

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a coastal scene with palm trees and a body of water. The image is tinted with a blue color. In the bottom left corner, there is a large, stylized graphic of a hurricane or storm, consisting of concentric circles and a central eye.

# 2025 City of Venice HURRICANE GUIDE

*For before, during and after a storm,  
how to prepare, respond and recover*



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# A message from the Mayor

Dear Resident,

Whether you've lived here your entire life or just recently moved to our coastal community on the Gulf, it is our shared responsibility to be prepared for hurricane season. The 2024 hurricane season was a stark reminder that living in a low-lying coastal area makes us all vulnerable when faced with back-to-back storms, intense rainfall, prolonged storm surge, and damaging winds.

For this season, we strongly encourage you to prepare early, stay vigilant, and heed warnings as soon as they are issued. The cost of preparation and evacuation will always be less than the cost of loss—whether it be property, livelihoods, or lives.

This guide has been revamped to help you understand what to expect before, during, and after a storm, and how you can best prepare yourself, your family, your home, and your business. Disaster preparedness is a whole-community effort, and while the City is committed to mitigating impacts, our resources can be stretched thin in major disasters. Your individual preparedness plays a crucial role in how quickly we recover and return to normal after a storm.

Hurricanes are increasing in both frequency and intensity, making it more important than ever to take every storm season seriously. Now is the time to plan, stock up on essentials, and ensure you have a reliable evacuation strategy in place. By working together, we can strengthen our community's resilience and face whatever this season may bring.

Stay safe, stay prepared, and thank you for doing your part.

**Nick Pachota**  
**City of Venice Mayor**



# Emergency Management Overview

The City's Emergency Services team works closely with Sarasota County's Emergency Management Department to begin emergency planning based on the storm's intensity and path. Activities may include activating the Emergency Operations Center, issuing a Declaration of Emergency — which allows the City to request county, state, and federal resources and funding, transitioning staff into their emergency preparedness roles, and issuing critical information on the City's website, social media and through local media partners.

Because the City is located within Sarasota County, the County serves as the lead agency during storm events. Our actions are closely aligned with the County's, including issuing emergency declarations, opening sandbag operations, and coordinating evacuation notices. Sarasota County also manages the opening and closing of evacuation centers. While we follow the County's lead on major actions, the City maintains control over certain local operations, such as managing the three bridges, maintaining stormwater systems, and restoring City utility services for our residents.

## Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

<b>Level 1</b>	Threat-specific activation, all City staff perform their essential emergency role. Full EOC operations 24/7 through recovery.
<b>Level 2</b>	Threat-specific activation, key staff report into the EOC, prepare facilities, amenities and infrastructure. Limited staffed EOC operations 24/7.
<b>Level 3</b>	Threat-specific monitoring, Emergency Manager and City leadership begin to plan. EOC operations regular hours with early morning and late evening briefings.
<b>Level 4</b>	Daily operations, weather, traffic, hazard and threat monitoring during regular business hours.



## Want to learn more about Emergency Management or the Incident Command System?

Create an online student account with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and take independent study (IS) courses at your pace, on your time. Learn about the basic principles of emergency management and the frameworks, policies and procedures that guide our prevention, response, recovery and mitigation during hurricane responses, and how you can be better prepared. Community preparedness starts with you: <https://training.fema.gov/is/>. Suggested courses include:

IS 100c. [Introduction to the Incident Command System](#)

IS 10a. [Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness](#)

IS 273. [How to Read Flood Insurance Rate Map \(FIRM\)](#)

IS 366a. [Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters](#)



# Stay Informed

It's important to stay informed before, during and after a hurricane through official and legitimate sources including the City of Venice, Venice Police Department, Venice Fire Rescue, Sarasota County, Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), the National Hurricane Center (NHC), National Weather Service (NWS), state and federal partners, and local news media.

Getting the right information at the right time can help you make informed decisions. For preparedness information, evacuation orders, and recovery information, monitor the following:

**City Website** [venicegov.com](http://venicegov.com)

**City Social Media** @CityofVeniceFL   

All emergency information is posted to the [City of Venice Facebook](#)

## Local TV News

	Cable	Antenna
ABC Action News	28	28.1
ABC 7 Suncoast View	7	40.1
Channel 10 Tampa Bay	10	10.1
Fox 13 Tampa Bay	13	13.1
News Channel 8	8	8.1
SNN Suncoast News Network	6	39.1
WINK News	11	11.1

Sarasota County Emergency Services on government access TV  
Comcast/Xfinity Channel 19 and Frontier Channel 32

## Local Print Newspapers

Venice Gondolier	 <a href="#">@VeniceGondolier</a>
Sarasota Herald Tribune	 <a href="#">@HeraldTribune</a>

## Local Radio News & Networks

iHeart Radio	92.1 FM	WCTQ
	105.9 FM	WTZB
	107.9 FM	WSRZ
	1320 AM	WDIZ
WENG Radio	107.5 FM	
	98.1 FM	
	1530 AM	
NOAA Weather Radio	162.40 MHz to 162.55 MHz	
Distress/ Raise Marina/Vessel	VHF Channel 16	
Bridge Tender	VHF Channel 9	
Weather	VHF Channel 2	
Florida Public Radio Emergency Network		88.5 FM



## Emergency Alerts

Sign-up for rapid emergency alerts  
by call, text, email, TTY:

[https://loom.ly/C-vB\\_kw](https://loom.ly/C-vB_kw)



City residents should select  
"City of Venice" to receive  
alerts specific to their area

## What's your plan?

After a storm, expect to be without power, cellular and internet services for at least a week. Getting in touch with loved ones will be a challenge – make a plan before hurricane season for how you'll keep your friends and family, both locally and out of state, informed.

### Here are some tools to consider:

- Use secure low-band width mobile apps such as NextDoor, Signal or Zello
- NOAA or HAM radio
- Car radio AM/FM
- Satellite Phone
- Pre-agreed communication check or meeting points

# Important Contacts

Life-threatening Emergencies	911	Call or text
<b>City Facilities and Services</b>		
Non-emergency Venice Police Department	941-486-2444	
Non-emergency Venice Fire Rescue	941-480-3030	
Code Enforcement	941-882-7549	
City Hall	941-486-2626	
City Building Department	941-882-7547	
City Solid Waste (Trash/Recycling)	941-486-2422	
City Stormwater Engineering	941-882-7410	
City Utilities (Water/Sewer)	941-480-3333	
Utilities Emergency Water/Sewer Outage	941-486-2770	

**Do not call 911 to check on storm damage to your property.**  
**The City of Venice does not assess damage to individual properties or businesses.**  
**Welfare checks are only conducted for individuals in peril or facing immediate danger**  
**after a storm has passed and sustained winds have dropped below 45 mph.**

<b>Sarasota County</b>		
Sarasota County Government	311 or 941-861-5000	TTY 711 or 1-800-955-8771
Sarasota County Department of Health	941-861-2784	
Sarasota County Schools	941-927-9000	
Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency	941-316-1201	
Sheriff's Office Animal Service	941-861-9500	
<b>Power Outage - Florida Power &amp; Light (FPL)</b>	1-800-468-8243	
<b>Natural Gas Leak - People's Gas (TECO)</b>	1-877-832-6747	Call 911 first and evacuate
<b>American Red Cross Family Assistance</b>	1-833-492-0094	
<b>American Red Cross Southwest Florida</b>	941-379-9300	
<b>Crisis Cleanup</b>	1-844-965-1386	Tarps, mucking, debris
<b>Crisis Lifeline Suicide Hotline</b>	988	Call or text 24/7 support
<b>Crisis Text Line</b>	Text HOME 741741	24/7 mental health support
<b>FEMA Individual Assistance</b>	1-800-621-3362	Application support, Q&A
<b>Florida Disaster Legal Aid Helpline</b>	1-833-514-2940	TTY 1-800-462-7585
<b>Fraud Hotline</b>	1-866-966-7226	Report unlicensed contractors
<b>Insurance Consumer Helpline</b>	1-877-693-5239	
<b>Insurance Fraud Hotline</b>	1-800-378-0445	
<b>Samaritan's Purse</b>	1-833-747-1234	
<b>Small Business Administration (SBA)</b>	1-800-659-2955	
<b>State Assistance Information Line (SAIL)</b>	1-800-342-3557	





# Weathering a Storm

*The realities of living in a coastal community*

# What to Expect

**Located along the Gulf of America, our community faces unique challenges during the Atlantic hurricane season, from June 1 through Nov. 30.** With low elevation and flat terrain, the City is especially vulnerable to storm surge, flooding, strong winds, and tornadoes. Features like Venice Island and the Intracoastal Waterway further influence storm impacts, affecting evacuation routes, bridge operations, and flood risk. Severe weather can disrupt daily life, and recovery may take days, weeks, or even months depending on the storm's severity.

**This guide outlines what to expect before, during, and after a hurricane, helping residents and businesses prepare for the realities of storm season in our community:**

## City Facilities and Services



The City of Venice is committed to maintaining government operations and resuming services swiftly and safely, especially during emergencies. Government facilities may close to the public, and services may be suspended for various reasons, including:

- **Emergency response operations:** Certain buildings may be repurposed to support emergency efforts, such as shelters or command centers.
- **Infrastructure preparation and recovery:** Staff may need to secure facilities before a storm, conduct safety checks, perform immediate repairs, or transition to generator power and temporary service schedules.
- **Emergency response roles take priority:** Staff may be reassigned to critical emergency operations, which can delay standard response times or non-essential services

Despite these challenges, our staff is equipped to provide services remotely via a secure City network. We appreciate your patience until services can resume to normal.



