

# CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



GET A KIT

MAKE A PLAN

STAY INFORMED

# Hurricanes, Earthquakes, Tornadoes, Floods, Terrorism and Wildfires

These are all things we prefer not to think about and hope will never happen. Unfortunately, emergencies and disasters are part of and will impact all of our lives.



Here in the Lowcountry we are vulnerable to a variety of hazards



including hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, earthquakes, wildfires, hazardous materials

incidents, terrorism, power outages and resource shortages. All of these types of events impact thousands of citizens across the country annually with significant financial impacts and tragic losses. We as citizens have the ability to reduce the impact on

ourselves and our community.

After an emergency, our disaster local officials will be working hard to manage the effects of the emergency or disaster. In your planning, you should assume that basic services such as electricity, water, gas and telephones may not be available for some time. This is why it is critical for everyone to Get a Kit, Make a Plan, and Stay Informed.



## **The Difference We Can Make Is Being Prepared**

Through preparedness, local governments can be better positioned to fulfill their obligation to respond to disasters in a timely and effective manner, and to protect lives and preserve property. Equally as important is that you take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of you and your family.



# The Citizen's Guide To Emergency Preparedness

This guide has been developed by the Town of Hilton Head Island Emergency Management to help our residents, businesses and guests prepare to safely face a variety of emergencies. Everyone's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.



This guide provides specific information for the hazards we face and is designed to help you develop your own personal emergency plan with the aid of checklists and sections for you to fill in your individualized plan information.

We hope that you will find the information provided helpful, and that you will not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO PREPARE?

- Learn the threats that we face on Hilton Head Island, what to anticipate from each and what plans the Town has in place.
- Know what actions and precautions you should take before, during, and after an emergency.
- Use common sense, follow official instructions and stay informed.
- Take a first aid and CPR course.
- Build an emergency kit.
- Make a plan and know your evacuation routes.

# HURRICANES

If we look at past hurricane events, they will show us that lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability, developing an emergency plan and keeping an emergency kit, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane's impact on you or your family.

There are many hazards associated with hurricanes, including storm surge, heavy rainfall, inland flooding, high winds, tornadoes, and rip currents. Of these, storm surge has the most potential for loss of life on the coast. Storm surge is an abnormal rise in sea level accompanying a hurricane or other intense storm. This advancing surge combines with the normal tides and increases the water level to heights that will impact roads, homes and other critical infrastructure. This rise of water can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tide.



Hurricanes are classified into five (5) categories based on their wind speed, central pressure, and damage potential.

| Category | Wind Speed (mph) | Damage  |
|----------|------------------|---|
| 1        | 74 - 95          | Very dangerous winds will produce some damage         |
| 2        | 96 - 110         | Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage |
| 3        | 111 - 129        | Devastating damage will occur                         |
| 4        | 130 - 156        | Catastrophic damage will occur                        |
| 5        | > 156            | Catastrophic damage will occur                        |

Tropical storms have all the characteristics of a hurricane, including storm surge, with winds being 39 to 73 mph.

The National Hurricane Center uses watches and warnings to inform the public of possible impacts from a storm. Familiarize yourself with the terms used to identify a tropical weather threat.

**Tropical Storm Watch:** An announcement that sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph (63 to 117 km/hr) are possible within the specified area within 48 hours in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical cyclone.

**Tropical Storm Warning:** An announcement that sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph (63 to 117 km/hr) are expected somewhere within the specified area within 36 hours in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical cyclone.

**Hurricane Watch:** An announcement that sustained winds of 74 mph or 119 km/hr) or higher are possible within the specified area in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical cyclone. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical storm force winds.

**Hurricane Warning:** An announcement that sustained winds of 74 mph (119 km/hr) or higher are expected somewhere within the specified area in association with a tropical, subtropical, or post-tropical cyclone. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds. The warning can remain in effect when dangerously high water or a combination of dangerously high water and waves continue, even though winds may be less than hurricane force.



Unlike locations further inland, any tropical weather (tropical depressions, tropical storms, and hurricanes) is cause for concern on the Island because most of the Island is close to sea level, where storm surge and wind shear pose a greater threat.

## EVACUATION INFORMATION

The Town of Hilton Head Island's Mayor may authorize a partial evacuation of any part(s) of the Island, or the Governor of South Carolina may require a mandatory evacuation for the entire Island. You are encouraged to evacuate well before such actions are taken. **Prepare now.** Know how you will travel and where you will go if you are evacuated, anticipate what roads you will travel on, and make plans that will accommodate young children and pets if necessary. If you plan on using a public shelter, be aware that they will not accommodate pets.

Planning Your Evacuation:

### **What are the evacuation routes? –**

Hilton Head Island evacuees will use both the William Hilton Parkway (US 278 Business) and the Cross Island Parkway toll facility (US 278). Take time to understand where those routes will take you. Once the evacuation has started there are designated traffic patterns. The best option is to leave early!

**Where will you go? –** When planning an evacuation destination, consider staying with friends or relatives. Factor in the additional fuel that will be used during stop-and-go traffic that is common in evacuations, and the additional time it will take to reach your destination.

**How will you get there? –** Are you going to self-evacuate or will you need assistance? If you don't have reliable transportation of your own, you need to know in advance what options may be available through your neighbors and local government. Beaufort County has developed a county-wide evacuation plan for those needing assistance evacuating. There is one Palmetto Breeze pickup point on the Island located at the Hilton Head Airport.



Also, the Town has six additional pick-up points around the Island which will deliver residents to the Palmetto Breeze pick-up point. These are:

1. 151 Gumtree Rd. (in front of the Boys and Girls Club)
2. 173 Marshland Rd. (in front of the Sea Island Chapel)
3. 450 Spanish Wells Rd. (in front of Grace Community Church)
4. 430 William Hilton Parkway (in front of Pineland Station)
5. 24 Pope Ave. (in front of Holy Family Catholic Church)
6. 663 William Hilton Parkway (in front of Hilton Head Resort)



Those with Functional Needs can request additional assistance through our Special Call Pickup program. Once an evacuation has been ordered, call the Hilton Head Fire Rescue Dispatch Center at 843-682-5125 to request evacuation assistance.

