy. Take shelter with friends and family outside of the danger zone if at all possible.

Look at the maps on the following pages. They contain the evacuation zones for Okaloosa County, zone-by zone. During a tropical weather event, Emergency Management in coordination with the director of Public Safety and the Board of County Commissioners and the Sheriff's Office make the decision to order an evacuation. While some parts of the county may seem to be out of the danger zone, even when evacuation orders are not given for a certain storm, it is important to stay mindful of the situation around you. The experts cannot be everywhere at

once, and you must rely on your judgment as well as on the professionals. It is always better to be safe than sorry.



Placing Sand Bags

If flooding is imminent, Okaloosa County will distribute sandbags at their north and south end Public Works Yards on Ferdon Boulevard in Crestview and Hollywood Boulevard in Fort Walton Beach.

Fill sandbags with heavy-bodied or sandy soil, not fine sand or gravel. Using sandbags, which are properly filled, and placed may divert water around instead of through buildings, but

they don't flood-proof your house.

Only fill a sand bag 2/3 of the way to the top and tie it securely. This makes the bag more malleable and more effective in preventing the flow of water. Polypropylene bags are the preferred bag to use, but burlap will work.

First place a waterproof canvas down and place sandbags in an overlapping pattern when deploying them. Place the first layer of bags lengthwise and lap the bags so the filled portion of one bag lies on the unified portion of the next. Place the second layer perpendicular to the first and limit placement

to two layers unless a building is used as a backing. Finally, remember to place the sandbags with the folded top of the bag in the upstream or uphill position to prevent the bags from opening when water runs by them.

Remember, sandbags will NOT seal out water and they deteriorate as they repeatedly get exposed to wind and water. In order to increase their lives, add one part cement to ten parts sand as a mixture and pour it into the bag

Securing Your Boat

Each boat owner needs to prepare their own specific plan for the type of boat they have as a storm threatens.

Never stay on your boat during a hurricane or tropical storm.

Seek advice from local marinas.

They can advise you on the best way to protect your boat through a storm in a specific area.

Remove small boats from the water and move them to a secure location.

Ensure the boat is tied securely to the trailer.

If your boat is too large to be removed from the water, move it to a protected harbor before the storm approaches.

Double up and secure mooring lines.

Secure all hatches and portals and cover windscreens.

Take down masts, if possible.

Remove all loose items from decks and mooring area. Leave nothing unsecured.



LEFT: Stack your sandbags like this in front of your door in order to reduce the risk of water coming into your home. This gives a sandbag wall balance so it is less likely to topple over.

Only fill bags 2/3 of the way.

DURING THE HURRICANE

During the storm, the first thing you will need to do is remain calm. It will take several hours for the storm to pass completely. Remain in an interior room, such as a closet, hallway or a bathroom, of a sturdy building. This room should be a structure away from windows. While you are taking cover, make sure you have a disaster kit nearby. Close all exterior and interior doors. If the eye of the storm passes, it will be calm for a **SHORT** period of time. **REMAIN INDOORS.**

As soon as the eye passes over, winds will increase dramatically from the opposite direction. Mobile and manufactured housing is not a place to ride out the storm. All who live in a mobile home should take shelter with a family member or a friend. Additionally, people who live in these structures should have gone through their yards and collected any and all loose items to prevent projectile damage from the

BELOW: During the storm, large amounts of rainwater can accumulate on area roads. Keep this in mind if you must venture out after the storm passes.

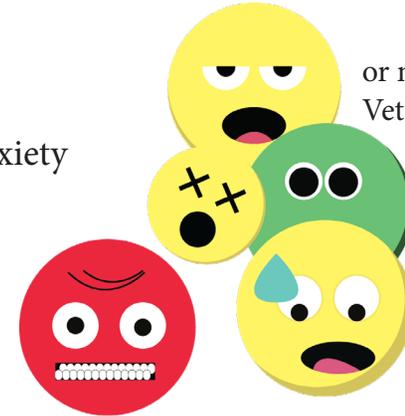


storm.

Managing Anxiety

Being able to cope with stress and uncertainty is a wonderful skill to have in everyday life, exponentially more so during a hurricane or tropical storm.

It is normal to feel apprehension as a storm approaches, and people should expect changes in their physical, emotional or mental state immediately before, during and after a storm makes landfall. Attempt to limit your exposure to graphic news stories by limiting the amount of time you consume the news. Check in regularly, but do not keep the television on or compulsively refresh your social media pages. Get accurate, timely information from reliable sources. As a storm approaches land anywhere in the US, we see an increase in false



ABOVE: people react differently to stress. Communication is the key to overcoming anxiety during a hurricane.

or misleading sources. Vet the source you are reading or watching. If you haven't heard of the news 'outlet' before, chances are you are not reading something from a reliable source.

