

Force Readiness Command Hurricane Preparedness Family Guide 2026





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EVACUATION OF COAST GUARD PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS FOR HURRICANES

Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30. This is the most likely time for hurricanes to develop in the Atlantic Ocean. North Carolina is most at risk later in the season when the waters off our coast have warmed up sufficiently to support a hurricane, although we have seen hurricanes here as early as June and as late as December.



Hurricanes are dangerous storms. The impact of each storm is unique and dependent, among other things, on wind speed, direction and speed of movement, height of tide at impact, and location of impact. Flooding may be sporadic, based not only on the storm itself, but also any storms that may have preceded a hurricane that could have saturated the soil. Wind and flood damage can be much more dangerous on the northeast quadrant of a

storm than on the southwest quadrant of the very same storm. Do not assume that you are not at risk from the next hurricane because your house survived previous hurricanes.

The safety and protection of Coast Guard personnel and their families is of paramount concern during preparations for an approaching hurricane. If an evacuation is authorized, Force Readiness Command assists in facilitating the evacuation of Coast Guard personnel and dependents.

Although unit evacuations and cost reimbursement occur at the direction of the Coast Guard District Commander, it is paramount that you heed the warnings of local emergency management officials for the safety of yourself and your family. An evacuation that is authorized by local authorities is likely to be supported by the District Commander, and therefore subject to cost reimbursement.

HURRICANE TERMINOLOGY







Be informed and know hurricane terminology:

TROPICAL STORM WATCH – A tropical storm watch is issued when tropical storm conditions, including winds from 39 to 73 mph, pose a possible threat to a specified area within 48 hours.

TROPICAL STORM WARNING – A tropical storm warning is issued when tropical storm conditions are expected to affect a specified area within 36 hours or less.

HURRICANE WATCH – A hurricane watch is issued for a specified area when hurricane conditions, including sustained winds of 74 mph or greater, are possible within 48 hours.

HURRICANE WARNING – A hurricane warning is issued for a specified area when hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hours. In coastal or near-coastal areas, a hurricane warning can remain in effect when dangerously high water, or a combination of dangerously high water and exceptionally high waves, continues, even though the winds may have subsided below hurricane intensity.

<p>TROPICAL STORM Winds: 39-73 mph Wind Effects: Scattered trees down, scattered power outages, some roads blocked due to downed trees and power lines. <i>For example, neighborhoods could lose power for several days.</i></p>	
<p>SAFFIR-SIMPSON HURRICANE WIND SCALE</p>	
<p>CATEGORY 1 Winds: 74-95 mph Wind Effects: Damage to mobile and some frame-constructed homes. Numerous trees down and widespread power outages. Roads blocked due to downed trees and power lines. Loose outdoor items will become airborne projectiles. <i>For example, an area as large as a county could experience near total power loss.</i></p>	
<p>CATEGORY 2 Winds: 96-110 mph Wind Effects: Severe damage to the majority of mobile and frame-constructed homes. Many trees down. Well-constructed homes will have damage to shingles, siding and gutters. Extensive damage to power lines and widespread power outages. Airborne debris could injure or kill. Damage could extend well inland. <i>For example, multiple localities could experience near total loss of power and water for several days or weeks.</i></p>	
<p>CATEGORY 3 Winds: 111-130 mph Wind Effects: Nearly all mobile homes destroyed. Severe damage to most homes, including structural collapse. Airborne debris will injure or kill. Severe damage to most low-rise apartment buildings with partial roof and wall failure. Damage could extend well inland. <i>For example, large portions of the affected area could experience total power and water loss for more than a week.</i></p>	
<p>CATEGORY 4 Winds: 131- 155 mph Wind Effects: Catastrophic damage to residential structures. Most of the affected area will be uninhabitable for weeks or longer. Nearly all industrial buildings and low-rise apartment buildings severely damaged or destroyed. Nearly all trees and power poles downed. Damage could extend well inland. <i>For example, large portions of the affected area will experience total power and water loss for weeks and possibly months.</i></p>	
<p>CATEGORY 5 Winds: 156+ mph Wind Effects: Similar to Category 4.</p>	