The dispatcher will take your information, and we will make arrangements to pick you up and take you to the Beaufort County Evacuation Point at the Hilton Head Island Airport.

Please contact the Hilton Head Island Emergency Management Office in advance at (843) 682-5156 to assist you with transportation options.

**What routes will you take?** – If you are going to wait for the evacuation order, know which route you will be taking; learn the route; take the time to drive the route and realize that cell service in some areas will be limited or may not be available at all.

If you are going to leave prior to the evacuation order, determine your final destination and develop a travel plan for that destination. It is recommended you select alternate locations in case you cannot get to your primary location. Have a plan “B”.



**Where will you stay?** – If you choose to stay in a shelter, be aware that only very basic needs will be provided for you. You will need to bring your own clothes and something to sleep on at the very least, and may want to consider packing a shelter kit ahead of time. You should also be aware that most public shelters do not accept pets, so you will need to make other arrangements for your animals. If you need additional accommodations, ensure the location where you are staying can accommodate those needs and let them know what those needs are.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:**

Palmetto Breeze

- Pre-storm transportation – 843-757-5782
- During an evacuation – 843-255-4000
- Transportation Evacuation Assistance Registry

Those who are home bound or people with disabilities and do not have existing transportation options should consider registering for the Palmetto Breeze Transportation Evacuation Assistance Registry.

<http://www.palmettobreezetransit.com/index.aspx?nid=123>



Susan Richards, SR Concepts

# RETURN AND RE-ENTRY

You may hear conflicting reports from the media about returning to the Island after an evacuation. Even if you hear that the Governor has rescinded the evacuation order, the final authority for allowing residents to return to the Island is the Mayor of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

Once the evacuation order has officially been lifted, all details about returning to the Island, including transportation assistance information, will be announced. You can call the Hilton Head Island/Beaufort County Re-Entry hotline at **1-800-963-5023** for more information. Make sure to bring either your photo ID with your local address or a utility bill with your name and Island address to reenter the Island.

**Is your home safe to enter?** – Professional building inspectors will conduct a survey of homes for potential hazards. They will leave behind a placard to communicate the results of their inspection. The color of the placard indicates the condition of the structure, and how safe it is to enter.

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND**  
**INSPECTED**  
LAWFUL OCCUPANCY PERMITTED

This structure has been inspected (as indicated below) and no apparent structural hazard has been found.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_

Inspected Exterior Only  
 Inspected Exterior and Interior

This facility was inspected under emergency conditions.

Report any unsafe condition to local authorities; reinspection may be required. Inspector ID / Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Inspector Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Site Inspected: \_\_\_\_\_

Do Not Remove, Alter, or Cover this Placard until Authorized by Governing Authority

A **green placard** indicates that any damage sustained by a building is minor or superficial, and that the building is safe to enter and use. Actions such as replacing broken glass, repairing roof tiles, and replacing garage doors will require no further permits from the Town.

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND**  
**RESTRICTED USE**

Caution: This structure has been inspected and found to be damaged as described below.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_

Entry, occupancy, and lawful use are restricted as indicated below.

Do not enter the following areas: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Brief entry allowed for access to contents: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

This facility was inspected under emergency conditions.

Inspector ID / Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Site Inspected: \_\_\_\_\_

Do Not Remove, Alter, or Cover this Placard until Authorized by Governing Authority

A **yellow placard** indicates that a building has sustained more than minor damage, and only partial entry or occupancy is allowed until repairs are made. The owner should contact the Emergency Permitting Office to obtain a building permit before going forward with repairs.

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND**  
**UNSAFE**  
DO NOT ENTER OR OCCUPY  
(THIS PLACARD IS NOT A DEMOLITION ORDER)

This structure has been inspected, found to be seriously damaged and is unsafe to occupy, as described below.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_

This facility was inspected under emergency conditions.

Inspector ID / Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Do not enter, except as specifically authorized in writing by jurisdiction. Entry may result in death or injury.

Address of Site Inspected: \_\_\_\_\_

Do Not Remove, Alter, or Cover this Placard until Authorized by Governing Authority

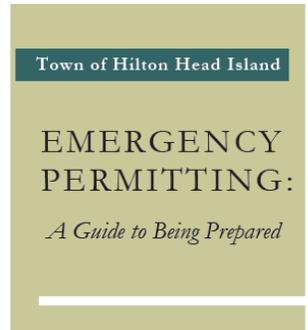
A **red placard** indicates that a building is seriously damaged, and is unsafe. These buildings should not be entered or occupied under any circumstance. Entry could result in injury or death. The building may be repaired or demolished, but in either case, a permit must be obtained from the Emergency Permitting Office before work begins.

# Emergency Permitting

We will all be anxious to get back to our homes and begin the process of recovering from a disaster such as a hurricane. Unfortunately the process of recovery could take some time. The Town does have processes in place to help expedite permitting and thus your recovery process. The emergency permitting process will allow those participating in the program to speed up the permitting process and begin rebuilding or repairing their homes.

Important to know about the program:

- Early permitting is for situations when you wish to build back exactly what you currently have.
- The approval is for the purposes of site planning and design standards ONLY, including approving the location of the building, parking layout, height, and other design standards.
- Approval of the plans does NOT exempt you from building to the current building or fire codes. Additional drawings or plans may be required in order for staff to review for building code compliance.
- Plans may be submitted digitally or in printed format. If you submit hard copy plans, bring in two sets of all documents. If submitting digitally, please bring in the CD or jump drive and a writeable CD. The Town does not keep a copy of the paper plans; however, digital plans will be stored in the Town's database.
- This program does NOT apply to mobile home placements.



What do I need to bring to Town Hall before the storm to get a permit to repair or rebuild my house?

