

February 14, 2025

Dear Meridian Residents:

Unlike most natural disasters, with hurricanes we often have at least some early warning – sometimes a few hours and, if we're lucky, a few days – so it is important to take advantage of that time to consider your options, review your safety plans, and make final preparations.

The following are some suggestions that experts believe will help you to prepare to survive and recover from a major storm.

The information has been condensed from several publications as well as the advice of experts. Hotels, phone numbers and shelters are current as of this publication, however, it is best to always call to confirm any information.

You can begin now to prepare for an emergency by adopting your plan.

Cordially,

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HOW BAD CAN IT REALLY BE AND DO I REALLY HAVE TO LEAVE?

A hurricane is an intense low-pressure system which rotates counterclockwise, in the northern hemisphere, and generates wind speed in excess of 74 miles per hour.

Category	Sustained Winds	Storm Surge	Damage
1	74-95 mph	4 to 5 feet	Minor
2	95-110 mph	6 to 8 feet	Moderate
3	111-130 mph	8 to 12 feet	Major
4	131-155 mph	13 to 18 feet	Severe
5	Over 155 mph	Over 18 feet	Catastrophic

The storm surge that accompanies a hurricane is a huge wall of water pushed inland by the hurricane causing major destruction. The storm surge is blamed for an average of nine out of every ten hurricane related fatalities. The ocean surface, under the storm's center, is drawn upward like water in a giant straw forming a mound higher than the ocean. As the mound nears the coast, it can grow to become a storm surge 50 miles wide and 20 feet high.

Six inches of storm surge can knock people off their feet. One foot can float your vehicle, and two feet can sweep it off the road.

A ten-foot hurricane generated wave on top of the storm surge can crash into coastal areas, which are less than 10 feet above sea level along most of the Gulf and Atlantic States. Water weighs about 1,700 pounds per cubic yard. So, the storm surge and waves can demolish a building designed to withstand wind but not water. Do not make the mistake of thinking the upper floor of a high rise is a safe place to stay in a powerful storm.

The Elevation Certificate for the garage level of our building is reported to be 6.1 (NAVD 1988 Datum). The 100-year FEMA flood elevation at 1200 Gulf Blvd. is reported to be elevation 10 (NAVD 1988). This means that during a 100-year flooding event the garage would be flooded with 4 feet of seawater. Storm surges during more severe storm events such as occurred with Hurricane Ian in the Naples area would increase the level of flooding in our garage. A storm surge similar to Ian would have the potential to fill the garage to the ceiling. During Hurricane Helene in 2024, we saw approximately 20" of flood water in the garage.

Any flooding of the garage, even 18 inches of seawater, will be catastrophic for vehicles left in the garage and personal property stored on the garage level. We saw this firsthand during Hurricane Helene in 2024. Consequently, moving vehicles to higher ground in the event of a severe storm would be prudent.

Hurricane evacuation orders are issued when a hurricane storm surge is a threat to humans in an evacuation zone. It is possible to live in a non-flood zone and still be in an evacuation zone. Know your zone and have an evacuation plan.

The ideal plan would be to stay with a friend or relative in an area outside the evacuation zones. If that is not an option, consider a hotel or as a last resort, a public shelter. Pet friendly hotels are listed separately. Whichever plan you choose, you need to execute your plan as early as possible. Hotel

reservations should be made as soon as you know evacuation is likely. You may also want to reserve a day or two extra in the event The Meridian is not accessible after the storm or if your unit is without power.

PLEASE REMEMBER that zones under mandatory evacuation orders do not receive emergency services. ***If you stay, you will be on your own if you have an emergency. This could mean several days without power, water, elevators, etc.***

The Florida hurricane season is from June 1st through November 30th. Confirm your evacuation zone (The Meridian is zone "A"). Go to the county website to find your zone.
http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/evac_faq.htm

SHOULD I STAY OR GO?

It is important to take advantage of any time available to consider the options of staying or evacuating prior to a storm. As warnings are issued, you will need to prepare your personal property to ensure the least amount of damage to people and property. Regardless of your decision to remain in place or to evacuate, the following precautions should be taken to hurricane ready your home.