**Utility Shut off or Reduced Pressure (Water and Sewer).** To protect the utility system and prevent saltwater intrusion, pressure loss, or failure — and to ensure critical facilities like Sarasota Memorial Hospital-Venice continue to receive water and wastewater services — the City will shut off potable water and wastewater services before significant storm events. [For more information, see Appendix C on page 34.](#)

**Residents are encouraged to factor this into their evacuation plans and prepare in advance by storing bottled water and filling bathtubs or other containers.**



Once water service is restored, a boil water advisory will be in effect for at least 72 hours. If you lose power and cannot boil water on an electric stove, consider using a propane or charcoal grill, camping burner, or follow household bleach instructions to disinfect drinking water.





**Parks, Beaches and Public Space Closures.** Before a storm, the interactive fountain at Centennial Park is shut off, and sunshades at various parks are removed or secured to prevent damage. After a storm, parks, beaches, and public spaces may be unsafe due to debris, missing safety features, or damaged amenities. Flooding and structural issues can also limit access. Crews assess and repair damage as quickly as possible, but reopening takes time. We appreciate your patience as spaces are made safe again.



**South Jetty and Venice Fishing Pier.** Before a storm, picnic tables, trash cans, and benches at Humphris Park (South Jetty) are secured, and jetty access is closed. The Venice Fishing Pier also closes for safety. As of the 2024 hurricane season, Humphris Park and the South Jetty remain closed, while the Pier is open just over three-quarters of the way. These facilities are monitored regularly and may close during severe weather for public safety. For the latest updates, visit the Sarasota County Park Status Report, which includes Venice parks, at <https://bit.ly/SRQCountyparkstatus>



## Cellular Services and Power Restoration



**Cellular service** may be unavailable during and after a storm. Restoration depends on your provider and may vary by location. The City of Venice offers Starlink-powered Wi-Fi access points to support Wi-Fi calling and basic connectivity after a storm. Have a communication plan in place to keep your friends and family, both near and far, informed.



**Extended power outages** are likely after a storm. The City of Venice is not responsible for power restoration. Florida Power & Light (FPL) manages repairs and prioritizes critical facilities like hospitals and government buildings. The FPL outage map to track progress, visit [fplmaps.com](https://www.fplmaps.com). Be prepared to be without power for seven days or more—consider options like using a generator, staying with friends or family, or evacuating in advance.

## Coastal flooding



**Coastal flooding** threatens public spaces, roadways, and homes near the Gulf of America and Intracoastal Waterway. Low-lying areas like The Esplanade, Tarpon Center Drive, Flamingo Drive, and Golden Beach Boulevard are especially vulnerable to storm surge, heavy rain, and stormwater. These conditions can overwhelm infrastructure, making it inoperable when submerged by seawater or tidal surge.

**Never drive through floodwaters.** It only takes 12 inches of water to float or sweep away a vehicle. Floodwaters may hide hazards like downed power lines, erosion, debris, wildlife, and harmful bacteria. Use alternate routes or wait until water recedes to stay safe.





### Bridge Access to Venice Island

The three bridges, North/KMI, Venice Avenue and Circus, are locked in the **down** position, allowing vehicles to drive on and off the island.



### Evacuation Levels and Notifications

Evacuation Levels are NOT the same as Flood Zones. Sarasota County Government, in coordination with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and the National Hurricane Center (NHC), determines Evacuation Levels (A, B, C, D, and E) based on storm surge risk, wind speeds, and storm projections.

All mobile and manufactured homes, vessels, and RVs are considered Special Evacuation Areas and are always included in Level A evacuations due to their heightened vulnerability.

[Learn more about your Evacuation Level on page 13.](#)



Sarasota County issues evacuation notices for all areas, including the City of Venice and neighboring municipalities (City of Sarasota, City of North Port, and Town of Longboat Key). The City of Venice communicates the same evacuation notices through Alert Sarasota County (an opt-in emergency alert system), the City of Venice Facebook page and website, local TV, print, and radio news stations, and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) via Venice Police Department loudspeakers in designated evacuation areas.

### Evacuation Centers

Sarasota County Government, in coordination with Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, determines the location of hurricane evacuation centers based on their elevation and distance from potential catastrophic storm surge impacts. The island of Venice cannot host an evacuation center due to its low elevation and coastal proximity.



**Evacuating to a shelter should be your last resort, not your first option.** If you must go, know the three closest locations in case your nearest center reaches capacity. Evacuation centers provide a safe, hardened building, but they do not supply food, bedding, or other essentials. You must bring your own sleeping bag or air mattress, clothing, food, water, medications, pet supplies, and comfort items. **All evacuation centers are pet friendly.** Medically dependent shelters require pre-registration through Sarasota County.

[Learn more about Evacuation Centers and Medically Dependent Registration on page 17.](#)



### Limited Gas Supply

Before a storm, gasoline supplies may become limited, and long lines at stations are common as residents rush to fuel up. To avoid last-minute shortages, keep your vehicle's gas tank at least three-quarters full throughout hurricane season. If you rely on a generator, store extra fuel in approved 3- to 5-gallon containers, kept in a cool, dry place away from heat sources, flames, or water exposure. Stock up early; waiting until a storm is imminent may leave you without the fuel you need.



## Debris Collections and Preparation



Debris collections after a storm can take up to or over 90 days to complete the first pass depending on debris volume, roadway accessibility and availability of contracted debris monitors and haulers. The City of Venice contractors activate once the storm has passed and roadways are clear to collect construction and demolition (C&D), vegetative and white goods debris and materials from public right-of-way. [See more information on page 29.](#)

## Traffic Signals and Signs



**Traffic lights** may be out after a storm. The City works with Sarasota County to restore signals at major intersections using generators until full power returns, but this takes time. If you approach an intersection with a non-working signal, slow down, treat it as a four-way stop, and make eye contact with other drivers before proceeding.



**Street signs** may be damaged or missing after a storm. The City works quickly to repair and replace them, but your help speeds things up. Report missing or downed signs using SeeClickFix to help us respond faster at <https://seeclickfix.com/venice>

## Trash and Recycling Collections



Secure your trash and recycling cans before a storm to prevent them from becoming hazards. After a storm, trash, recycling, yard waste, and bulk collection may be delayed or suspended. The Sarasota County Landfill may close due to damage, flooding, or other impacts, affecting City of Venice services. Collection resumes as soon as the landfill reopens, and roads are safe. Regular trash, recycling, and yard waste pickups are separate from storm debris collection. Continue placing items out on your normal days unless otherwise directed by the City; however, you should expect delays due to volume or roadway accessibility.



## Recovery Resources



The City cannot manage disaster recovery alone and relies on partnerships with county, state, federal, and nonprofit agencies to provide critical resources and support to help our community recover and rebuild after a storm. Recovery resources include assistance with debris preparation, mucking and gutting, tarps, ice, water, meals ready to eat, mental health, individual and businesses assistance, small business loans, and volunteer support. [See more information about recovery resources on page 30.](#)



Following a disaster, building permits may be delayed due to the time required for damage assessments and the high volume of applications. [Learn more in the Building Department Q&A in Appendix D on page 36.](#)



# Before the Storm

*Know your Level, pack your disaster preparedness kit,  
prepare your home and property*



# Know Your Level

The City of Venice is a low-lying coastal community along the Gulf, making it especially vulnerable to hurricanes, storm surge, and flooding. Hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, when Gulf waters and temperatures peak. High winds and occasional tornadoes also pose risks. Use the tools below to understand your risk and prepare your home and family.

**All mobile and manufactured homes, RVs, and vessels are called alongside Evacuation Level A, regardless of their location within the City. These areas are called special evacuation areas.**

**Know Your Evacuation Level:** Go to <http://ags3.scgov.net/knowyourlevel/> and enter your address in the search bar at the top right.

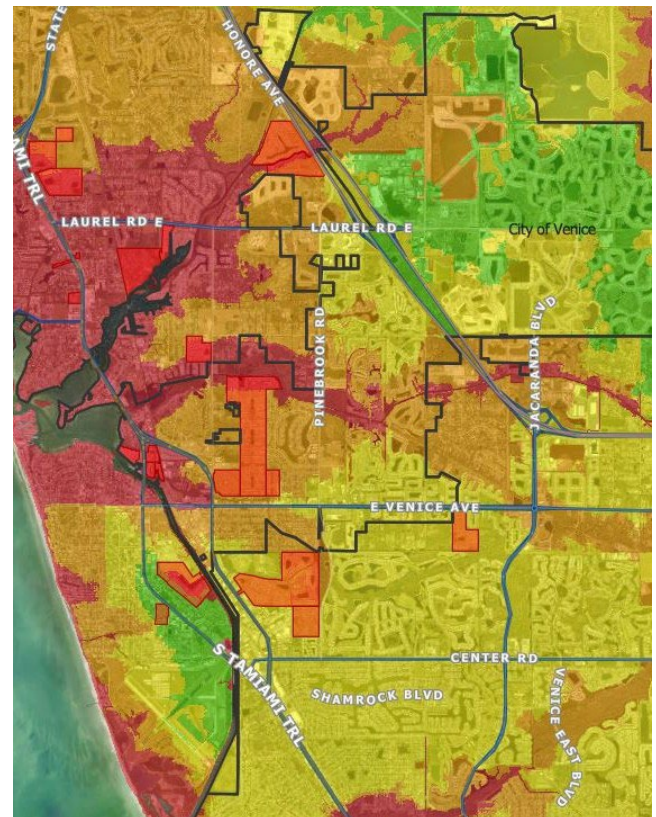
Evacuation Levels are NOT the same as Flood Zones.

Evacuations are issued by Sarasota County and the City of Venice as a storm approaches to give residents, visitors, and business owners time to relocate to a safer inland area. Evacuation Levels (A, B, C, D, and E) are determined by the National Hurricane Center based on ground elevation and an area's vulnerability to storm surge.

Evacuation levels range from A through E, along with non-evacuation areas. If an evacuation is ordered for your area, you need to leave. Head inland, out of state, or to a safe location outside the storm's path. Leave early to avoid traffic, long delays, and worsening conditions as winds, rain, and storm surge intensify.