- Photos of your home, all 4 sides, **OR**
- 2** copies of building elevations, all 4 sides
- And**
- 2** copies of a site plan, showing all structures on the site and the property lines,
- OR**
- 2** copies of an as-built survey of the property
- And**
- If your home is located in a Neighborhood Character Overlay District (NCOD)\*, bring verification of the gross floor area.

Now that you have gathered the appropriate information to bring to Town Hall:

- Have your plans stamped by the Emergency Permitting Office PRIOR to the storm. This will include as-built drawings, surveys, and photographs.
- If you are not doing the work yourself, you must still hire licensed contractors that have the required State and Town licenses to do the work. This will protect you as a property owner.
- Inspections are still required.
- Outside agency approvals (DHEC, DOT, OCRM, etc.) may be required depending on the damage and the location of the structure.
- If you are going to demolish your structure or the storm has done it for you, you are required to obtain a demolition permit. This is for your personal insurance purposes as well as for the County Tax Assessor.



If you bring your plans and other information on CD or flash drive to have them approved for emergency permitting, Town Staff has the ability to stamp and approve the plans and return them to you saved on a CD or the flash drive you provided. The Town will also save a copy of the plans in our records (The Town will not keep copies of paper plans). Please make sure your CD is writeable.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:**

The Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development

- <http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/publications/brochures/EmergencyPermittingBrochure.pdf>
- Community Development – 843-341-4757.

# **Disaster Debris Removal on Hilton Head Island**

If a natural disaster strikes the Island and generates all sorts of debris ranging from building materials and tree limbs to electronics, the Town has a plan to deal with it. Our debris management plan shall help prepare for and guide the Town's debris operations during our response and recovery efforts after a natural disaster. The Town has established plans to remove, reduce, and dispose of disaster-generated debris.

Although the majority of the streets on the Island are maintained by others, the Town has agreements with the county, state and most of the private road owners to allow our contractors access to remove disaster-generated debris. In the event of a major storm, our first priority will be to clear debris from the roads for emergency personnel and to provide access to critical sites such as the hospital, government facilities, and the utility companies. After that, we will clear key routes based on priority of use, from major thoroughfares to the local streets.

Residents should be aware that it may take some time before residential streets are cleared of debris and standing water. Debris collection efforts will begin after the initial road clearance efforts are complete.

- Residents may expect that all debris will not be collected at once. Collection efforts will continue until it is determined that all storm-related debris has been satisfactorily removed.
- The Town will pick up disaster-related storm debris placed along the edge of the road on all publicly-maintained roads and private roads where right-of-entry has been granted.

## **Tips for debris removal**

- DO NOT attempt to handle debris near downed power lines. Contact Palmetto Electric at (843) 208-5551 if you have questions about the status of lines near your home.
- Debris collectors will be responsible for addressing different types of debris at different times.
- Separate different types of debris to facilitate faster collection: loose vegetative debris; hazardous waste (paint, pesticides, etc.); appliances or "white goods" (refrigerators, air-conditioning units, etc.); and construction/demolition debris.
- Place debris along the curb or edge of the pavement as soon as possible after the storm in anticipation of collection.
- Keep debris away from utilities such as fire hydrants, cable or telephone boxes to avoid damage during pick up.

- Residents of multi-family developments may bring their debris to the nearest road right-of-way and ask their POA to coordinate rights-of-entry if the road is privately maintained.
- The Town may enter onto private property to remove storm-generated debris in accordance with Town Code, Title 9, Chapter 1, (Public Nuisances and abatement thereof) and Section 9-5-211 (Post-disaster Debris Collection).
- Follow the Town's web site after a storm to find out more details about debris removal: [www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov](http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov)



- Temporary collection centers will be activated for residents only following a major storm. Residents will need to provide a proof of address when taking storm related debris to the collection centers. Below is a list of the temporary collection centers:
  - Coligny Beach Parking Lot (1 South Forest Beach Drive)
  - Crossings Park (6 Haig Point Circle)
  - Shelter Cove Community Park (2 Shelter Cove Lane)
  - Barker Field (160 Mitchellville Road)
  - Old Gullah Flea Market Site (120 William Hilton Parkway)

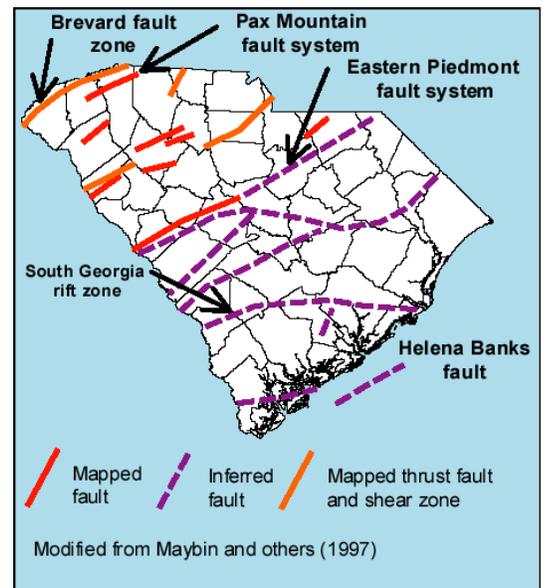
Once debris is collected on the road, road-side, or collection center, it will be transported to one of two debris management sites on the Island or the ultimate disposal site off-Island. The two debris management sites identified are at Honey Horn and Chaplin Community Park. The debris will be segregated, processed, and vegetative debris will be reduced at the management sites prior to going to the ultimate disposal site or landfill. Residents will only be able to take storm generated debris to the collection centers listed above and not to the debris management sites.

# EARTHQUAKES

Despite occurring infrequently on the East Coast, earthquakes strike without warning and can affect areas far from their epicenter. In South Carolina, ten to thirty earthquakes are recorded annually; two to five significant earthquakes are felt each year. The most significant earthquake in South Carolina state history was the 1886 Charleston earthquake which killed 60 people and is still considered to be the most destructive earthquake to have occurred in the southeastern United States. The potential for damage is much higher than it was in 1886, as a growing population and more densely populated areas create greater earthquake hazards. The destructive impact of an earthquake is also greatly influenced by the type of soil in a particular area. Buildings located in marshy, sandy, or artificially filled-in land are much more susceptible to damage from the waves generated by an earthquake than those built on bedrock. Hilton Head Island is mostly comprised of these sandy, marshy soils, and could expect significant amplification of forces transmitted by a nearby earthquake.