Maintain your normal routine as much as possible. Try to sleep eight hours a night and eat regular, balanced meals. Avoid drugs and excessive drinking, you need to be alert and ready to move at all times.

Stay active physically and mentally. Read a book, do pushups. Call your family members and let them know your status often.

Laugh. Keeping a sense of humor helps reduce the level of stress you are under.

Finally, if you are feeling stress, tell someone. Talk the situation out with a family member or trusted friend.

Blackout Conditions

A storm can cause a widespread loss of electrical power throughout a system for an extended period of time. If you use life-sustaining electrical equipment, pre-register with the special needs shelter.

Consider purchasing a small generator or know where to rent one if you use life sustaining equipment that requires electrical power.

If you own an electric garage door, make sure you know how to open it properly without power.

Prepare a power outage kit. For short outages, consider using glow sticks, flashlights and a battery-powered radio, extra batteries and a wind up clock.

Have a cell phone and a way to charge it

When you install a home generator, follow the manufacturer's instructions and have it inspected by the utility company.

Unplug computers and other voltage-sensitive equipment, as well as appliances to reduce initial demand when power is restored.

If you decide to evacuate, unplug or turn off your heat-producing appliances, such as stoves, irons or heaters.

Stay away from downed power

lines and call 911 to report them. Conserve water, especially if you are on a well system.

Keep doors, windows and curtains closed to retain heat in your home if the outage occurs late in the hurricane season.

Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed, especially in the summer. IF the doors remain closed, food in a fully loaded freezer can remain edible for two days. Carefully check thawed food for contamination.

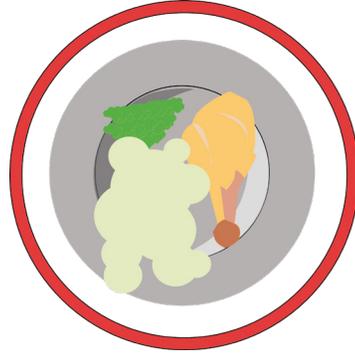
Be careful around candles or other flammable light sources.

When using Kerosene heaters, gas lanterns or stoves inside houses, maintain ventilation to avoid a buildup of toxic fumes.

Generator Safety

Before you operate a generator, make sure you follow these steps and have the tools you need to operate it safely.

Have a Carbon Monoxide detector on hand to protect yourself from the dangerous, odorless chemical which is produced by generators. Have extra gas cans on site, so you can continue to operate your generator for as long as necessary. Store the gasoline in a well-ventilated area that is not a utility room. If you don't have a suitable place to



store gasoline, build or buy a cabinet to place outside of your home. Check your gas tanks for leaks once a month.

Fuel stabilizer helps give gasoline a longer shelf life.

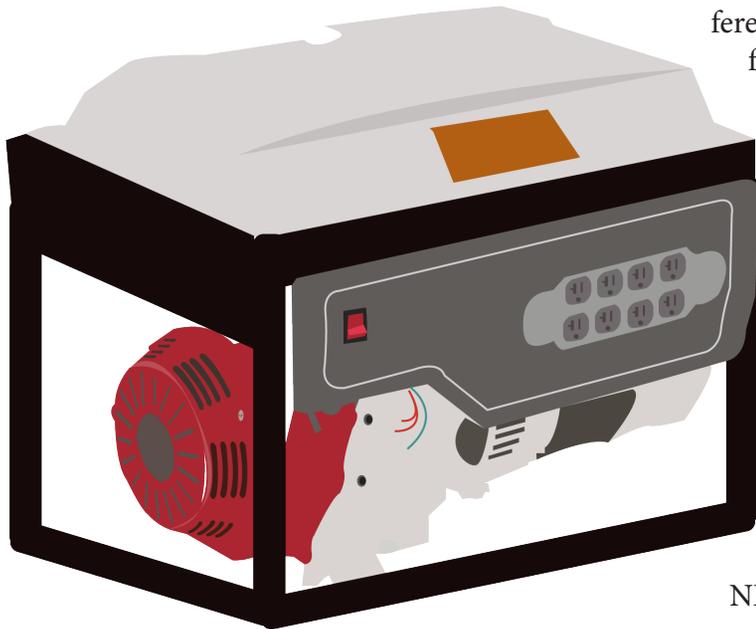
Always use extension cords to run indoor appliances with a generator. You should never bring a generator inside.

Before refilling a generator's gas tank, turn it off and let it cool.

YOU SHOULD NEVER REFILL A GENERATOR WHILE IT IS RUNNING. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts can cause a fire.