In addition to emergency alerts, social media, news media, and website notifications, the Venice Police Department makes evacuation announcements over loudspeakers in designated evacuation areas, including mobile and manufactured home communities on Venice island.

If your home is outside of Level A, not on the island, and built to modern building codes (2002 or later), you may consider sheltering in place. Know your home, know your risk, and make an informed decision.



Storm Evacuation Level

Evac Level

Evac Level A

Evac Level B

Evac Level C

Evac Level D

Evac Level E

# Know Your Flood Zone

Everywhere in Florida is in a flood zone, it's the level of risk that varies. Flooding issues can arise even in locations far from water sources or outside the high-risk Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).

**Find Your Flood Zone:** <https://bit.ly/45PPtwe>

- High-risk flood hazard: Also known as a Special Hazard Area are the most at risk and likely to flood during any event.
- Moderate flood hazard areas: These areas are labeled as Zone B or Zone X (shaded), and a 500-year flood risk.
- Areas of minimal flood hazard: These areas are labeled as Zone C or Zone X (unshaded) and are usually higher than the elevation of moderate flood risk areas.

Properties in the City of Venice located in low-lying and coastal areas are prone to flooding. Contact the City's Engineering Department at 941-882-7412 to check on your property's risk of flood hazard.

## National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

Managed by FEMA with a network of more than 50 insurance companies, the NFIP provides flood insurance to property owners, renters and businesses to help you recover faster when floodwaters recede.

Standard homeowner insurance policies do not cover flood and wind damage. Venice residents receive a 25% discount on flood insurance through the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS), no discount code required.

**Visit [floodsmart.gov](https://floodsmart.gov) to get a flood insurance quote today.**

There is a 30-day waiting period for flood insurance to take effect. Ensure your policies cover all hazards and save money for all deductibles. Insure your home based on reconstruction cost, not real estate value. Visit [fema.gov/flood-insurance](https://fema.gov/flood-insurance) for more information.

Contents coverage for condos and renters is available. Without flood insurance, government assistance may come as grants or loans from the Small Business Administration.

## Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)

SFHAs are high-risk areas that are very likely to be inundated by a flood event in any given year.

- ▶ Properties within a SFHA must have flood insurance if they have a federally backed mortgage
- ▶ SFHAs are shown on Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as Zone A, AO, A1-A30, AE, A99, AH, AR, AR/A, AR/AE, AR/AH, AR/AO, AR/A1-A30, V1-V30, VE or V
- ▶ SFHAs have a 1% chance of being exceeded, also known as a blasé flood or 100-year flood

Learn more about SFHAs at [fema.gov/about/glossary/flood-zones](https://fema.gov/about/glossary/flood-zones)







***"When officials recommend or order an evacuation, leave.  
Do not try to ride out a hurricane in a high-risk area."  
- Jim Cantore, renowned meteorologist***





# Prepare Yourself and Your Family

Hurricane preparedness takes the whole community, and together our individual efforts help to speed up recovery and return to normal. Prepare yourself, your family, your pets, your business and your property:

## Build your Kit

When we say, "build your kit," we don't mean waiting until June 1 to rush to the store and stock up. Instead, start early and gradually gather supplies between January and June. Add extra cases or bottles of water, canned food, toiletries, pet food, baby items, and other essentials to your regular shopping.

**Your kit should have enough supplies to last each person in your household at least seven days.**

As you pack your kit, be sure to include medications, water for drinking and hygiene, nonperishable foods, dietary or specialty foods, snacks, clothing, bedding, and comfort items. Don't forget cellphone chargers, headphones, power banks and extra batteries. Make sure your gas tank is at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, and you have cash.

If you are evacuating, be sure to bring your pets, their food, carriers, and waste bags or boxes. And don't leave behind important documents, cherished keepsakes or valuables. [See the checklist on page 32.](#)



## Make an Evacuation Plan

Know and practice your routes. Some areas may be flooded or inaccessible during a storm. If your home is not safe to ride out a storm in, you'll need to evacuate:

- 1. Stay with a friend or leave the area.** Evacuating doesn't always mean driving across the state. Sheltering with friends or family inland or checking into a nearby hotel outside of an evacuation zone and away from potential storm surge may be enough to keep you safe.
- 2. Move to an evacuation center.** If you plan to go to an evacuation center, know that they should be a last resort. Identify at least three nearby locations, as the closest one may be full. Sarasota County Government, in coordination with FDEM and FEMA, determines evacuation center locations based on elevation and distance from potential storm surge impacts. Due to its low elevation and coastal proximity, the island of Venice cannot host an evacuation center. [Learn more about Evacuation Centers on page 17.](#)

# Evacuation Centers

If you plan to go to an evacuation center, know that they should be a last resort. Identify at least three nearby locations, as the closest one may be full using this map <https://bit.ly/3E7V21o> or Appendix B on page 33.

Sarasota County Government, in coordination with FDEM and FEMA, determines evacuation center locations based on elevation and distance from potential storm surge impacts. Due to its low elevation and coastal proximity, the island of Venice cannot host an evacuation center. **All evacuation centers are pet-friendly, but medically dependent shelters require preregistration through Sarasota County, see more information at right.**

Evacuation centers provide a safe, hardened building, but they do not supply food, bedding, or other essentials and amenities. You must bring a sleeping bag or air mattress, pillow, clothing, food, and water for each member of your group, medications and necessary medical supplies, pet supplies, and comfort items. You will have no privacy, limited space approximately 20 square feet per person within a family with six feet of separation between families in a public classroom or hallway, and meal service may be delayed. Evacuation centers cannot provide bedding, cots, or blankets.

Never go to an evacuation center until local officials announce it is open. Always turn off your main water valve, irrigation system and secure loose items before leaving your home.

## Transportation Dependent

Use personal transportation, Sarasota County Breeze Transit service, or go to a transportation rally point to get to an evacuation center. For those who cannot otherwise be transported by family, friends or neighbors, Sarasota County will provide last-resort bus transportation for you and your pets (along with a limited amount of supplies) to and from a general population evacuation center.

Transportation will be offered at designated rally points throughout the county. If you cannot drive to a rally point, please call Sarasota County at 311 or 941-861-5000 before a storm to register.

**NOTE:** Rally points may change depending on the severity of a storm. Residents who preregister will receive an automated telephone message with information about the location of rally points and when they will be picked up. [See more on page 33.](#)

## Medically Dependent

City of Venice residents with qualifying medical needs are encouraged to apply for registration as a Medically Dependent Person (MDP) with Sarasota County by calling 311 or online at [scgov.net/MedicalNeedsProgram](https://scgov.net/MedicalNeedsProgram).

It is important to apply in advance, as paper applications for medically dependent registration will be stopped at 120 hours prior to potential impact from a storm, and all online applications will stop at 72 hours prior to impact from a storm or hurricane.

All MDPs must bring a caregiver to the designated medically dependent evacuation center.

The caregiver must be able to:

- ▶ Assist you with all activities of daily living, including dressing and toileting
- ▶ Lift you to/from toilet and cot and wheelchair as needed
- ▶ Assist you with walking (with or without walker); assist with wheelchair
- ▶ Transport food from cafeteria to you as needed
- ▶ Assist with medication and any treatments as needed
- ▶ Monitor your oxygen usage
- ▶ Provide evacuation center management with a discharge plan in the event you cannot return to your home

For more information on what to bring with you to a Medically Dependent Center visit [scgov.net/MedicalNeedsProgram](https://scgov.net/MedicalNeedsProgram).

# Prepare Your Home and Your Property

Consider other ways to safeguard your home and property before a hurricane arrives.

## Securing Your Home

- Reinforce your roof, windows, doors, and garage doors.
- Install hurricane shutters or impact-rated windows/doors.
- Clear downspouts and rain gutters to prevent pooling.
- Consider building a FEMA-rated safe room for protection from high winds and flooding.
- Learn how and when to turn off gas, water, and electricity.
- Never use candles or oil lamps during a storm, even if the power is out. Instead, use flashlights or battery-operated lamps.
- Gather important documents and information, and take photos of your home, vehicles and property before the storm.



## Mobile and Manufactured Homes

- Mobile homes are unsafe shelter in high winds no matter how well fastened to the ground. Take precautions to ensure that your mobile home is properly secured to reduce possible damage to your home and your neighbor's property.
- Check tie-downs annually and make sure straps are tight and properly aligned.
- Verify ground anchors and stabilizer plates have been installed.
- For assistance, call the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Bureau of Mobile Home and Recreational Vehicles Construction at 850-617-3004.

## Protecting Outdoor Spaces

- Remove or secure loose outdoor items such as patio furniture, grills, garden tools and toys, and fix or replace damaged fences to prevent them from becoming projectiles.
- Trim trees to reduce the risk of flying or falling debris.
- Secure fuel tanks, boats, trailers, and vehicles. Park your main vehicle in a garage or under a carport if possible.
- Keep stormwater drains and ditches clear. Blocking them is illegal and can cause flooding. Report any issues to the City Engineering Department at 941-882-7410.

## Know your home

Hurricane research shows that homes built under the 2002 Florida Building Code generally sustain less damage during storms. If your home meets these standards and is equipped with shutters, it may be safe to stay in as long as it is not in an evacuation area and it not a mobile or manufactured home, RV or vessel.

## Should I Shelter in place?

Before deciding to shelter in place, ask yourself:

- ▶ Do I have medical needs that depend on power or electricity?
- ▶ Do I have young children, older adults, or pets who require temperature control?
- ▶ Can I go days or even a week without power, internet, or running water?
- ▶ When was my roof last inspected or replaced?
- ▶ Do I have a safe space away from windows and doors?
- ▶ Am I outside an evacuation area or a level that has been called?
- ▶ Do I have a generator, backup fuel, and enough supplies to last?

Sometimes, sheltering in place isn't a choice. If you delay evacuation too long or if conditions worsen rapidly, roads may become impassable. Always have a disaster kit ready in case you need to shelter unexpectedly.