What to do to prepare your home:

- Fasten shelves and appliances securely to walls.
- Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Store breakable items, such as glass and china, on lower shelves or in drawers.
- Repair defective electrical wiring or leaky gas fixtures, as these present major post-earthquake fire risks.
- Repair any deep cracks in your foundation or ceiling. Get expert advice if these are discovered.



What to do during an earthquake:

**DROP down onto your hands and knees** (before the earthquake knocks you down). This position protects you from falling but allows you to still move if necessary.

**COVER your head and neck** (and your entire body if possible) under a sturdy table or desk. If there is no shelter nearby, *only then* should you get down near an interior wall (or next to low-lying furniture that won't fall on you), and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.

**HOLD ON to your shelter** (or to your head and neck) until the shaking stops. Be prepared to move with your shelter if the shaking shifts it around.

- *Indoors:* Drop, Cover, and Hold On. Drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. Be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops. If you are not near a desk or table, drop to the floor against the interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. Avoid exterior walls, windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall furniture, large appliances, and kitchen cabinets with heavy objects or glass. Do not go outside!
- *In bed:* If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. Broken glass on the floor has caused injury to those who have rolled to the floor or tried to get to doorways.
- *Outdoors:* Move to a clear area if you can safely do so; avoid power lines, trees, signs, buildings, vehicles, and other hazards.
- *Driving:* Pull over to the side of the road, stop, and set the parking brake. Avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking is over. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.
- *In a theater:* Stay at your seat and protect your head and neck with your arms. Don't try to leave until the shaking is over. Then walk out slowly watching for anything that could fall in the aftershocks.

## **During the Earthquake**

Protect yourself in the safest place possible without having to move far - no matter your limitations, you need to protect yourself to the extent possible. Do NOT try to get out of the building during an earthquake! You could be injured by people attempting to leave the building or falling debris during the earthquake. You should Drop under a piece of furniture or position yourself against an interior wall. Take Cover under a desk or table if possible, and protect your head and neck with one arm/hand. Hold On to a desk or furniture leg to keep it from shifting or uncovering you until the shaking completely stops. Learn more at [www.DropCoverHoldOn.org](http://www.DropCoverHoldOn.org)

## **For People with Disabilities**

When you enter a room, consider your physical abilities and look for a safe place for you to “Drop, Cover, and Hold On”.

- Look for a place away from falling objects and breaking glass, such as under tables or desks, or along an interior wall.

- If you have significant limitations, it is extremely important for you to create a safe space for yourself. Specifically if you cannot Drop, Cover, and Hold On under a desk, table, etc.
- To assist you in creating a safe space secure heavy shelves and furniture, and move heavier objects to lower shelves.
- Secure essential medical equipment such as oxygen tanks or machines, so they won't cause additional damage or injury.
- When you are in a public space, be aware of your surroundings and identify an area that would be a safe place.

### **Suggestions if it is difficult to Drop, Cover, and Hold On:**

We all do not have the ability to Drop, Cover and Hold On. Below are a few tips for people who are limited in their ability to Drop, Cover and Hold On.

- If you are in a wheelchair, do not try to transfer to or from your chair during the shaking. Stay put. Cover your head and neck with your arms, a pillow or other items until the shaking stops.
- Wheelchair users: lock your wheels; cover your head and neck until the shaking stops. The force of the earthquake may knock you off your feet or throw you to the ground. If you have mobility or balance issues, the shaking may make it even harder for you to move around.
- Know and understand your abilities. If you were to get under a desk and would not be able to get back up on your own, consider other ways to protect yourself, such as standing by an interior wall free from large furniture and objects that may fall or injure you.
- Use your existing support system and develop a list of people who will check on you after an earthquake.
- Do your best to keep calm.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- FEMA – <http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes>
- Red Cross – <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/earthquake>
- US Geological Survey – <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/preparedness.php>

# TORNADOES

Tornadoes can appear with little to no warning, and can cause catastrophic damage in a matter of minutes. Tornadoes are often the byproduct of large thunderstorms and even hurricanes. They frequently occur during the months of April, May and June, but have been known to appear in later months as well.

## Enhanced Fujita Scale

EF-0 (65-85 mph) Light damage. Peels surface off some roofs; some damage to gutters or siding; branches broken off trees; shallow-rooted trees pushed over.

EF-1 (86-110 mph) Moderate damage. Roofs severely stripped; mobile homes overturned or badly damaged; loss of exterior doors; windows and other glass broken.

EF-2(111-135 mph) Considerable damage. Roofs torn off well-constructed houses; foundations of frame homes shifted; mobile homes completely destroyed; large trees snapped or uprooted; light-object missiles generated; cars lifted off ground.

EF-3 (136-165 mph) Severe damage. Entire stories of well-constructed houses destroyed; severe damage to large buildings; trees debarked; heavy cars lifted off the ground and/or thrown.

EF-4 (166-200 mph) Devastating damage. Whole frame houses completely leveled; cars thrown and small missiles generated.

EF-5 (>200 mph) Incredible damage. Strong frame houses leveled off foundations; automobile-sized missiles fly through the air.

## Actions To Consider

- Determine in advance where you will take refuge in the event of a tornado.
- Since underground shelters are uncommon on the Island, take shelter in an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor of a building.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- Avoid auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums that have wide span roofs.
- DO NOT stay inside a trailer, or mobile home! If possible, move to a building with a strong foundation.



- DO NOT get under an overpass or bridge, as winds can blow debris up into the gap or even collapse the bridge itself.