- Bring all outdoor furniture and potted plants inside. During a storm with high winds, these items become dangerous objects. Remember, securing personal items around your unit is YOUR responsibility. If owners fail to remove furniture and plants from their terrace pursuant to the above, the Association may, but is not obligated, arrange for the terrace to be cleared at the sole expense of the unit owner. The minimum fee to the Association if such action is taken will be \$500.00.
- Ensure that sliding glass doors are completely closed and locked. A manual locking device is recommended. Remember to close the curtains.
- Ensure all important documents are in a safe and easily accessible place. You may want to place them in waterproof bags or take photos on your phone of the most important documents.
- Fill your gas tank.
- Review your "Stay" or "Go" emergency kit and replenish as necessary (suggested items to follow).
- Read your homeowners insurance policy and be sure you understand what is covered and how to file a claim.
- Protect documentation. Make copies of all-important documents, passport, driver's license, birth certificate, financial documents, wills, health related papers, etc. Provide copies to out-of-state contacts. Be sure to have your insurance policies and contact numbers in your possession.
- Create a home inventory. Create an organized photo catalog of your belongings on your smartphone with available insurance apps.

Management will do its best to communicate imminent danger to our property. It is, however, your responsibility to be informed and prepared to stay in place or evacuate should a mandatory evacuation be issued.

IF YOU GO:

If you make the decision to evacuate the community or you are mandated to leave, there are some additional precautions you may want to take upon your departure.

- Be sure that your door is locked when you leave, and you have all you need while you are away. You may not be back for some time.
- Clean your refrigerator and remove perishable items.
- Shut off water.
- Lower hurricane shutters if you have them. Ensure that sliding glass doors are completely closed and locked. A manual locking device is recommended.
- Close all interior doors – this can protect against minor damage if your windows are shattered.
- Close your curtains – This will help to protect against shattered glass.
- Send management an email that you will be leaving your unit with permission to enter your unit to assess damage in your absence should we need to. Provide emergency contact information should we need to reach you. Email at manager@meridianonsandkey.com.
- Check and pack your hurricane survival kit.

IF YOU STAY

If you decide to remain on property, you will want to ensure you are ready to weather the storm. Be prepared to remain in your home for several days. You will most likely not be able to leave due to debris and emergency crews will not be able to get to you. In addition to those general precautions previously mentioned, you will also want to:

- Check with your neighbors to determine who will also be in the building. You will also want to ensure you are able to reach them after the storm.
- Prepare for the power to be out for several days. If you have battery-operated devices, ensure you have sufficient batteries. While we do have a generator to power emergency lighting and elevators, fuel availability will dictate how much we can use it. Plan to be without power, water service, elevators, etc. for several days. We strongly encourage all residents to comply with mandatory evacuation orders.
- Charge your phone. If possible, have an alternate charger.
- Ensure you have enough water for 7 days. The suggested amount is two gallons per person per day. Don't forget water for pets. Hint: freeze water in gallon containers. You will have fresh water and will be able to keep food items cold without electricity. Consider filling your tub. This water can be used for hygiene purposes and clean up.
- Be sure to have enough medications for at least 7 days.
- Be sure to have your homeowner's insurance and inventory available for after the storm.

- If you lose electricity, unplug items, and turn off electronics to prevent damage from a power surge.

Elevators will not be operable during a storm.

During a Mandatory Evacuation:

- Emergency back-up generator power provides limited duration of power to life safety systems and elevators. Even though generators are inspected and tested frequently, they stop working for many reasons: tripped electrical breakers, mechanical failures, limited fuel supply, etc. Plan for the elevators to be out of service until power is restored.
- In order to protect the elevator assets, the car and counterweight system are raised to a level above which storm surge damage could occur and are locked off during the storm.
- Before restarting elevators, a physical inspection must be made to ensure there is no visible water intrusion of the electrical system or other elevator damage and that the elevator pits are clear/clean, and sump pumps are operational. Depending on access to the barrier islands, this could be several days after the storm has passed.

HURRICANE EMERGENCY KIT

Everyone living in a hurricane prone region should have a hurricane safety kit ready. Pre-packaged hurricane preparation kits may be purchased, or you can easily assemble a kit yourself. A safety kit is one of the most essential elements of preparing yourself, your family, and your property for a hurricane.

Hurricane emergency kits should be prepared at least at the beginning of the season and remain ready until the end of the season. Hurricane season is June 1 – November 30 each year. All of the listed items should be packed in portable containers that are easy for you to lift and transport.

Here is a list of some essential items:

- Include at least two gallons per day per person as well as clean water for pets.
- Prepackaged, dried or canned food should be available. Energy bars and snacks should be available. You may not have electricity for your stove. Ensure enough for each person to eat for three days. Attached is a more complete list of food suggestions.
- Create a first aid kit. Include prescription medications, over-the-counter painkillers, rubbing alcohol, eye wash kit and vomit-inducing medication in case of accidental poisoning.
- Have several flashlights on hand with batteries. They are a safer alternative to candles if the power is down.
- Whistles can be used to signal and direct attention during and after the storm passes.
- A battery or crank powered radio will allow you to listen to weather alerts and directives from authorities that may save your life.
- Have enough to power flashlights and battery-operated radios for three days.
- Make sure you have CASH. Do not rely on ATMs after a hurricane, as power may be down.
- Ensure you have cleaning supplies. Include disinfectant and garbage bags to manage waste and germs.
- Create a small toolbox with the essentials and a pair of work gloves. You will also need tape, rope, close-toed shoes, or work boots.
- Two forms of identification may be required to prove residency if Sand Key re-entry is restricted by law enforcement. At least one photo ID should be available.