# Sandbags

**Not all protective measures work in every area. Sandbags may not be effective in coastal or low-lying areas where storm surge and widespread flooding are expected.**

Before a storm, the City of Venice provides free empty sandbags to City residents at Venice City Hall (401 W. Venice Ave.) and the Public Works Department (1350 Ridgewood Ave.); limit 10 sandbags per household. A self-service sandbag station on Seaboard Avenue offers free sand, but residents are responsible for shoveling and transporting their own bags.

**Used sandbags have a limited lifespan.** After a storm, they may be contaminated with bacteria, chemicals, or debris, even if they appear clean. Sandbags should never be reused for flood protection or placed in children's sandboxes, gardens, or near edible plants. You may safely spread clean, dry sand over lawns, flower beds, or landscaping areas. Do not dump sand into storm drains, roads, or waterways. Empty bags should be discarded with regular household trash.

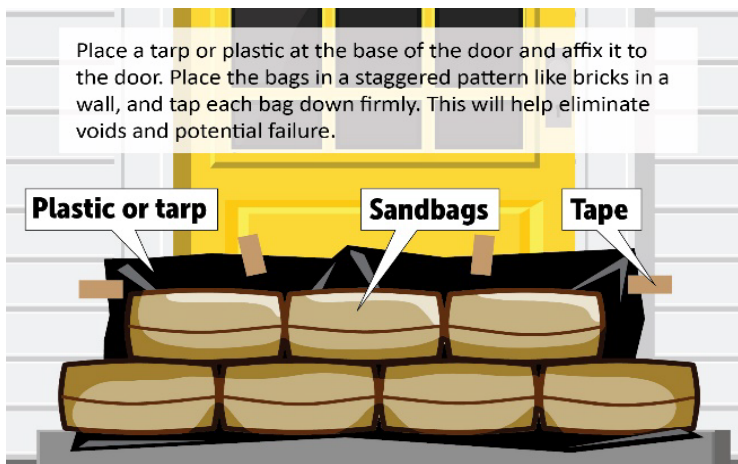
**Unused sandbags that have remained dry and uncontaminated can be stored for future use.** Keep them in a cool, dry, covered area to prevent damage from moisture or sunlight. Inspect stored sandbags each hurricane season, and replace any that show signs of deterioration, mold, or weakening.



## How to Use Sandbags

### Filling Sandbags

- 1/2 to 2/3 full, weighing between 35-40 lbs.
- Overfilled bags and bags tied too low leave gaps, allowing water to seep through.



### How Many Sandbags Do You Need

- 1 foot = 5 bags
- 2 feet = 10 bags
- 3 feet = 21 bags
- 4 feet = 36 bags
- 5 feet = 55 bags

Place sandbags on flat ground, overlapped and stair-stepped, tamped into place. For added protection, consider placing a tarp at the base of doors and garage doors before placing sandbags.

# Prepare Your Business

Decide when to close your business, allowing employees time to prepare at home, and establish clear communication channels for updates. Create an evacuation plan for staff and essential equipment, identify an alternate work site, and provide cross-training to support continued operations. Protect important documents with online backups and fire-safe, waterproof storage, and review your business insurance coverage annually.

Within 24 hours of a hurricane watch being issued, all construction sites and materials must be secured.

Visit [floridadisaster.biz](http://floridadisaster.biz) to create or update your Business Continuity of Operations Plan using a customized interactive website.

# Prepare Your Vessel

Have a hurricane plan by deciding early whether to relocate your vessel or secure it in place and ensure someone else can carry out the plan if you're away.

**Never stay onboard during a hurricane. Evacuate early and monitor local alerts.**



If able to be trailered, move your boat out and relocate it away from tidal waters and storm surge zones. Learn more at [myfwc.com/boating/safety-education/hurricane/](http://myfwc.com/boating/safety-education/hurricane/)

## If you must leave your boat ...

- **on the water** - remove or secure sails, canvas, electronics, and loose gear. Double mooring lines, rig cross-spring lines, tie high on pilings, and use chafe protection and fenders. In protected areas, set multiple anchors with a 10:1 scope
- **on the lift** - raise as high as safely possible without making the boat unstable. Tie it to the lift frame (not just straps), remove the drain plug and all loose items, and secure or disconnect the battery.
- **at the dock** - use high pilings and tie lines above usual height. Double or triple mooring lines with long spring lines for surge, and protect all lines with chafe gear.

## Technology Plan

It is essential to store important documents in both digital and physical formats to safeguard them from potential loss.

Follow these guidelines:

- ▶ Take photos/videos of your property, belongings, and assets before and after a disaster for insurance claims
- ▶ Move major electronics (computers, TVs, servers, etc.) away from windows, doors, and exterior walls to reduce risk of water or wind damage
- ▶ Cover electronics with plastic sheeting, trash bags, or place them in waterproof containers to protect against leaks or broken windows
- ▶ Unplug electronics before the storm to prevent damage from power surges or outages
- ▶ If possible, elevate valuable devices off the floor in case of flooding
- ▶ Securely store passwords and access codes
- ▶ Convert essential paperwork into digital files by scanning them with a scanner, mobile camera, or smartphone app
- ▶ Store documents in the cloud provides a backup option if your device is compromised
- ▶ Back up your digital files to external drives, USB sticks, and the cloud, and update them regularly to keep data current and accessible
- ▶ Remember to take your backup drives during evacuations

# Prepare Your Pets and Rural Animals

## Pets

The safety of your family pets depends on you, especially in an emergency. During severe weather or other emergency situations, if it is unsafe for you to stay in your home, it is also unsafe for your pets. Don't leave your pet behind, and don't use your pet as an excuse not to evacuate.

All evacuation centers are pet-friendly, but you must be prepared before you go. Bring a crate for your pet and all necessary supplies including food, water, medications, toys, litter boxes, and waste bags. If your pet is not accustomed to being confined, acclimate it to the crate before an emergency to help alleviate stress.



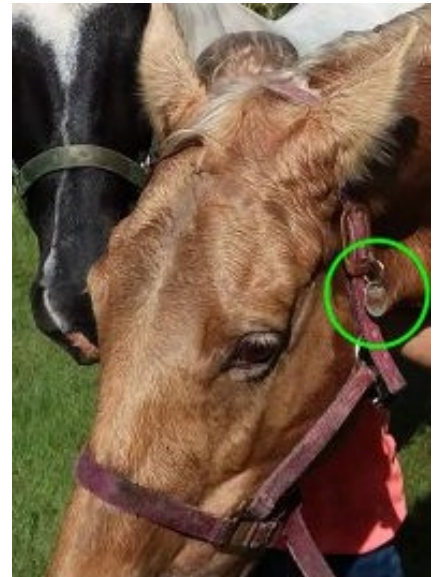
*During disasters, pets may become afraid and run away. Consider microchipping your pets to make reunification easier.*

## Rural Animals

The decision to evacuate your livestock depends on many factors. If they are in a storm-surge area, flood plain, small pasture or urban area where they will be unable to avoid debris or will be in danger of collapsing buildings, you should consider evacuation. Decide in advance how you are going to evacuate and, in case you cannot evacuate, how you and your animals are going to cope with limited water, electricity and access to assistance for three or four days or more. Write your plan down and keep it in a place with copies of important papers so that you will be ready in the event you must act quickly.

If you are forced to evacuate and leave your animals behind, inform friends and neighbors of your evacuation plans and post detailed instructions in several places on your property.

- ☐ Leave water for at least three days and access to quality hay. Do not leave animals with free access to grain.
- ☐ The safest place for large animals to weather a storm is in a large pasture.
- ☐ Label your animals with a non-toxic grease pencil or spray paint with your phone number.
- ☐ Label your contact information onto waterproof luggage tags and attach them to their halters/collars or braid them into the mane or tail.



Learn more about preparing rural animals at UF/IFAS: <https://bit.ly/4cptfGt>





# During the Storm

*Stay indoors and stay informed*



# During the Storm

If you chose to shelter at home or were unable to evacuate, it's important to stay indoors and take safety precautions until the storm has completely passed. Hurricane conditions are unpredictable, and even periods of calm—such as the eye of the storm—can be extremely dangerous. Remain inside and away from windows until local officials announce it is safe to go outside. Your safety depends on staying alert, minimizing risks, and following these important guidelines:

- ▶ **Stay indoors** – Only go outside for a life-threatening emergency, such as a fire. Do not go outside during the eye of the storm while conditions may seem calm, dangerous winds and heavy rain can return suddenly. Flying debris, downed power lines, and other unseen hazards remain a serious threat. Stay inside your home or evacuation center until officials confirm the storm has completely passed. If your home is damaged, move to a safer area away from windows and glass doors.
- ▶ **Stay away from windows** – Broken glass and flying debris are major hazards. Stay in a windowless room, closet, or interior hallway for protection.
- ▶ **Be ready to evacuate** – If officials instruct you to leave or your home sustains major damage, be prepared to relocate. Do not leave pets or service animals behind.
- ▶ **Emergency response delays** – When sustained winds reach 45 mph, emergency responders must suspend operations for their safety. Still call 911 if you have an emergency, an operator may provide life-saving instructions until responders can be dispatched.
- ▶ **Limit water use** – Reduce water consumption to help prevent sewer backups.
- ▶ **Stay informed** – A NOAA weather radio is the most reliable way to receive official updates if power or cell service is lost. You can also use your vehicle radio to listen for updates, but never run your vehicle inside a garage due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. If possible, monitor City social media updates, but conserve your device battery.
- ▶ **Conserve food and power** – Keep the refrigerator closed to prevent food spoilage. If using power, limit usage to essential needs.
- ▶ **Use generators safely** – Wait until the storm has completely passed before operating your generator. Never operate a generator indoors, in a garage, or near windows and doors. Always place it at least 20 feet away from your home. Never plug a generator directly into a building's wiring — only connect appliances directly to the generator. Install a carbon monoxide detector for added protection.
- ▶ **Turn off power if flooding occurs** – If water enters your home, shut off electricity at the main breaker and unplug major appliances to prevent electrical hazards.