If you are outside and there is not a safe shelter nearby:

- Go to your vehicle, buckle your seat belt and drive to the closest sturdy shelter.
- If conditions worsen and your vehicle is being hit by debris, pull over and park. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushion if possible.
- If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.
- Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

### **After the Tornado**

Assess your surroundings and determine if there are any injuries. Be cautious and aware of your surroundings. Additional injuries can occur from walking through debris, downed power lines, or fire. Protect yourself and your family and call 911 for assistance.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- FEMA – <http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>
- SC Emergency Management Division – <http://www.scemd.org/planandprepare/disasters/tornadoes>
- National Weather Service - <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/brochures/tornado.shtml>

## FLOODS

Whether during a hurricane, tropical storm, or simple rainstorm, flooding may affect large portions of the Island. One of the most proactive measures you can take as a homeowner is to purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The United States has billions in flood losses every year. The majority of those flood claims are paid by the NFIP. The NFIP provides additional coverage up to \$250,000 on a building and \$100,000 on its contents, and unlike most homeowners policies, will cover flood damage for almost any enclosed building.

### **What can you do to protect yourself and your property?**

Remember to avoid contact with flood water. Never walk through or drive on flooded roads. Assume all flooded water is contaminated and thoroughly decontaminate anything that becomes wet. Be prepared to shelter in place using your emergency kit.

The Town of Hilton Head Island has adopted Flood Insurance Rate Maps that show the areas of the island that have a 1% chance of flooding with corresponding predicted flooding depths. When building a new structure it is important to strictly follow all building codes that apply to construction in a Special Flood Hazard Zone. To prevent shallow flooding from heavy rain storms the land should be graded away from the structure for positive drainage to the local storm water system. Make sure your local drainage is well maintained and free from debris and vegetation.

Older properties, while elevated, may be below the current predicted level of flooding due to changing federal regulations. In this case, the best way to minimize damage is to eliminate any enclosed habitable spaces at ground level, provide watertight closures at windows and doors, remove any materials that are not water resistant below the predicted flood level, move any mechanical and electrical equipment to a higher location in the building and structurally reinforce the foundation.

The Town's Flood Plain Manager would be happy to answer any questions you may have and make site visits to assist you in improving the situation or becoming flood compliant.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Town of Hilton Head Island - <http://hiltonheadislandsc.gov/publicsafety/flood/floodhazard.cfm?menuheader=3>
- Flood Plain Administrator - 843-341-4651 or [richards@hiltonheadislandsc.gov](mailto:richards@hiltonheadislandsc.gov)
- NFIP - <http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>

# FIRE

## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DANGERS OF FIRE?

In the United States, three (3) home fires are reported to fire departments every four (4) minutes. On average, nine (9) people die in a home fire each day. Fire can happen in any home at any time. Don't underestimate the speed and power of a fire. Even a small kitchen fire can turn deadly in a matter of minutes. Fires can spread rapidly through your home engulfing it in smoke and flames which can make an escape nearly impossible. Take the time to walk through your home and follow these simple steps to reduce your chances of having a fire. It could save your life or the life of your family.

### HERE ARE SOME BASIC THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- GET OUT AND STAY OUT! Fire won't wait so plan your escape! Does everyone know to get out and go to a special meeting place?
- Smoke alarms will decrease your chance of dying in a fire by 50%! Make sure you have working smoke alarms!
- Smoke alarms should be on every level of your home, as well as inside and outside each bedroom.
- Test your smoke alarms monthly and replace the batteries twice a year.
- Smoke alarms are good for 7-10 years – do you need to replace yours?
- Make sure all windows and doors will open so everyone can get out.
- Stay low and go! If there is smoke, make sure everyone knows to crawl low under smoke.
- Don't be a hoarder! Piles of stuff only acts as fuel in a fire ~ keep your home clutter free.
- Make sure space heaters are kept at least 3 feet away from anything combustible.
- Be aware of the hazards of candle fires. Extinguish candles when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Always stay in the kitchen when cooking.
- If a pan of grease catches fire on the stove ~ do not use water! Turn off the heat and cover with a lid.
- Keep things like oven mitts, wooden utensils and paper towels away from the stove.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Practice makes perfect! Practice fire drills in your home on a regular basis.



## HOW SAFE IS YOUR HOME?

### FIND OUT BY GOING THROUGH THIS SAFETY CHECKLIST!

- Are exits clear and unobstructed?
- Are extension cords in good condition (not frayed or cracked) and only used as temporary wiring?
- If multiple items need to be plugged in, is a surge protector being used?
- Are fire extinguishers visible and accessible?
- Is combustible rubbish removed from the building on a regular basis?
- Are oily rags and combustible chemicals stored in a container that limits oxygen or is filled with water?
- Are attic, closets and other storage areas kept neat and clean?
- Do you have working smoke alarms?
- Do you test your smoke alarm batteries monthly and change the batteries twice a year?
- Do you have your chimney and furnace/AC unit cleaned and serviced yearly?
- Are propane tanks stored outside the house?
- Are your address numbers clearly visible from the street?



# WILDFIRES

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT DEFENSIBLE SPACE IS?

It is the space between a house and an oncoming wildfire, so keep it maintained with shorter plants, increased moisture, free from dead branches and leaves, and well mowed. Routine maintenance is key!

## WHAT ITEMS SHOULD I KEEP OUT OF MY DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Wood piles, lawn furniture, barbeque grills, tarp coverings, etc.



## WHICH PLANTS ARE FIRE RESISTANT?

Use plants that are not oily or waxy. Some fire resistant plants are tulips, red oak, periwinkle, vinca, crepe myrtle, azaleas and Boston ivy. Hardwood trees are less flammable than evergreens.

## WHAT ABOUT MY ROOF AND GUTTERS?

Keep your roof and gutters blown out and clean. Use fire-resistant or noncombustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the dwelling, or treat wood or combustible material used in roofs, siding, decking or trim with fire-retardant chemicals evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Consider installing protective shutters. Have a garden hose long enough to reach any area of the home or other structures on the property.



# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Occasionally, a hazardous materials release may affect a significant area. Hazardous



materials are materials or substances that pose a danger to life, property, or the environment if improperly stored, shipped, or handled. If you see people suffering from watery eyes, choking, difficulty breathing, twitching, blistering, itching, or loss of coordination, recognize that these may be signs of a hazardous materials release. If you see these signs, try to move uphill and upwind from the source if you can. If a chemical is spilled inside of the building you are in, try to leave the building without

passing through the source of the spill. If you cannot exit the building without passing through the affected area, try to move as far from the spill as possible.

If you think you have been exposed to a hazardous material, get to a safe location, remove all clothing and wash with soap and water. Be sure not to scrub the material into your skin, and instead flush it off of yourself with water. Call 911 immediately afterwards for assistance. If you are indoors during a hazardous materials release, you may be asked to shelter in place.

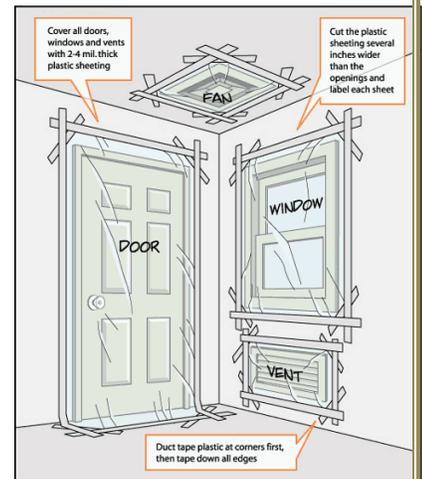
## SHELTER IN PLACE

The Town of Hilton Head Island may ask residents to shelter in place during an emergency that poses more risk to you if you should evacuate, such as a hazardous materials spill. Sheltering in place offers you and your family immediate protection for a short period of time. If you are asked to shelter in place, get everyone indoors immediately, close all windows and outside doors, and relocate to a central room in your house or workplace. If instructed to do so, turn off fans, central air and heat, and cover windows and doors with plastic or duct tape.

The supplies you have collected for your emergency kit will sustain you while waiting for the emergency to be stabilized.

If your children are at school, do not leave your house or workplace to go get them. Take the time now to learn the school's emergency plans. Going outside could expose you to a hazardous environment.

During a shelter in place emergency, turn on a radio or television to a local news station to stay informed about what is going on, and wait until the "all clear" is broadcast before exiting the building. Follow instructions provided by local officials, and be prepared to evacuate if ordered to do so.



## Obtaining Emergency Information

Your communication plan should not only include contact information, it should also include how you will obtain information from Federal, State and Local sources. Consider using some of the below resources.

### Phone Numbers

- Hilton Head Island/Beaufort County Hurricane Re-Entry Hotline: 800-963-5023
- Town of Hilton Head Island: 843-341-4600
- Beaufort County Emergency Management: (843) 470-3100
- SC Evacuation and Shelter Information: 866-246-0133 (Used when needed)  
\*Note: Spanish Interpreters available.
- South Carolina Emergency Traffic Network: 888-877-9151 (Used after a storm)
- Hispanic Outreach of SC: 803-419-5112
- Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce: 843-785-3673
- Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce: 843-525-8500
- SC Animal Care and Control: 803-776-7387
- SC Insurance News Service: 803-252-3455

### Social Media

- The Town of Hilton Head Island on Twitter @HHIEmergency
- Beaufort County on Twitter @bcgovsc
- Beaufort County Government SC on Facebook
- South Carolina Emergency Management Division on Twitter @SCEMD
- South Carolina Emergency Management Division on Facebook
- South Carolina Department of Transportation on Twitter @SCDOTPress

### Websites

- The Town of Hilton Head Island: <http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov>
- Beaufort County Emergency Management:  
[http://www.bcgov.net/Emerg\\_mgt/emer\\_mgt.php](http://www.bcgov.net/Emerg_mgt/emer_mgt.php)
- South Carolina Emergency Management Division: <http://www.scemd.org>
- South Carolina Emergency Traffic Network: <http://www.sctrffic.org/>
- National Hurricane Center: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>
- National Weather Service Charleston: <http://www.weather.gov/chs/>

### Local Media

RADIO STATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEVISION STATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

# EMERGENCY SUPPLY CHECKLIST

You should be prepared to provide your own basic necessities for **at least three days** during a disaster, whether you are evacuating or sheltering-in-place. Make sure to modify this list to suit your own personal needs.

Before you begin to develop a kit, consider how a disaster will impact you and/or your family. Consider the individual needs of each person you are preparing for. Make sure to modify this list to suit your own personal needs.

- One gallon of water per person per day
- Nonperishable food that does not require preparation such as canned food
- Manual can opener
- Eating supplies such as paper plates, napkins, and plastic utensils
- Baby supplies such as formula, bottles, and diapers
- Books, toys, games or other activities
- Food and water for pets
- Shot records for your pets
- First-aid kit
- Emergency reference material (first aid book)
- Clothing for several days
- Credit card
- Cash
- A whistle or air horn to signal for help
- Battery or crank-operated radio
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Basic tool kit and work gloves
- Spare pair of reading or prescription glasses
- An air mattress and sheets for each member of the group
- Toilet paper, moist towelettes, garbage bag and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Soap
- Female hygiene supplies
- Toothbrushes
- Local, regional, and state maps
- Toothpaste
- Dust mask
- Hand sanitizer
- Cell phone with charger



Other necessities to add to your emergency kit:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Maintaining Emergency Kit Inventory

Once you have developed your emergency kit, consider developing a schedule to check the supplies in your kit, including rotation of your food and water supplies. Also, reconsider the items in your kit and update with additional items as your personal situation changes. It is recommended you check your kit inventory at least twice a year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency supplies Inventoried and supplies rotated

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency supplies Inventories and supplies rotated

### Additional Items and considerations:

Some items that you will need in an emergency kit may be too difficult to maintain within the kit, but those items should be readily available in your home if you need to shelter in place or evacuate. Some of those items include.

