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NORTHWEST FLORIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO DEVELOP STORM DISASTER PLANS

Hurricane season runs June 1 through November 30



Contact:

Allison McDaniel

HealthyOkaloosaPIO@flhealth.gov

850-344-0580

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — With hurricane season officially starting June 1, Northwest Florida county health departments encourage everyone to prepare for severe weather emergencies now.

Northwest Florida county health departments include those serving Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, and Washington counties.

Get A Plan!

The best way to cope with a disaster is to have a plan. Following an emergency or disaster, you may lose access to basic services, such as power and water, and be subject to limited or no access to basic needs, like food and medications. The Florida Department of Emergency Management provides an interactive online tool, [Get a Plan!](#), to help families and businesses stay prepared. This useful tool allows you to answer a series of questions and create a plan customized for you.

Make a Kit

As we watch for upcoming storms, think about what you might need to keep on hand in order to be prepared. The Florida Division of Emergency Management recommends that you have enough supplies to last you and your family for a minimum of seven days. Each individual or family disaster supply kit differs, based on personal needs. Review the list below for the basic items to include in your kit. For more information, visit

<https://www.floridadisaster.org/planprepare/hurricane-supply-checklist/>.

- **Water:** Enough for drinking, cooking and sanitation purposes—pack a minimum of 1 gallon daily per person per day for 7 days.
- **Food:** Nonperishable packaged or canned food and juices, snacks and foods for those with dietary restrictions (i.e., infants, people with diabetes, etc.).
- **Cooking Supplies:** Manual can opener, cooking tools and fuel, paper plates and plastic utensils.
- **Flashlight and extra batteries**
- **Pillows, blankets and/or sleeping bags**

- **Clothing:** Complete change of clothes suitable for the current climate. Stock up on diapers if you have an infant. Include sturdy shoes to protect feet from debris or other sharp objects post-storm.
- **First Aid Kit, Prescription Medications and Other Medicines:** People with health issues may need to carry written instructions for care and medication (including medication dosages), a list of medical devices and a list of current doctors.
- **Radio:** Battery-operated and NOAA weather radio.
- **Toiletries**
- **Cleaning Supplies:** Garbage bags, moisture wipes and other items.
- **Cash:** Banks and ATMs may not be working for long periods following a disaster.
- **Important documents:** Store all critical documents in a waterproof container and save electronically. Documents like insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
- **Special Items:** Assess all family member needs. Plan for infants, elderly and individuals with access and functional needs (i.e. medical items, baby bottles, etc.).
- **Pet Care Items:** Proper identification, immunization records, ample supply of food and water, carrier or cage, medications, muzzle and leash, and a photo of you and your pet together to validate ownership.

Know Where to Find Shelter

The time may come when you need to evacuate your home and go to a safer place. If you cannot stay at home, staying with a relative, friend or co-worker whose home is in a safe location or at a nearby hotel will be the most comfortable. If that option is not available to you, a hurricane evacuation shelter is a place to go when you have no other place to go. The Florida Division of Emergency Management maintains a list of [open shelters on their website](#).

If you have a disability or a special need, such as a medical condition, it's vital that you register with your [local emergency management office](#). All emergency management offices maintain a list of people within the community who have disabilities or special needs so they can be assisted quickly during an emergency.

If you are eligible for a Special Needs Shelter, your kit should include the following: a list of medications and dosage, a 30-day supply of medications, vital medical equipment for those who may be electrically or oxygen dependent, backup energy sources for essential medical equipment, any special dietary needs or food, as well as personal information, including photo ID, insurance card, emergency contacts, and your primary care providers contact information. And if you have pets, be sure that the shelter has a place for them and their supplies.

Stay Connected.

During severe weather and other emergencies, stay connected to local radio, television and social media outlets.

The State Assistance Information Line (SAIL), a toll-free hotline, is activated to provide accurate and up-to-date information on emergency or disaster situations impacting the State of Florida. The SAIL hotline is: 1-800-342-3557.

You can also get helpful information from the Florida Department of Health's official social media accounts. One of the fastest ways to receive accurate health-related information is to monitor [@HealthyFla](#) on Twitter and on [Facebook](#).

For more information on how to prepare for hurricane season, please contact your Northwest Florida county health department.

DOH-Bay	(850) 872-4455	DOH-Calhoun	(850) 674-5645
DOH-Escambia	(850) 595-6500	DOH-Holmes	(850) 547-8500
DOH-Jackson	(850) 526-2412	DOH-Liberty	(850) 643-2415
DOH-Okaloosa	(850) 833-9240	DOH-Santa Rosa	(850) 983-5200
DOH-Walton	(850) 892-8015	DOH-Washington	(850) 638-6240

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About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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