# After the Storm

*“Turn around don’t drown,” contractors and permits, returning home, debris collection, and health and safety*

# After the Storm

**It is critical that you do not attempt to return to your home immediately after a storm. We know you are anxious to check on your home, but it is not worth risking your life.**

- Entering too soon could delay emergency response and recovery operations.
- Roadways may be blocked by debris or flooded, and conditions can be extremely dangerous.
- Many traffic lights, streetlights, and signs may be out or missing, creating hazardous driving conditions.

If you approach an intersection with a non-functioning traffic light, treat it as a four-way stop. Make eye contact or wave others through before proceeding. Slow down, stay patient, and stay alert.

**Turn Around, Don't Drown.** Flooded roads can hide active downed power lines, deep water, debris, or other hazards. It only takes 12 inches of water to float or sweep away your vehicle.

Once winds drop below 45 mph, the City's Tactical First-In Teams (TFIT) deploy to assess conditions. They report back to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on the status of critical facilities, City buildings, infrastructure, major roadways, and overall observed impacts. Following these initial assessments:

- ▶ **Venice Fire Rescue (VFR) and Venice Police Department (VPD)** mobilize to clear any suspended 911 calls, conduct rescue missions, and perform welfare checks. They do not check on damage to individual properties or business. Do NOT call 911 to check on damage to your home.
- ▶ **Public Works crews and contractors** deploy push-and-cut teams to remove downed tree limbs and debris, and cone off downed power or internet lines blocking roadways. Public Works also begins mobilizing debris contractors to start the FEMA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) certification processes required before large-scale hauling and collection can begin.
- ▶ **Utilities crews** mobilize to restore water and sewer services, deploying generators at locations that do not automatically switch to backup power.
- ▶ **Information Technology (IT)** staff work to set up Starlink connections to provide free Wi-Fi for residents at designated locations.
- ▶ **The City EOC** coordinates with county, state, and federal partners to bring in additional recovery resources, including Points of Distribution (PODs) for water, ice, Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), and tarps; financial recovery resources; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Blue Roof Program; FEMA; volunteer organizations and other support agencies to assist with recovery and relief efforts.

As conditions stabilize, City staff begin returning to their regular duties to maintain continuity of government operations, while some staff remain activated in their disaster recovery roles. Please be aware that response times may be delayed as storm recovery is prioritized. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work together to rebuild and recover.

***Recovery can take days, weeks, months, or even years depending on the severity of the storm.***



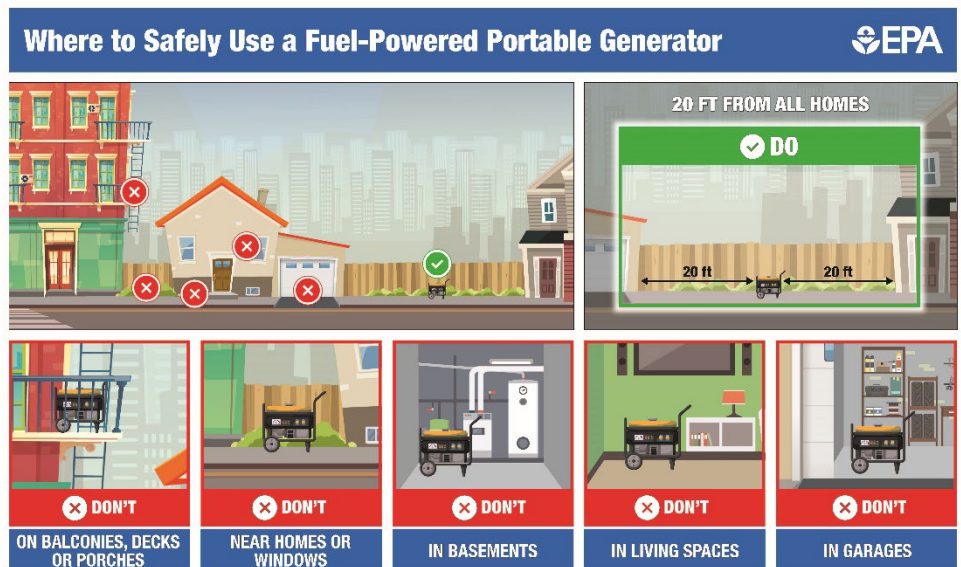
# Returning Home

Be extremely cautious when returning home after a storm. Floodwaters, debris, and hidden damage can make conditions dangerous. Check in on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly, disabled, or living alone, and offer help if they need it.

**Food Safety** - If you evacuated or are returning home and are unsure whether your power was out, take extra precautions with any food left in refrigerators or freezers. When in doubt, throw it out. Never taste food to check if it's safe. Refrigerated foods should be discarded if the temperature has risen above 40°F for more than two hours. Frozen foods may be safely refrozen if they still contain ice crystals or are at 40°F or below. Look for signs of spoilage, such as unusual odors or color or texture changes. For more detailed food safety guidelines after a power outage, visit [FoodSafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov).

**Generators** - Always use a portable generator outside and far away from buildings and homes. Never operate a generator inside your house, garage, on a balcony, near doors, windows, or vents, or anywhere near where you or your children are sleeping.

It is highly recommended to have a carbon monoxide (CO) detector/alarm if you are using a portable generator. CO is a deadly, invisible, and odorless gas produced by burning fuels. Learn more about safe generator operation at <https://bit.ly/3G4ksxx>



**Heat Safety** - Cleaning up after a storm often means working long hours outdoors in Florida's extreme heat and humidity. To protect yourself from heat exhaustion or heat stroke:

- Stay hydrated — drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty
- Take frequent breaks in the shade or an air-conditioned space whenever possible
- Avoid working outside during peak heat hours (typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.)
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored clothing for sun protection
- Apply sunscreen regularly to protect your skin from sunburn, which can make it harder for your body to cool itself
- Work with a buddy if possible — watch for signs of heat-related illness in yourself and others, such as dizziness, confusion, or nausea

**Remember:** If you feel faint, dizzy, or extremely fatigued, stop immediately and seek medical attention. Heat illnesses can become life-threatening very quickly. Heat exhaustion symptoms include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, and nausea. Move to a cooler place, rest, and hydrate. Heat stroke is a medical emergency with signs like confusion, hot dry skin, and loss of consciousness. Call 911 immediately if you suspect it.

**Mold, Mucking and Gutting Safety** - After a storm, moisture and flooding can quickly lead to dangerous mold growth. If your home has water damage, act fast to protect your health and safety. Wear gloves, boots, long sleeves, and an N95 mask when cleaning. Remove wet materials like drywall, insulation, and carpets as soon as possible, and open windows for ventilation if safe. Never mix cleaning products and watch for hidden debris and unstable structures when mucking and gutting your home. If you see or smell mold, assume it's present and take proper precautions. Those with asthma, respiratory issues, or weakened immune systems should consider using professional mold remediation services.



**Power Tools Safety** - Chainsaws, pole saws, and other power tools can be dangerous. Wear protective gear, follow manufacturer instructions, and keep others clear of your work area. If you're inexperienced, hire a professional for hazardous tree or debris removal.

**Power Outages** - Power and water are a deadly mix — stay alert for electrical hazards after a storm. If you see downed wires or suspect damage, stay out and call a licensed professional. After a major hurricane, expect power outages for seven days or longer. Florida Power & Light (FPL) restores critical facilities first, then neighborhood grids. Avoid flooded or debris-filled areas, assume all downed wires are live, and report them immediately. Turn off appliances and your main breaker until the system is confirmed safe, and stay away from outlets if water may have entered your walls or ceiling.

**Water Precautions** - Water safety is critical after a storm, both inside your home and outdoors. Take extra precautions with drinking water, floodwaters, and coastal conditions to protect yourself and your family during recovery:

- ▶ **Potable Water Safety** - If the City turned off your utility service during the storm, you may be under a boil water notice. When in doubt, boil water for at least the first 72 hours after the storm. Bring it to a rolling boil for at least one minute before using it for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth, or washing dishes. If you don't have power, follow the instructions on the back of your unscented household bleach bottle to safely disinfect drinking water.
- ▶ **Beach and Marine Safety** - After a storm, the Gulf may contain hidden debris, pollution, and other hazards. Stay out of the water — including swimming, boating, and launching vessels — until conditions are confirmed safe. Keep pets out of post-storm Gulf water as well. Check the latest conditions at VisitBeaches.org or through the Florida Department of Health-Sarasota. Report missing or damaged marine signs to the U.S. Coast Guard.
- ▶ **Flood Water Safety** - Never drive, walk, or play in standing floodwaters or stormwater. Flooded areas can hide downed power lines, sharp debris, bacteria, wildlife and other hazards. Keep pets and children out of floodwaters, as they are especially vulnerable. It only takes 12 inches of water to float or sweep away your vehicle. Always turn around and find a safer route.



# Contractors and Building Permits

The City of Venice Building Department offers a complimentary inspection to verify and assess damage to your home. This inspection will help identify necessary repairs, determine if a permit is required, and evaluate whether your home is substantially damaged. There is no cost for this inspection, but it must be completed before beginning any repairs or reconstruction.

[For more information view the Building Department Q&A in Appendix D on page 36.](#)

For in-person assistance, visit the Building Department from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at Venice City Hall, 401 W. Venice Ave., or call 941-882-7547 during regular business hours. Online applications, permits, and forms are available at [venicegov.com](http://venicegov.com).

**Permit Required:** for repairs to your building before you remove, alter, or replace any of the following: Roof, walls, siding, wallboard, plaster, insulation, paneling, cabinets, flooring, electrical system, plumbing, heating, or air-conditioning units.

