



With Hurricane Beryl making landfall in Texas and becoming the first major hurricane of this season, now is the time for Floridians to be extra vigilant and prepared for approaching storms.

As the former Director of Florida's Division of Emergency Management, I witnessed the devastating effects of hurricanes firsthand. What helps prevent these hurricanes from turning into catastrophic events is our ability to prepare in advance of landfall. That's why I encourage Floridians to assemble their [disaster supply kit](#), which should include:

An infographic titled "HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS TIP ASSEMBLE A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT". It features a central red backpack with arrows pointing to it from six categories of supplies: 1. "Plenty of batteries and a battery-powered radio" (with a radio icon); 2. "Food and water for at least 7 days" (with a water bottle and food can icon); 3. "Copies of important documents such as: • Photo ID • Birth Certificates • Social Security Cards" (with document icons); 4. "Enough supplies for your pets for at least 7 days" (with a pet food can icon); 5. "2 weeks' supply of medications and a detailed list of required medical devices" (with a pill bottle icon); 6. A Florida Disaster Emergency Management (FDEM) logo in the bottom left corner. At the bottom, it says "Find a full disaster supply kit checklist at FloridaDisaster.org/Kit".

Business owners should also be appropriately prepared for hurricane season. This includes identifying your risk and [developing a plan](#). Also, consider how you would manage your business if access to the workplace is limited by road closures or communication is limited. The safety of your employees should remain top of mind when there is an approaching storm.

[Pets](#) are family members too, and they should be incorporated into your family's disaster preparedness plan. If you evacuate your home, DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS OR ANIMALS BEHIND.

PET PREPAREDNESS



Have your pet microchipped



Make an evacuation plan



Build a kit for your pet

[FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/PETS](https://www.floridadisaster.org/pets)



When a [hurricane watch](#) is issued, it means that hurricane conditions are possible within the watch area. The hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical storm-force winds. This watch should trigger your family's disaster plan, and proactive measures should be initiated, especially those actions that require extra time.

When a [hurricane warning](#) is issued, it means tropical storm-force winds are anticipated to hit your area within 36 hours. Once this warning has been issued, your family should be taking proactive actions and deciding the safest location to be during the storm.

HALFWAY FULL ● HALFWAY THERE



Remember to keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half-full during hurricane season to avoid long lines at gas stations and gas shortages prior to a storm.



If you are ordered to evacuate, consider staying with nearby friends or family who live outside the evacuation zone or in a house that can withstand hurricane-force winds and rain.



Evacuations typically don't have to be hundreds of miles – having at least half a tank of gas ensures you can evacuate the necessary tens of miles to a safe sheltering location when a storm threatens your community.

[FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/PLANPREPARE](https://www.floridadisaster.org/planprepare)



[KNOW YOUR ZONE, KNOW YOUR HOME](#) - Every year, it's important for residents to know if they live in an evacuation zone, a low-lying, flood-prone area, a mobile home, or an unsafe structure during hurricane season. These areas and buildings are most likely to be evacuated, and knowing these zones helps Floridians prepare to evacuate and better understand orders from local officials. You can [find your evacuation zone here](#) (note that this is continuously updated).

Also, remember to stay updated with current information. Storm tracks can change, so please listen to your local Emergency Management Directors and the Florida Division of Emergency Management for the most up-to-date information about evacuations.

This year, it is also very important for residents to know their homes. If an evacuation order is not issued for your area and your house is not in a flood zone, you may consider sheltering in place. If you shelter in place, knowing your home and its ability to withstand strong winds and heavy rain is important.

Even if you have weathered storms before, it is always best to follow the advice of official sources. [The FEMA mobile app](#) allows you to receive real-time weather alerts, locate emergency shelters in your area, and more.

I advise my fellow Floridians to leave nothing to chance this hurricane season. Preparation is essential to keeping our communities safe, and I urge everyone to take proper precautions this year.