EVACUATION ELIGIBILITY

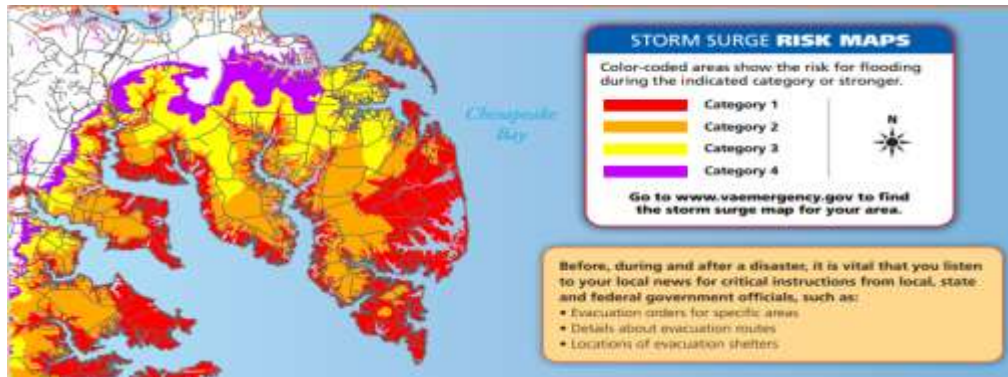
The following personnel are eligible for the evacuation entitlement once the authorization has been released by proper CG authority via message traffic:

- Active-Duty personnel (includes Reservists performing Active Duty of 30 days or more)
 - Civilian Employees
 - Dependents of Active Duty and Civilian Employees
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WHAT SHOULD I DO TODAY?

There are several steps that you can accomplish immediately to help you prepare for the hurricane season and ease the burden on your family in the event of an evacuation. For more information, visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency's website www.ready.gov.

1. **Determine your flood zone** – It is important to know your flood zone location as it helps you understand flood insurance rates and consider flood-proofing options. Flood maps show your risk of flooding and include your flood zone, floodplain boundaries, and base flood elevation. [FEMA Flood Map Service Center | Search By Address](#)
2. **Call your insurance company** – Flood insurance, homeowners' insurance, and renters insurance differ from state to state. Call your insurance provider to discuss your coverage annually. **IF YOU DON'T HAVE INSURANCE, GET IT!** If you are a renter, the homeowner's insurance plan likely does not cover your belongings; look into renter's



insurance to cover your belongings. Also, inventory your property and take pictures of valuables to ease the claim process in the event of loss or damages.

3. **Save some money** – Later in this guide we will discuss how you are reimbursed for evacuation expenses; however, you will need to be able to pay these costs upfront. Plan on having room in your budget or on your credit card to pay for a few nights in a hotel, and a few days of meals.
 4. **Prepare a disaster kit** – Go to [Build A Kit | Ready.gov](#) for information on how to prepare a disaster kit. Not all emergencies provide advance notice like a hurricane, so make sure you have a kit ready with flashlights, water, and other critical supplies.
 5. **Update your contact information** – FORCECOM's Business Administration Branch (FC-Ba) keeps track of your emergency contact data in CGPAAS. Talk with your spouse and make sure they updated your contact data on the unit's recall roster.
 6. **Update ETS profile** – Add/update your dependent information on your ETS profile.
 7. **Ensure your GTCC is Current**– Authorized members and employees can use their GTCC for evacuation expenses. Be sure you know where your card is located.
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WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN A STORM APPROACHES?

You have limited time to prepare as a storm approaches. Your spouse may be unable to assist at home due to response operations at work. You can take these steps to prepare:

1. Prepare your home. Turn off electrical appliances and unplug what you can. Shut off water and gas if emergency officials instruct you to do so. (You will need a professional to turn water and gas back on.) Secure outdoor furniture or anything on your property that could become airborne during high winds.
2. Review your Evacuation Plan with your family. Determine a likely hotel or shelter for evacuation. The pre-designated evacuation location for FORCECOM units in Hampton Roads is Richmond, Raleigh, NC, Charlotte, NC, or as directed by the FORCECOM Commander. This may change according to a particular storm's characteristics and granted authority.
3. Check up on your disaster kit and purchase any needed items or replacement batteries, etc. Stock up on water and non-perishable food, particularly if you have children and pets. Aim to have at least 3 days' worth of supplies.
4. Secure your home, close storm shutters and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors. Protect windows and glass by drawing drapes and boarding up windows.
5. Move boats and trailers closer to the house.
6. Store valuables in a watertight container and place in a high point in your home in case flooding occurs.
7. Fill the car with gas.
8. Be ready to evacuate if directed by local authorities.
9. Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
10. Listen to the radio or TV for more information and further instructions.
11. Ensure a supply of water for household purposes.
12. Leave early. An evacuation will increase traffic on evacuation routes, and your trip will take longer than usual. Be prepared for delays. The sooner you leave, the sooner you will get to your destination and out of harm's way. You also will spend less time in traffic.



EVACUATE OR NOT TO EVACUATE?

You **SHOULD** evacuate to a safe location under the following conditions:

- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure-such shelters are particularly hazardous during a hurricane no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- If you live in a high-rise building-hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an island waterway.

If you are **NOT** authorized to evacuate:

- Stay tuned to emergency stations on TV or radio.
- Listen for further instructions.
- Stay away from windows and doors by seeking shelter in a bathroom or basement.
- Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or neighbor's home if your home is damaged.
- Do not go outside until instructed to do so even if the storm is over and it seems calm. When the eye of the hurricane passes, it is calm for a while but does not remain that way.
- Once you are in a safe place, muster with your command if you are military or civilian personnel or a member of the selective reserves.

