



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

# Natural Disasters and Severe Weather

## Natural Disasters, Severe Weather, and COVID-19

Know how the COVID-19 pandemic can affect disaster preparedness and recovery, and what you can do to keep yourself and others safe.

## Hurricanes and COVID-19



Planning for hurricane season and other potential disasters can be stressful, and because the 2020 hurricane season comes during the coronavirus disease 2019 ([COVID-19](#)) pandemic, it may be especially so.

Public health and emergency response professionals have advice to help you safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter for severe storms while protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. Here are some tips to help you and your family stay safe during hurricane season this year.

## Prepare for hurricane season

- Understand that your planning may be different this year because of the need to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
- Give yourself more time than usual to [prepare your emergency food, water, and medicine supplies](#). Home delivery is the safest choice for buying disaster supplies; however, that may not be an option for everyone. If in-person shopping is your only choice, take steps to [protect your and others' health when running essential errands](#).
- Protect yourself and others when filling [prescriptions](#) by limiting in-person visits to the pharmacy. Sign up for mail order delivery or call in your prescription ahead of time and use drive-through windows or curbside pickup, if available.
- Pay attention to local guidance about updated plans for evacuations and shelters, including [shelters for your pets](#).
- When you check on neighbors and friends, be sure to follow [social distancing](#) recommendations (staying at least 6 feet from others) and [other CDC recommendations](#) to protect yourself and others.

## Prepare to evacuate

- If you may need to evacuate, prepare a "go kit" with [personal items](#) you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19, such as hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes (if available) and two cloth face coverings for each person. Face covers should not be used by children under the age of 2. They also should not be used by people having trouble breathing, or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Know a safe place to shelter and have several ways to receive weather alerts, such as National Weather Service [cell phone alerts](#) [📱](#), [NOAA Weather Radio](#) [📻](#), or (@NWS) Twitter alerts.
- Find out if your local public shelter is open, in case you need to evacuate your home and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- If you need to go to a disaster shelter, follow CDC recommendations for staying safe and healthy in a [public disaster shelter](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Follow guidance from your local public health or emergency management officials on when and where to shelter.
- [Make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pets](#). Find out if your disaster shelter will accept pets. Typically, when shelters accommodate pets, the pets are housed in a separate area from people.
- Follow [safety precautions when using transportation](#) to evacuate. If you have to travel away from your community to evacuate, follow [safety precautions for travelers](#) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

## Staying with friends or family

If you will be staying with friends or family outside your household to evacuate from the storm:

- Talk to the people you plan to stay with about how you can all best protect yourselves from COVID-19.
- Consider if either of your households has someone who is at [higher risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19](#), including older adults or people of any age who have underlying medical conditions. Make sure everyone knows what they can do to keep them safe from COVID-19.
- Follow [everyday preventive actions](#), including covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Consider taking extra [precautions for people living in close quarters](#).
- Know what to do if someone in your family or in the household you are staying with becomes sick with COVID-19. Take steps to [keep your pets safe](#).

## Stay safe after a hurricane

In addition to following guidance for staying safe and healthy [after a hurricane](#), note that:

- You should continue to follow [preventive actions](#) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, like washing your hands and wearing a [cloth face covering](#) during cleanup or when returning home.
- It may take longer than usual to restore power and water if they are out. Take [steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning](#) if you use a generator.
- If you are injured or ill, contact your medical provider for treatment recommendations. [Keep wounds clean](#) to prevent infection. Remember, accessing medical care may be more difficult than usual during the pandemic.
- Dealing with disasters can cause stress and strong emotions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is natural to feel anxiety, grief, and worry. [Coping with these feelings and getting help](#) when you need it will help you, your family, and your community recover.
- People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) [↗](#) page.
- After a hurricane, it's not unusual for rats, mice, and other pests to try to get into your home or building. Be aware that with restaurant and commercial closures related to COVID-19, there are already reports of [increased rodent activity](#) as they try to seek other sources of food. Follow recommendations for [keeping pests out of your home](#).

## For more information

- [CDC: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [CDC: Prepare your health for the 2020 hurricane season](#)
- [National Weather Service: Prepare for Hurricane Season 2020](#) [↗](#)
- [gov: Hurricanes](#) [↗](#)