Plug appliances directly into the

BELOW: Generators, while expensive, could be well worth it in a power outage.



generator, starting with the largest electric appliance you wish to power and then others, one at a time. Use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord with a generator and make sure it is free of cuts and tears.

Never plug a generator into a wall outlet.

Learn to shut off utilities

After a disaster, your utilities may be disrupted or disconnected. You may need to turn off your gas water or other utilities without aid from a professional. Make sure all adults in the home know how to turn off utilities to the house. In addition, make sure the shut off valves are

unobstructed. There are dif-

ferent procedures for turning off

gas in differ-

ent places. If you turn

off the gas for any

reason, you should

only allow a qualified profes-

sional turn it back

on again.

NEVER attempt

to turn the gas on again by yourself.

If you hear re-

ports of contami-

nation from the

OKALOOSA

DEPART-

MENT OF

HEALTH,

you may want to

shut off your

water after a

hur-

ricane to

prevent sickness.

To close the incoming

water source,

locate the in-

coming valve

and turn it to the closed

position.

To use

the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the

faucet in your home at the highest level. A small amount of water will

trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the home.

To use the water in your hot water tank, be sure the electricity or

gas is off and open the drain at the

bottom of the tank. Start the water

flowing by turning off the tank's

water intake valve and turning on

the hot water faucet. Refill the

tank before turning the

gas or electricity

back on.

For safety's

sake, al-

ways shut off

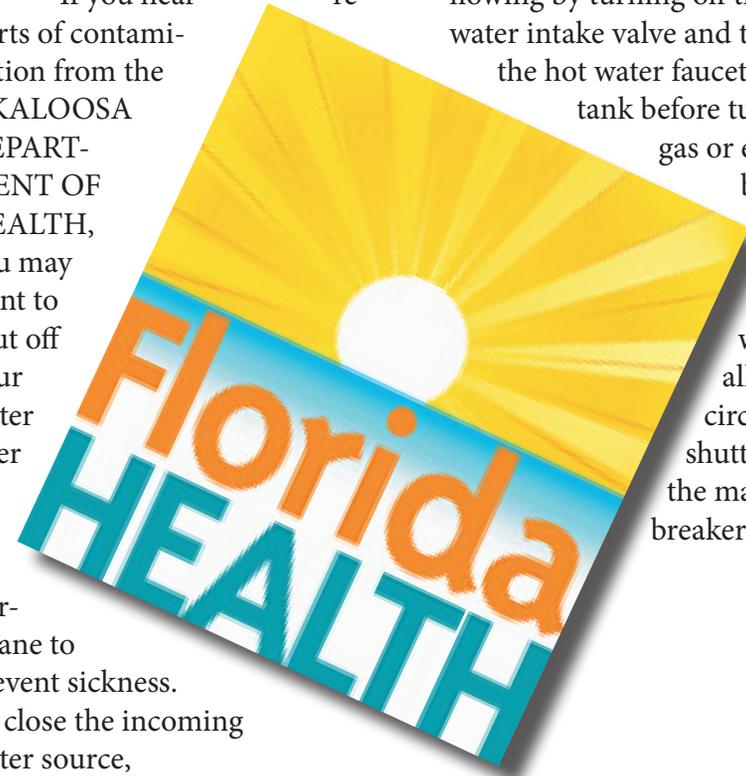
all individual

circuits before

shutting off

the main circuit

breaker.



ABOVE: The Okaloosa Department of Health will issue any and all water quality notices. Their phone numbers are (850).833.9240 in Fort Walton Beach and (850).689.7808 in the city of Crestview.

AFTER THE STORM PASSES

After the storm, wait until area is declared safe before going outside. Only drive if absolutely necessary. Debris could inundate the roadways making it impossible to drive on. Emergency Management crews will work to clear up all roads. Roads could be closed for your protection; meaning detours could be necessary. If you evacuated, only return home when authorities have said it is safe to do so. When you get home, check on your neighbors. If your home is safe, then make any necessary temporary repairs. Take photos of any damage to send to your insurance company. Don't drive into flooded areas and beware of any standing water. Additionally, be on the lookout for any downed power lines near water. The lines can electrify the water - and you, a family member or a pet. Look out for insects, snakes or animals which could've been driven to higher ground and may be ornery. Enter your home cautiously - use a flashlight to look around, do not use

any sort of open flame. Once you have inspected your home, begin removing shutters or plywood, checking gas, water and electrical lines. Check our local media for any boil water notices and throw out any spoiled food.