**Permit Not Required:** for clean-up activities and temporary emergency repairs including:

- Removing and disposing of damaged contents, carpeting, wallboard, insulation, hosing, scrubbing, or cleaning floors, walls, ductwork
- Covering holes in roofs or walls and covering windows to prevent the weather from inflicting further damage
- Removing sagging ceilings, shoring up broken foundations, and other actions to make the building safe to enter

**50% Rule:** Under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), if repairs or improvements exceed 50% of a building's market value, the entire structure must be brought up to current flood protection standards. This may include elevating the building, using flood-resistant materials, adding proper flood vents, and other required updates. You can use either the improvement value from the latest pre-damage tax roll or a new appraisal by a state-licensed appraiser. The City cannot recommend one method over the other. If using the tax roll value:

- ▶ Find your property using the [Real Property Search](#) on the Sarasota County Property Appraiser's website [sc-pa.com](http://sc-pa.com)
- ▶ Take the most recent improvement value and multiply by 1.2
- ▶ Your threshold will be 50% of that adjusted number

## Scam warning!

Contracted work must be performed by a firm licensed to work in the State of Florida and registered with the City of Venice. Residents are urged not to sign blank contracts, agree to work without first verifying contractor registration, or authorize any work not approved by the City of Venice Building Department.

Unlicensed contracting is a felony during a state of emergency. Do not pay for services until repairs are completed.

To verify a contractor's license or report fraud:

- ▶ Call 866-966-7226 or visit [www2.myfloridalicense.com](http://www2.myfloridalicense.com)
- ▶ For additional verification or to file a complaint, contact the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) at 850-487-1395 or visit [MyFloridaLicense.com](http://MyFloridaLicense.com).

## Substantial Damage

If repairs or improvements to a structure cost 50% or more of its market value (excluding land), it is considered Substantially Damaged or Substantially Improved and must meet current floodplain standards. Learn more at <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/substantial-damage-quick-guide>

# Debris Preparation and Collection

Debris collections after a storm can take up to or over 90 days to complete the first pass depending on debris volume, roadway accessibility and availability of contracted debris monitors and haulers. The City of Venice contractors activate once the storm has passed and roadways are clear to collect construction and demolition (C&D), vegetative and white goods debris and materials from public right-of-way.

Debris haulers determine their collection route and typically begin in the hardest-hit areas. If you see debris haulers on your road, give them plenty of space to avoid delays.

**Never place debris in the roadway, under power lines or low-hanging branches, in your storm drain, or next to your vehicle or mailbox. Place debris in front of the home where the debris originated, on the easement, out of the road. It is illegal to dump debris at City parks and beaches, and burning vegetative debris is prohibited. Self-drop-off sites may become available.**

Debris must be properly prepared and separated by type:

- ▶ Cut large tree limbs, trunks, or logs into 4-foot sections weighing less than 40 lbs
- ▶ Tape shut refrigerators with food waste and label them as spoiled
- ▶ Wet sandbags can be disposed of with regular trash pickup

Debris is collected by type, with haulers making multiple passes. Once removed from the right-of-way, debris is taken to a federally monitored Debris Management Site (DMS), where each truckload is measured, photographed and cataloged by the City's contracted debris monitor. The DMS is not open to the public. After offloading, debris is separated by type, consolidated, and then hauled away for final disposal.

Commercial properties, manufactured home communities, mobile home parks, condominiums, and private streets are NOT eligible for City collection, according to FEMA guidelines. Commercial properties should work through their insurance, a private debris hauler, or the Small Business Administration for storm debris removal claims.

## Separating Your Debris

Storm debris should be placed at the curb without blocking the roadway or storm drains.

Regular trash, recycling, properly prepared yard waste and non-storm related bulk items will not be picked up with disaster debris. Continue to follow regular collection preparation guidelines.



**HURRICANE DEBRIS**

VEGETATIVE DEBRIS	CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION DEBRIS*	APPLIANCES** AND WHITE GOODS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tree branches</li><li>Palm fronds</li><li>Logs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building materials</li><li>Carpet</li><li>Drywall</li><li>Fencing</li><li>Furniture</li><li>Lumber</li><li>Mattresses</li><li>Plumbing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Air conditioners</li><li>Dishwashers</li><li>Freezers</li><li>Refrigerators***</li><li>Stoves</li><li>Washers, dryers</li><li>Water heaters</li></ul>

\*Any construction and demolition materials contained in plastic bags should be placed with the regular garbage for disposal.  
\*\*Small appliances such as radios, stereos and televisions should be placed in the garbage for disposal.  
\*\*\*Refrigerators: don't empty or tape shut and notice spoiled food inside.



A right-of-entry form is required if FEMA authorizes debris collection from private roads and communities.



# Recovery Resources and Assistance

The City cannot manage disaster recovery alone and relies on partnerships with county, state, federal, and nonprofit agencies to provide critical resources and support to help our community recover and rebuild after a storm.

**Crisis Cleanup:** If you need help cleaning up damage from a storm, call 844-965-1386 or visit [crisiscleanup.org](https://crisiscleanup.org) to be connected with volunteers from local relief organizations, community groups and faith communities. These groups may be able to assist with muck out, downed trees, tarps and debris. All services are free, but service is not guaranteed due to need.

**Local Relief:** Nonprofit and mobile app supported by locals for locals seeking help, locals wanting to help, volunteers with boots on the ground, and information on where to find supplies and resources necessary to rebuild. Download the app or get more info at [localrelief.com](https://localrelief.com)

**YMCA of Southwest Florida:** Often offers amenities to those in need, including hot showers, charging stations, Wi-Fi, and space to relax away from the elements. The Venice YMCA is located at 701 Center Rd.; call 941-492-9622 to check on amenities available.

**Venice-Nokomis Rotary Club:** Organizes volunteers to assist residents in need with moving debris to the curb, cleaning, cutting drywall, and salvaging and packing items, among other tasks. [venicenokomisrotary.org](https://venicenokomisrotary.org) and on Facebook.

**FEMA Individual Assistance:** Apply for Federal Emergency Management assistance such as housing, financial support, and direct services, and get additional resources here: [fema.gov/assistance/individual](https://fema.gov/assistance/individual)

**Small Business Administration:** Offers low-interest disaster loans to help homeowners, renters, and businesses of all sizes recover from declared disasters. Get more information at [sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance](https://sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance)



## Other helpful links:

- ▶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov)
- ▶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [BlueRoof.gov](https://BlueRoof.gov)
- ▶ Florida Housing Finance Corporation [Disaster Relief Resources and Information](#)
- ▶ Florida Division of Emergency Management [Public Assistance Grant Program | Florida Disaster](#)
- ▶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [Disaster Recovery Small Business Loan and Grant Program - HUD Exchange](#)
- ▶ U.S. Department of Commerce Disaster [Recovery Resources](#)



# Appendices

*Disaster supply checklist, understanding disasters, water and sewer Q&A, building Q&A, glossary*

PIER  
CLOSED  
DO NOT ENTER

PIER  
CLOSED  
DO NOT ENTER



City of Venice

## APPENDIX B – Evacuation Centers and Transportation Rally Point Locations

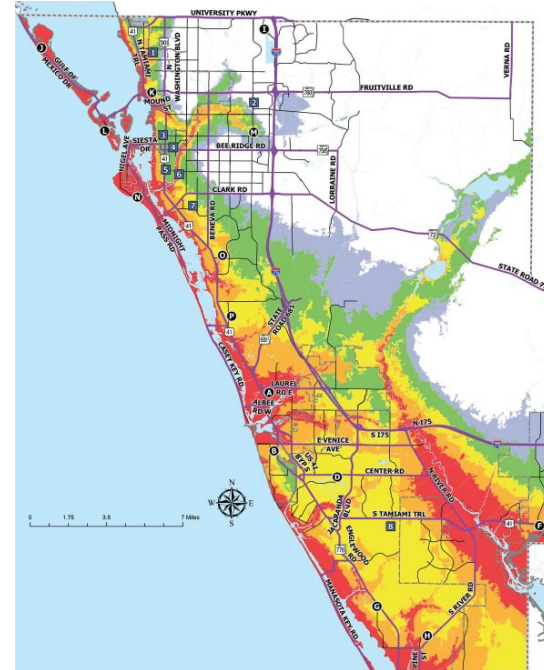
**EVACUATION CENTERS:** Evacuation centers should be your last resort. All evacuation centers are pet friendly. Never go to an evacuation center until officials open them. Evacuation Centers are located at:

1. Booker High School, 3201 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota
2. Fruitville Elementary School, 601 Honore Ave., Sarasota
3. Southside Elementary School, 1901 Webber St., Sarasota
4. Brookside Middle School, 3636 S. Shade Ave., Sarasota
5. Phillippi Shores Elementary, 4747 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota
6. Riverview High School, 1 Ram Way, Sarasota
7. Gulf Gate Elementary, 6500 S. Lockwood Ridge Road, Sarasota
8. Taylor Ranch Elementary, 2500 Taylor Ranch Trail, Venice
9. Heron Creek Middle School, 6501 W. Price Blvd., North Port
10. North Port High School, 6400 W. Price Blvd., North Port
11. Woodland Middle School, 2700 Panacea Blvd., North Port
12. Atwater Elementary School, 4701 Huntsville Ave., North Port

View the Evacuation Center map online at <https://bit.ly/3E7V21o>.  
For more information on what to bring with you visit page 17.