- Consider creating a network to help you in an emergency or evacuation
- Functional need items such as a walker, oxygen, wheelchair, or hearing aid
- Instructions for the use of special medical equipment and teach your network on how to use the equipment
- Style and serial number of any medical devices
- Size and weight of any special medical equipment
- Contact your oxygen supply company about their emergency plans and how you will maintain your supply of oxygen.
- Consider written instructions regarding your care if you have any special care needs
- 30 days' worth of your prescription medications
- Laptop or tablet and accessories
- Patch kit for tires

### OTHER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

- Federal Emergency Management Agency: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)
- FEMA Ready: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- National Red Cross: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- Carolina Lowcountry Red Cross: [www.redcross.org/sc/north-charleston](http://www.redcross.org/sc/north-charleston)
- Palmetto Breeze: [www.palmettobreezetransit.com](http://www.palmettobreezetransit.com)
- National Alliance for Mental Illness: <https://www.namibeaufortcounty.com/>
- SC Department of Health and Environmental Control:  
<http://www.scdhec.gov/emergency.htm>

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

If you are leaving your home to evacuate, it is a good idea to bring copies of important documents like birth certificates, wills, insurance policies, etc. with you or have them saved on a CD, external hard drive, thumb drive or stored in a safe location out of the area. If you choose to keep paper copies of these documents, they should be stored in a watertight plastic envelope or container to prevent damage. As you accumulate your important documents, use the below checklist.

Before hurricane season, it may be prudent to review and upgrade any of your existing insurance policies. In addition to “typical” policies (home, auto, and boat) you should also consider wind, hail, flood, and earthquake insurance.



You should also create an inventory of your home to assist with insurance claims and document your home and what is in your home.

Location of important documents: \_\_\_\_\_

- Passports
- Social Security cards
- Immigration Documents
- Insurance policies
- Licenses
- Car titles and registrations
- Wills
- Contracts
- House plans
- Mortgage and property deeds
- Immunization and other medical records
- Bank account numbers
- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates
- Adoption Decrees
- Death certificates
- Deeds
- Stocks and bonds
- Prescriptions
- Recent tax returns
- Military records
- Important photographs and other irreplaceable documents
- Backup computer files on a portable drive
- Photos of valuables in your home
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



Additional Resource:

- The Insurance Information Institute - Know Your Stuff – [www.knowyourstuff.com](http://www.knowyourstuff.com)

# COMMUNICATION PLAN

It is important to keep a physical list of emergency contacts, both for yourself and for others to use. Cell phones, computer backups, and address books can all be damaged in a disaster.

| EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST   |   |
|--|---|
| <u>EMERGENCY NUMBERS</u><br>Emergency Services: 911 or<br>Poison Control Center: (800) 222-1222<br>Ambulance:<br>Fire:<br>Police:<br>Hospital ER:<br>Doctor's Name:<br>Doctor's Number:<br>Doctor's Name:<br>Doctor's Number:<br>Pharmacy: | <u>FAMILY CONTACT NUMBERS</u><br>Home Number:<br>Mom's Work:<br>Dad's Work:<br>Mom's Cell:<br>Dad's Cell:<br>Emergency Contact Name:<br>Emergency Contact Number:<br>Relationship:<br>Emergency Contact Name:<br>Emergency Contact Number:<br>Relationship: |
| <u>FAMILY MEDICAL CONDITIONS:</u><br><br><u>HOME ADDRESS:</u>  |   |

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance how you will contact one another and get back together in different situations.

Start by identifying an out-of-town contact for you all to connect with during and after a disaster. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Be sure every member of your family knows this phone number and has a cell phone, coins, or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact.

As part of your communication plan, use the below forms to develop a contact list for your children's school or day care, doctor, pharmacy, insurance agent, veterinarian, and other important numbers. Every plan is different and additional space has been provided to add those items that are specific to your family.



# Emergency Contacts

| <b>Out of the Area Primary Contact</b> |  | <b>Out of the Area Secondary Contact</b> |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Name:                                  |  | Name:                                    |  |
| Address:                               |  | Address:                                 |  |
| Phone:                                 |  | Phone:                                   |  |
| Other Info:                            |  | Other Info:                              |  |
| <b>Physician #1</b>                    |  | <b>Physician #2</b>                      |  |
| Name:                                  |  | Name:                                    |  |
| Address:                               |  | Address:                                 |  |
| Phone:                                 |  | Phone:                                   |  |
| Other Info:                            |  | Other Info:                              |  |
| <b>Insurance Home</b>                  |  | <b>Insurance Auto</b>                    |  |
| Name:                                  |  | Name:                                    |  |
| Address:                               |  | Address:                                 |  |
| Phone:                                 |  | Phone:                                   |  |
| Other Info:                            |  | Other Info:                              |  |
| <b>School #1</b>                       |  | <b>School #2</b>                         |  |
| Name:                                  |  | Name:                                    |  |
| Address:                               |  | Address:                                 |  |
| Phone:                                 |  | Phone:                                   |  |
| Other Info:                            |  | Other Info:                              |  |
| <b>Veterinarian</b>                    |  | <b>Other Contact:</b>                    |  |
| Name:                                  |  | Name:                                    |  |
| Address:                               |  | Address:                                 |  |
| Phone:                                 |  | Phone:                                   |  |
| Other Info:                            |  | Other Info:                              |  |
| <b>Other Contact:</b>                  |  | <b>Other Contact:</b>                    |  |
| Name:                                  |  | Name:                                    |  |
| Address:                               |  | Address:                                 |  |
| Phone:                                 |  | Phone:                                   |  |
| Other Info:                            |  | Other Info:                              |  |

# EVACUATION DESTINATIONS

It is important to have multiple destinations as options during a hurricane evacuation. Contact relatives before the storm to make sure they can accommodate you during an evacuation, or ensure that hotel rooms will still be available after the evacuation order has been given.