ABOVE: County employees refresh their operational knowledge on Points of Distribution (PODs). The once-yearly training updates policies and procedures. In the aftermath of a storm, employees will leave their families and possibly destroyed homes and man POD stations.

PODs

After a hurricane or tropical storm, the county, state or federal government may choose to open points-of distribution, or PODs. This service will be run by county

employees who are responding in the immediate aftermath of a storm in Okaloosa County. These access zones are where you will be able to pick up food and water to help you recover from the storm. These facilities will only be opened if another commercial facility, like a grocery store, is not available to the public immediately after a weather event. The number and locations of PODs will therefore vary from situation to situation.

Purifying Water

There are two primary ways to make water drinkable: boiling and adding bleach. If water is unsafe because of contamination from flooding, boiling is the best method.

Fill a pot with water after straining it through a coffee filter or cheesecloth to remove dirt and other particles. Bring the water to a rolling boil and boil for three minutes.

Pour the water into a disinfected drinking container after it has cooled.

Store in the refrigerator, if possible.

If you are unable to boil water, the next-best method is to use an appropriate amount of bleach to clean the water.

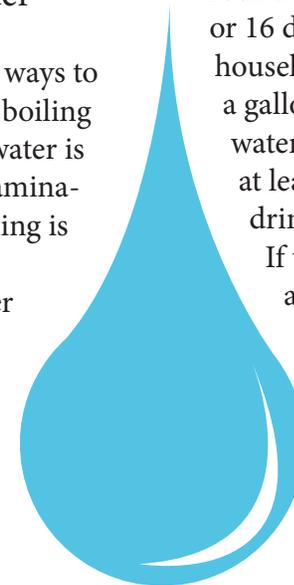
Strain water through a coffee filter or cheesecloth to remove larger particles.

Use gallon-sized containers to calculate the correct chlorine bleach solution.

Pour a mixture of 1/8 teaspoon or 16 drops of pure, unscented, household chlorine bleach into a gallon-size, purified drinking water container. Let this stand at least 30 minutes before drinking the water.

If the water is still cloudy after 30 minutes, add an additional 1/8 teaspoon or 16 drops of chlorine bleach to the gallon sized container and let the water stand another 30 minutes.

Remember: an excessive amount of bleach is poi-



sonous.

Extreme Heat

Many of the hurricanes which threaten our county take place during the hotter months. Since power outages are common during these events, the threat of heat-related illnesses is quite high. Avoiding heat-related sicknesses requires heavy preparation - before extreme hot weather, install window-mounted air conditioners ahead of time and insulate them if necessary. Check air conditioning ducts for proper insulation. Install temporary window reflectors, like aluminum foil covered cardboard to reflect heat and cover windows that receive morning or afternoon



ABOVE: You should have one gallon of water per day per family member on hand during hurricane season. If you have a family of four, you need 12 gallons of clean drinking water.

sun with drapes, shades, awnings or louvers. Outdoor awnings can reduce the heat that enters the home by up to 80%. Finally, install storm-rated windows in your home.

During hot weather, stay indoors as much as possible and limit sun exposure. Stay on the lowest level on your home if air conditioning isn't available. Spend the warmest part of the day at a public place with power and dress in lightweight, light colored clothing.

If you must go outside, wear sunscreen and re-apply hourly. Be sure to apply to dry skin. Wear a hat and sunglasses.

Never leave a pet or child in an unattended vehicle.

Eat light, balanced and healthy meals in addition to drinking large amounts of water.

Finally, remember to check in on elderly or disabled family friends and neighbors.

Clean up

Call professional arborists for large uprooted trees. Use proper safety gear, such as



ABOVE: Trees take a beating from high winds, debris and lightning during tropical storms and hurricanes. They pose a significant threat to lives and property if they are not properly managed. Make sure weakened or dead trees are cut away before the storm

heavy gloves, boots, and safety goggles and long sleeved shirts and pants.

Wear a hat and use sunscreen. Drink plenty of water and rest often.

Lift with your legs, not with your back.

DO NOT burn trash or yard debris. Low water pressure and blocked roads may keep the fire department from reaching you if any controlled burns get out of control.

If you can ID something, don't touch it.

Be wary of downed power lines.

Final Words

Preparation is the key to surviving a tropical event on the Gulf Coast. It means getting preparations done before the storm season, making common sense decisions, obeying lawful orders and knowing the dangers associated with storms.

Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Employees are here to help you prepare. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, call the main office at (850).689.5030.

We are here for you and want to help.



This booklet was designed using information obtained through fair use from The Santa Rosa County Disaster Guide, The National Weather Service, Penn State University, Colorado State University, The Florida Department of Health, The Okaloosa County Department of Health, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Okaloosa GIS.