**TRANSPORTATION RALLY POINTS:** For those who cannot drive or otherwise be transported by family, friends or neighbors, Sarasota County will provide last-resort, free bus transportation for you and your pets (along with a limited amount of supplies) to and from a general population, evacuation center. Rally points are not evacuation centers. You **MUST** complete an online registration before a storm or submit pre-registration 72 hours before a storm makes landfall. Rally point locations may change depending on the storm:

- A. Laurel Park, 509 Collins Road, Nokomis
- B. Venice Community Center, 326 Nokomis Ave. S., Venice
- C. Suncoast Technical College, 4675 Career Lane, North Port
- D. Garden Elementary School, 700 Center Road, Venice
- E. George Mullen Activity Center, 1602 Kramer Way, North Port
- F. North Port Library 13800 Tamiami Trail, North Port
- G. Buchan Airport Community Park, 1390 Old Englewood Road, Englewood
- H. Englewood Sports Complex, 1300 S. River Road, Englewood
- I. Breeze Transit UTC Transfer Station at UTC Mall, 500 North Cattlemen Road, Sarasota
- J. Publix Super Market at Shoppes of Bay Isles, 525 Bay Isles Parkway, Longboat Key
- K. Breeze Transit Downtown Transfer Station, 150 N. Lemon Ave., Sarasota
- L. Lido Public Beach, 400 Benjamin Franklin Drive, Sarasota
- M. Colonial Oaks Park, 5300 Colonial Oaks Blvd., Sarasota
- N. Siesta Public Beach, 948 Beach Road, Sarasota
- O. Potter Park, 8587 Potter Park Drive, Sarasota
- P. Pine View School, 1 Python Path, Osprey





## APPENDIX C - Utilities (Water and Sewer) Q&A

### Why would Utilities turn off my water in the event of a hurricane?

It has become a standard practice to turn off the potable water to the barrier islands in Sarasota and Manatee counties if we are expecting a major storm, in order to protect the utilities and property during the event. The potable water system is a pressurized system which derives its pressure from high service pumps at the Water Treatment Plant, as well as elevated water towers. Turning off water to Venice island is performed by closing valves on the mains that serve the island, physically isolating the system from the mainland. Therefore, the system no longer has a continuous supply. The system is still filled, and you may see pressure because of the height of the tower, until that water runs out. During a hurricane, high winds tend to fell trees, which may pull water mains out of the ground. Also, the increased groundwater pressure and movement can create breaks. Turning off the water supply to the island reduces the pressure in the mains, thereby reducing the risk of breaks, as well as limiting the loss of water in the event of breaks, in a potential critical time. Turning off the water also reduces the risk of introducing contaminants into the water system from flooding or storm surge, as well as mitigating potential flooding of homes from leaks or breaks. We will endeavor to turn the water system back on as quickly as possible when it is safe following the storm.



Occasionally, it may also become necessary to turn the water plant off, and therefore the whole City's potable water system during the storm. The existing water plant on Venice Avenue is in the flood zone/storm surge area. Storm surge elevations are provided Above Ground Level (AGL) not sea level like the flood elevations. Prior to Hurricane Milton, the storm surge was expected to be up to 15 feet AGL. The water plant may have been submerged. Also, the buildings at the water plant are only rated for a Category 3 hurricane. Therefore, despite several hardening measures we have (flood doors, emergency power), the site was not safe for our staff in the projected conditions. Therefore, the decision was made to turn off the water plant and evacuate while it was still safe for them to leave. They remained within the City and returned to the Water Plant to restart as soon as it was safe to do so.

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the water plant again, we will attempt to restart the water plant as quickly as possible, once the dangerous part of the storm has passed, depending on the damage. However, as we experienced in Hurricane Ian, much of the water distribution system was damaged. We prioritize and fix water mains as quickly as possible, but depending on what break may be affecting you, it may take days to get to it (just like with power outages). This breakage is also a major risk with the sewer collection system, as it is highly susceptible to stormwater intrusion.

### How will I be notified of a water shutoff?

Make sure you are signed up for [Alert Sarasota County/Everbridge](#), which provides location-specific alert notifications via phone, text, or email as you designate. That can be done by visiting [alertsarasotacounty.com](#). In addition, messaging is distributed via the City's website, [venicegov.com](#)

and the City's Facebook page and other social media platforms. If there is a break in your community that only affects a small area, you may also receive a door hanger with the anticipated water off timing and boil water notice.

### **What does a boil water notice mean?**

If a water main break occurs or the pressure of the public potable water system drops below 20 psi, a boil water advisory (BWA) notice will be issued for the area affected. A boil water notice means that any water that is ingested, (i.e., cooking, drinking, brushing teeth) should be brought to a rolling boil for at least 3 minutes to confirm it is safe to ingest. To rescind the boil water notice, the City takes samples for bacteriological analysis. When the samples show no evidence of contamination for two consecutive days, the notice is rescinded. Rescinds are posted in the same methods described as the water shutoffs above. Please note, BWAs normally take a minimum of 2-3 days, but rarely go past that. If there are any concerns about current boil water notices, residents may call the water plant at 941-486-2770 or visit [venicegov.com/government/utilities](http://venicegov.com/government/utilities).

### **How will I be notified when my water is safe to drink?**

Via Alert Sarasota County/Everbridge and by monitoring the City's website, Facebook page and other social media. Also, for small areas, door hangers will be redistributed.

### **Why would the wastewater system be shut off?**

Regarding sewer services, the wastewater from the City collection system and portions of Sarasota County's collection system is pumped to the Venice Water Reclamation Facility. Pump stations (aka lift stations) run on electricity and many have generators available if the power goes out. However, on the island and in lower-lying areas of the City, we do not want to pump floodwaters or storm surge, or have a running generator submerged. This would cause a risk of electric shock from the water. Therefore, pump stations on the island and other areas of the City where this is a risk may be emptied and turned off, resulting in the collection system acting as storage, and if full, potentially backing up into homes. It is important to note, this generally occurs in mandatory evacuation areas where no one should be using the utilities. Also, usually the water is off in these areas. Since the pump stations are reliant on power, it may take longer for them to be back online depending on the extent of the outages. Generator power is prioritized based on service area and critical customers. Similarly, lift stations have many electrical components for communication and control. We attempt to mitigate the risks to these sensitive components, particularly on the Island and low-lying areas, but damage may also affect service restoration.

### **What is the Utilities Department doing as a storm approaches?**

As a storm approaches, the Utilities Department has a representative at the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) monitoring tropical activity and coordinating with other EOC representatives and City management to make decisions and disseminate information. Utility technicians, working with Fire and Police, confirm any critical facilities are aware of any potential interruptions in services. Technicians also work to prepare the facilities, including placement of hurricane shutters and flood gates at the treatment plants. Potable water storage facilities are filled, in case the treatment capacity is limited, and reclaimed, and wastewater storage facilities are emptied as much as possible, so that if the storm brings inundation of the sewer system, we have a safe place to put it until it can be treated. We wait as long as possible, while it is still safe for our staff, to shut down any systems; however, some systems may be partially isolated in the 24 hours before the storm so that less work needs to be done to affect a total shutdown. Most hurricane preparedness is done in the months before hurricane season, so that we can mobilize quickly and safely as we get information on an approaching storm.



## APPENDIX D - Building Department Q&A

### **What is the Building Department's role when the City gets impacted by a hurricane?**

Damage assessment. Post-storm inspections in which building inspectors assess the damage to structures, focusing on whether buildings are safe to enter. These inspections include structural issues, flood damages and other utility concerns.

### **In a hurricane's aftermath, what does the Building Dept. staff do in the field?**

Inspect structures for damage and photograph the level of damage to the structures. Photograph high-water marks for structures located within the Special Flood Hazard Areas. Provide information and guidance to impacted residents.

**When the City is impacted by a storm, how can Building Dept. permit fees change?** City Council can provide direction on how building permit fees can be adjusted as needed.

### **What is the 50% rule as it applies to damaged homes?**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency 50% rule refers to a guideline established by FEMA that limits the amount of repairs or improvements that can be made to a damaged structure before it must comply with the stricter building codes. The rule applies to repairs and improvements. If repairs exceed 50% of the building's fair market value, it triggers the requirements for the property to be brought into compliance with current floodplain management standards, which might involve elevating the structure, relocating utilities, or other significant modifications. Learn more about the 50% rule on the Sarasota County Property Appraiser's website at

[sc-pa.com/appraisal-info/damage-reporting/understanding-the-fema-50-rule/](https://sc-pa.com/appraisal-info/damage-reporting/understanding-the-fema-50-rule/)



### **What type of recovery and remediation work requires a permit?**

A permit is required any time an owner or authorized agent intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, or to cause any such work to be done.

### **Does the City waive any permit fees after a disaster?**

City Council can elect to waive or reduce certain permit fees as allowed by the state to expedite the permitting process for disaster recovery.

### **What should homeowners be aware of related to scams and unlicensed contractors?**

There are people out there representing themselves as contractors. As a homeowner, you should trust but verify. When searching for a contractor, ask trusted friends and neighbors for references. You should check with the Better Business Bureau at [bbb.org](https://bbb.org) to determine what others are saying about the company. Additionally, you should contact the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR) to determine whether the contractor has any complaints lodged against them or call 850-487-1395. Verify that the contractor has a license from the DBPR for the type of work you wish to have performed at [myfloridalicense.com](https://myfloridalicense.com).

## APPENDIX E – Understanding Natural Disasters

**TROPICAL DEPRESSION:** An organized weather system with a closed circulation that forms over tropical waters with maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less.

**TROPICAL STORM:** An organized system of strong thunderstorms with defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39–73 mph.

**TROPICAL CYCLONE:** A strong storm that forms over warm ocean water. It has thunderstorms and winds that spin around a clear center.

**HURRICANE:** An organized system of strong thunderstorms that blow in a large spiral around a calm center known as the “eye.” The winds reach a constant speed of 74 mph or higher. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating based only on a hurricane's maximum sustained wind speed. This scale does not consider other potentially deadly hazards such as storm surge, rainfall flooding, and tornadoes. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale estimates potential property damage.

Hurricanes can occasionally generate tornadoes within the storm system. This typically occurs near the eyewall, where intense thunderstorms form. Storm surge flooding is frequently the most significant danger to life and property during a hurricane.

Visit [nhc.noaa.gov/](https://nhc.noaa.gov/) for more information.