Make sure you have registered with the City of Clearwater and obtained the proper re-entry pass.

<https://www.clearwaterpolice.org/community/barrier-island-re-entry-pass>

If you have questions, email them at ReEntryHangtag@myclearwater.com or call them at 727-562-4420.

- A two-week supply of prescription medication and a written list of what you are prescribed. Be sure to have your pharmacy information in case of an emergency refill. Don't forget hearing aid batteries.
- Copies of insurance policies and contact information for your physicians and family members. These should be stored in a waterproof bag. If you are taking your pet, you will need a written record of their vaccinations as well as supplies and medications.

- Bug spray
- Rain gear and waterproof footwear.
- Sunscreen
- A paper map of the area.
- Notepad and pen or pencil.
- Paper towels, toilet paper, sanitizing wipes or liquid, feminine products.
- Cell phone and chargers. (Car chargers are essential when we have extended power outages.)
- Manual can opener
- Disposable flatware, plates, and cups
- Several changes of undergarments, clothing, and footwear.
- Extra oxygen tank for those dependent on them.
- Books, cards, or other forms of non-electrical entertainment.
- Pillows, blankets, air mattresses for public shelters accommodations.
- Pet food, medication, and supplies such as toys and cat litter.

All contents of a hurricane survival kit should be packed neatly into easily accessible plastic storage bins and should be easily transportable.

EVACUATION SHELTER INFORMATION

Evacuations are ordered when storm surge is a threat to human safety and survival. Recommended and mandatory evacuations are issued in zones A through D. You can find your zone by calling Pinellas County Evacuation Inquiry Line at 727-453-3150. Key in your phone number without the area code. You can also find the information at www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone.

If you will require a special need shelter, you must register in advance by calling 727-464-3800 or going to <https://pinellas.gov/special-needs/>.

Public shelters should be a last resort. They are not hotels. They provide basic shelter space, some toilet facilities, some food and very few amenities. You must bring your own bedding. If you are going to a pet friendly shelter, you will need to bring a crate and vaccinations records.

PUBLIC SHELTERS

Largo High School, 410 Missouri Ave. N., Largo (Pet Friendly)

Gibbs High School, 850 34th St. N., St. Petersburg (Pet Friendly)

John Hopkins Middle School, 701 16th St. N., St. Petersburg (Special Needs)

Oak Grove Middle School, 1370 Belcher Rd., Clearwater (Special Needs)

Dunedin Highland Middle School, 70 Patricia Ave., Clearwater (Special Needs)

Belleair Elementary School, 1156 Lakeview Road, Clearwater

Not all shelters are open during an emergency. Check your local TV station or go to www.pinellascounty.org for an updated list of open shelters.

PET FRIENDLY HOTELS NEAR U.S. 19

In the event of a mandatory evacuation order being issued for Meridian residents, this list may be useful as an alternative to public shelters. You are advised to book early as they may fill rapidly once a hurricane is forecasted to impact the area. All are pet friendly and may or may not charge extra fees for pets. The phone numbers are for making reservations directly through the hotel. Expedia and other booking companies may offer lower room rates, but often their booking fees are non-refundable if canceled before arrival. No specific recommendations are made or implied.

Hampton Inn and Suites East Bay Drive, Largo, 727-585-3333 (non-evacuation zone)

Holiday Inn Express, Seminole Blvd, Largo, 727-581-3900 (non-evacuation zone)

Tampa Bay Extended Stay, 6500 Ulmerton Road, Largo, 1-800-804-3724 (evacuation zone D)

HURRICANE EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 800-621-3362 (TTY users, 1-800-621-7585)

Pinellas County Evacuation Inquiry Line 727-453-3150

Pinellas county web site is www.pinellascounty.org

Key in your home phone number to get your evacuation zone; or go to www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone. The Meridian is in zone "A".

Pinellas County Emergency Management, 727-464-4333. OPEN ONLY DURING EMERGENCIES.

Transportation to special needs shelters: 727-464-3800. You do need to register first at www.pinellascounty.org/specialneeds.

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