| Primary Destination     |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Name:                   | _____                |
| Address:                | _____                |
| City:                   | _____                |
| State:                  | _____                |
| Phone Number:           | _____                |
| Email:                  | _____                |
| Estimated Driving Time: | Estimated Room Cost: |

| Alternate Destination   |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Name:                   | _____                |
| Address:                | _____                |
| City:                   | _____                |
| State:                  | _____                |
| Phone Number:           | _____                |
| Email:                  | _____                |
| Estimated Driving Time: | Estimated Room Cost: |

| Alternate Destination   |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Name:                   | _____                |
| Address:                | _____                |
| City:                   | _____                |
| State:                  | _____                |
| Phone Number:           | _____                |
| Email:                  | _____                |
| Estimated Driving Time: | Estimated Room Cost: |

Before hurricane season, take the time to consider the items on the below list:

- Check metal and wood support columns on patios for rust and wood decay.
- Evaluate your home's foundation for cracks and other damage.
- Check your windows, doors and roof to make sure they are in the best shape possible to withstand a potential storm.
- Consider deadbolts to strengthen doors.
- Ensure your shed is secured to a permanent foundation or strapped in the ground with anchors.
- Ensure your garage door(s) close completely and have appropriate reinforcement.
- Keep your yard free from debris and other loose items.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant.
- Clean your yard of items that could become projectiles during an event with high winds or a hurricane.
- Document, photograph or video your home and possessions for insurance purposes.
- Check for loose rain gutters and unclog all rain gutters.
- Know where your utility shut offs are located.
- Review your insurances policies.
- Know your evacuation routes and where you will be going.
- If you have a portable ramp, ensure it is properly secured or removed once you evacuate.



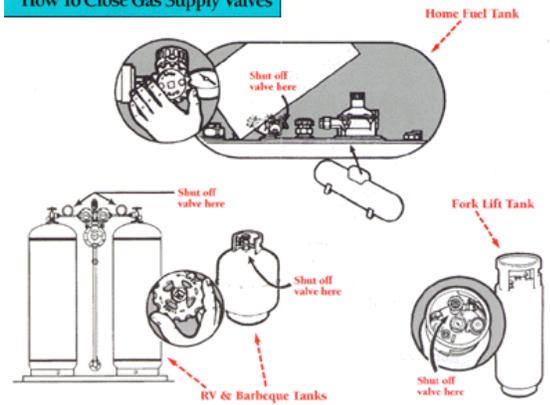
Before you leave for an evacuation:

- Cover your windows with pre-cut plywood or metal storm shutters.
- Bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, grills, and anything else that is not tied down.
- Keep trees and shrubs well-trimmed so they are more wind-resistant.



- ❑ Secure and turn off any outdoor propane tanks you may have.
- ❑ Close all interior doors in your home to help compartmentalize damage.
- ❑ Consider filling the bathtub and other larger containers of water for sanitary purposes and cleaning when you return.
- ❑ Secure or shut off appropriate utilities.
- ❑ Let someone know where you are going and what route you will be taking.
- ❑ Take your emergency kit and this plan.

How To Close Gas Supply Valves



# PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS EMERGENCY SUPPLY CHECKLIST

As discussed in the previous section, you should be prepared to provide your own basic necessities for at least three days during a disaster. Additionally, we need to ensure we make the same preparations for our pets or service animals. **Do not leave your pet behind.**

Make sure to modify this list to suit the needs of your pet(s) and/or service animal(s).  
Food, water, and treats for three (3) days

- Food and water bowl
- Manual can opener
- Proof of vaccination and medical records
- Veterinarian emergency plans and emergency contact information
- Contact information for a veterinarian at your evacuation location
- Certification or documentation for Service Animals
- Current photo of the animal with the owner
- First aid kit
- Extra leash and collar
- Crate, bed, and/or blanket
- Litter, pan and plastic bags
- Toys
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Hilton Head Humane Association

- o <http://www.hhhumane.org/>
- o 843-681-8686

South Carolina Association of Veterinarians

- o [www.scav.org/resources/emergencypreparedness.html](http://www.scav.org/resources/emergencypreparedness.html)
- o 1-800-441-7228

South Carolina Animal Care and Control:

- o <http://scacca.org/>
- o 803-776-7387

Beaufort County Animal Control Office:

- o <http://www.bcgov.net/about-beaufort-county/Public-Safety/animal-control/index.php>
- o 843-846-3905





## **QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**

### **Shelter in Place Emergency Kit**

Prepare a shelter-in-place kit containing the following:

- A battery-operated AM/FM radio with spare batteries
- Flashlight with spare batteries
- Food and bottled water (one gallon per person per day)
- Towels; toys for young children
- First-aid kit and medicine
- Other items essential for your family's survival
- Include food and water for your pets
- Consider sanitary arrangements for your family and pets.

### **Evacuation Supply Kit**

Assemble an Evacuation Supply Kit containing the following:

- Food and water for three days (one gallon per person per day) and/or special dietary foods.
- Toilet articles (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.)
- Prescription medicines, medical equipment and important medical records.
- Clothing for several days.
- Blankets, pillows, and towels (particularly if you may stay at a public shelter).
- Identification and important papers.
- Checkbook, credit card and cash.
- Flashlights with extra batteries, phone chargers and extra phone batteries.
- Baby and/or pet supplies including special food, sanitary items and play items.

### **Other Important Information**

- Have a good road map. Evacuation routes may take you on unfamiliar roads.
- Know how to safely shut off electricity, gas and water supplies at main switches and valves.
- Secure all loose yard items like lawn furniture, BBQ grills, bird baths, trash cans, planters, awnings, etc.
- Move valuable items to inner rooms or upper floors.
- Check your refrigerator and freezer for perishable items.
- Unplug major appliances to avoid damage from lightning strikes or power surges.
- Consider obtaining and pre-drilling plywood to board up windows of your home.

**Do not call 9-1-1 for general information or questions about a disaster/emergency. Emergency workers need these lines open for emergency use. If you need information or have questions that do not involve a criminal, medical or fire emergency immediately threatening your life, call the Hilton Head Island Emergency Management Office at (843) 682-5156.**