Hurricane Category	Sustained Wind (mph)	Potential Storm Surge	Potential Damage
1	74 - 95	7 feet	Winds are dangerous and produce some damage
2	96 – 110	15 feet	Winds are extremely dangerous and cause extensive damage
3 (major)	111 – 129	26 feet	Winds are extremely dangerous and cause extensive damage
4 (major)	130 - 156	33 feet	Winds are extremely dangerous and cause devastating damage
5 (major)	157 or higher	36 feet or greater	Winds are extremely dangerous and cause catastrophic damage

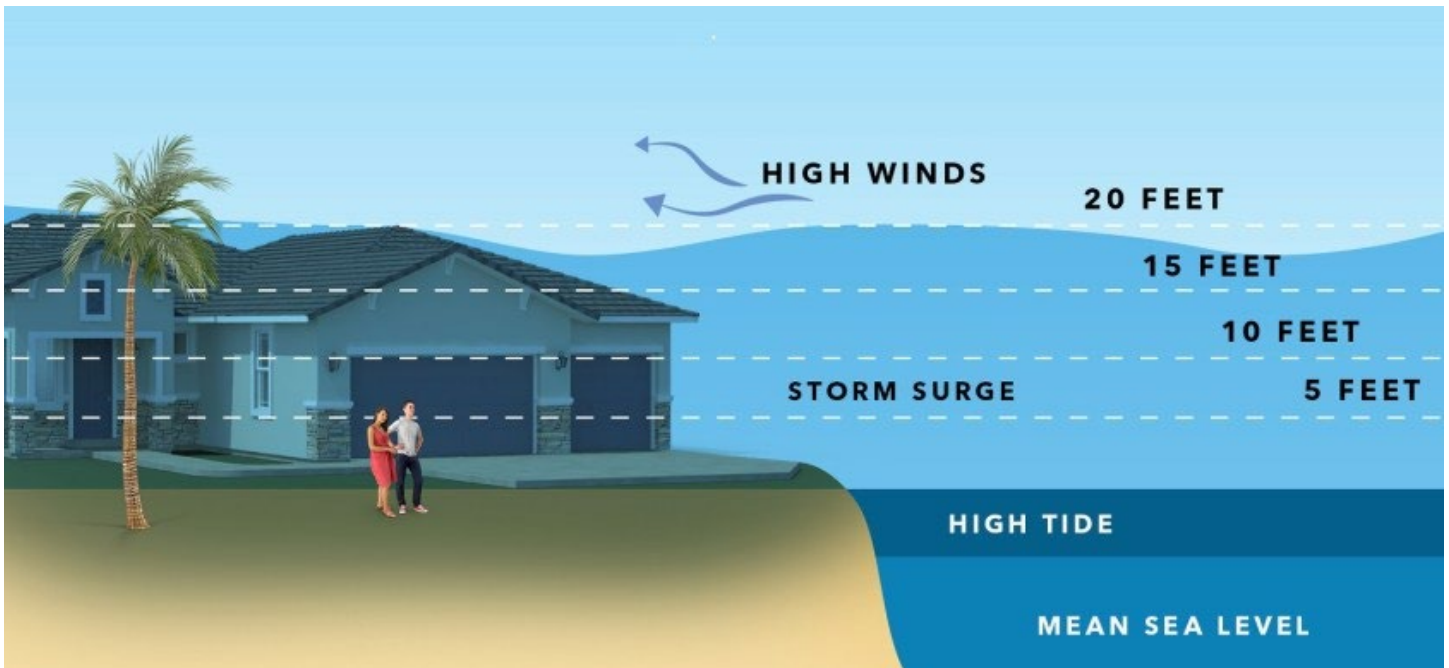
### HURRICANE WATCH VS. WARNING

- **WATCH:** A Hurricane Watch is issued when a tropical cyclone containing winds of 74 mph or higher poses a possible threat, generally within 48 hours. These winds may be accompanied by storm surge, coastal flooding, and/or river flooding. The watch does not mean that hurricane conditions will occur. It only means that these conditions are *possible*. When a hurricane watch is issued, you should ensure your preparedness kit is accessible, your vehicle has gas, and your family are prepared should a hurricane become imminent. You should continue to “watch” local media and official government communications for updates.
- **WARNING:** A Hurricane Warning is issued when sustained winds of 74 mph or higher associated with a tropical cyclone are expected in 36 hours or less. These winds may be accompanied by storm surge, coastal flooding, and/or river flooding. A hurricane warning can remain in effect when dangerously high water or a combination of dangerously high water and exceptionally high waves continue, even though winds may be less than hurricane force.

**For more information about storm advisories, watches and warnings, visit [weather.gov/lwx/warningsdefined](https://weather.gov/lwx/warningsdefined)**



**STORM SURGE:** An abnormal rise in seawater level during a storm.



### Other types of hazards:

- **Fire** - Take time now to plan for a fire emergency by testing smoke alarms, gathering contact information, and deciding on at least two escape routes for your home or business. Practice fire drills regularly, and remember that in a fire, unlike a hurricane, you may only have moments to evacuate, including pets or service animals.
- **Hazardous materials** - If told to evacuate, stay calm, gather essential items if time allows, and move to a location designated by officials, keeping car windows and vents closed until you are safely out of the area. If instructed to shelter in place, bring pets inside, seal doors and windows, turn off ventilation systems, and stay indoors until authorities say it is safe.
- **Lightning/Thunderstorm**- Never seek cover under a tree, do not lie down in an open area, stay away from bodies of water. Take cover inside a home, business, park restroom or shelter, and remain inside for at least 30 minutes after thunder stops. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away and even under clear skies.
- **RIP current** - If caught in a rip current, stay calm, float, signal for help, swim parallel to the shore to escape the current, and then swim at an angle back to land.
- **Tornado** – If a tornado threatens, seek shelter in a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building. Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes.

### Learn more about your risk:

- ▶ [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)
- ▶ [Hazard Aware \(hazardaware.org\)](https://hazardaware.org)
- ▶ [Florida Division of Emergency Management \(FDEM\)](https://www.floridastorm.com)
- ▶ [National Hurricane Center Storm Surge Risk Map](https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/stormsurge)
- ▶ [NOAA Weather and Hurricane Resources](https://www.noaa.gov/hurricanes)

## APPENDIX F - Glossary

**Air Release Valve (ARV)** - a pipeline component that automatically expels trapped gases to prevent flow restrictions, pressure surges, and system inefficiencies

**Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)** - a framework that ensures essential functions continue during and after emergencies by outlining procedures for maintaining government operations, delegating authority, and restoring critical services

**Damage Assessment** - the process of evaluating the impact of a disaster on infrastructure, homes, and communities to determine the extent of destruction, estimate recovery needs, and support emergency response efforts

**Disaster Declaration** – issued by the City Manager, governing authority, during a disaster to allow access to emergency County, state and federal resources, funding, and assistance for response and recovery efforts

**Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** - centralized facility where government agencies and emergency responders coordinate disaster response, resource allocation, and decision-making during emergencies

**Emergency Declaration** – issued by the City Manager to allow the City to make state and federal resource and funding requests

**Evacuation Level** - designated zones or areas that determine when residents should evacuate based on the severity of a storm, storm surge risk, and emergency management plans

**Evacuation Notice** – sent by text, phone call or email through Alert Sarasota County in addition to VPD PSAs via loudspeaker in neighborhoods within Levels A, B, C

**FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) Categories** – [PAPPG](#) provides assistance to state, local, Tribal Nation, and territorial (SLTT) governments and certain types of private non-profit (PNP) organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies under federal law, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act Title 42, allows FEMA to provide assistance for the following categories pending all federal regulation are met:

**Category A** – Debris removal, clearing of debris from public and private property

**Category B** – Emergency protective measures, search and rescue, protection from damage and EOC operations

**Category C** – Roads and bridges, restoration of damage road systems and bridges

**Category D** – Water control facilities, restoration of dams and similar stormwater management systems

**Category E** – Building and equipment, restoration of buildings, contents and equipment

**Category F** – Utilities systems, restoration of utility plants, water and wastewater distribution systems

**Category G** – Recreational and other park related work not otherwise specified

**FIRM** – Flood Insurance Rate Map determined by FEMA based on likelihood and risk of flooding. Used to determine Flood Zones and requirements for flood insurance.

**Flood Zone** - a geographic area defined by FEMA based on its risk of flooding, used for insurance requirements and land-use planning

**Geographic Information System (GIS)** - technology that captures, analyzes, and visualizes spatial data to support decision-making in areas like emergency management, urban planning, and environmental monitoring

**Mitigation** - process of reducing or preventing the long-term risks and impacts of disasters

**Point of Distribution (POD)** - Established by the County and City with state and federal resources and essential supplies including meals ready to eat, water, ice and tarps

**Preparedness** - planning, training, and equipping individuals, communities, and organizations to effectively respond to and recover from disasters

**Saffir-Simpson Scale** - a five-category system used to classify hurricanes based on their sustained wind speeds and potential damage

**Hurricane Category 1 (74-95 mph)** – causes minor damage to roofs, siding, and trees, with possible power outages

**Hurricane Category 2 (96-110 mph)** – leads to more significant roof and siding damage, fallen trees, and extended power outages

**Hurricane Category 3 (111-129 mph)** – results in major structural damage, uprooted trees, and widespread power loss lasting days to weeks

**Hurricane Category 4 (130-156 mph)** – causes severe destruction, with most trees and power poles down and catastrophic home damage

**Hurricane Category 5 (157+ mph)** – leads to total roof and building failures, widespread devastation, and long-term infrastructure collapse

**Storm surge** - abnormal rise of seawater above the normal tide level caused by a storm's winds pushing water onshore, often leading to coastal flooding

**Special Hazard Flood Zone** - FEMA-designated high-risk flood zone where there is at least a 1% annual chance of flooding (also known as the 100-year flood), requiring mandatory flood insurance for properties with federally backed mortgages

**Tactical First In Teams (TFIT)** - specialized response units deployed in the initial phase of an emergency to assess conditions and clear critical roadways for emergency services to resume response

**100-Year Flood** - a flood event that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year based on historical data and statistical analysis