If you choose to Shelter in Place:

- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information or resources.
 - Pay attention to local media outlets for official news and instructions as they become available.
 - Bring your family and pets inside.
 - Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
 - Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
 - Take your emergency supply kit unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
 - Go into an interior room with few windows if possible.
 - Seal all windows, doors and air vents with thick plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time.
 - Cut the plastic sheeting several inches wider than the openings and label each sheet.
 - Duct tape plastic at corners first and then tape down all edges.
 - Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.
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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM DIRECTED TO EVACUATE?

1. Know where you are going and leave early. Evacuate in daylight, if possible, with a full tank of gas. Listen to your car radio for additional emergency information or evacuation routing problems.
2. Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going and maintain communications with them with updates as to your welfare.
3. Secure your home by unplugging appliances, turning off electricity, secure gas and locking all doors.
4. Take only your most valuable possessions with you; otherwise place them in high points away from flooding within your home. If time permits, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding or move it to a higher floor.
5. Bring pre-assembled emergency supplies and warm protective clothing. If staying at a local shelter, take blankets and sleeping bags.
6. Follow the designated evacuation plan and expect a high volume of traffic Do not walk in moving water. Do not drive in high water.

WHAT IF I LIVE IN COAST GUARD HOUSING?

There will be no forced evacuations from homes owned or leased on the economy. However, families residing in government owned or leased housing will be required to evacuate if the order is issued. Military personnel can also be ordered to evacuate. A military member may evacuate elsewhere if he/she takes annual leave, which is subject to the approval of the Chief of Staff at FORCECOM.

For those occupying government owned or leased housing, the Coast Guard provides up to \$40,000 gratuitous payment of damage you might suffer to property. This coverage is ONLY available for those families either in Coast Guard owned or leased housing. Please remember that your possessions might be worth more than that amount, and it still is wise to have renter's insurance to cover damage above that amount or under other circumstances.

EVACUATION TO A SHELTER

Another option you and your family have is evacuation to a local shelter. If you must

evacuate, but you don't want to drive out of the area (or can't), there are many shelters in the area that will open in the event of a hurricane. Shelters may be used when large- scale evacuations are not officially ordered or as an alternative to evacuation. It is important to note that shelters do not open or close at the same time. Monitor TV, Radio, and County web sites for locations of local shelters that will be open in the event of a hurricane.

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY PETS?

Before deciding on a hotel, determine if they accept pets. Most hotels charge pet fees. You will not be permitted to claim this fee on your evacuation travel claim so be prudent when you shop for a hotel that allows pets. Many internet search engines can be used to determine if a hotel accepts pets.

Don't forget to include pet food and water in your Family Go-Kit. You will not be allowed to bring your pets to public shelters. Plan with your veterinarian, humane society, or private shelter outside the normal hurricane impact areas. Your military spouse should include pet information on the hurricane recall roster at his/her unit.

If you have a pet, you may want to find a kennel instead of keeping them with you. It is important that you don't forget to make special arrangements and plans for a place that will safely house, feed, and care for your pets.

IF YOU STAY AT HOME

- Stay indoors within an inner room on the lowest level away from doors and windows. Do not go out in the brief calm during passage of the hurricane eye. The lull sometimes ends suddenly, and winds return from the opposite direction. Winds can increase in seconds to 75 mph or more.
 - Stay away from windows and glass doors; move furniture away from exposed doors and windows.
 - Keep a continuous watch on communications: keep radio or television tuned to receive information from official sources. Unexpected changes can sometimes call for last minute relocations.
 - Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light.
 - If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is
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- restored.
- Protect your property from damage without taking any unnecessary risks. Temporary repairs may reduce further losses from wind and water but *be careful!*

AFTER THE HURRICANE

1. Listen to news reports to make sure water supplies are not contaminated.
 2. Avoid flood waters, standing or moving, as they may be contaminated or deeper than expected.
 3. Beware of downed power lines.
 4. Avoid any roads where flood waters have receded as they may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
 5. Be extremely cautious when entering buildings and homes as there may be unseen damage.
 6. Clean and disinfect everything that was touched by flood water, as it can contain sewage and other contaminants.
- 1.** After a declared emergency, register your needs with the Coast Guard through the Coast Guard Personnel Accountability System (CGPAAS) at [Coast Guard Personnel Accountability and Assessment System \(CGPAAS\) \(uscg.mil\)](https://uscg.mil).

WHEN TO RETURN

If you evacuated, delay your return until authorized or when recommended by local authorities or the District Commander. Telephone services within the evacuation zone may be overloaded or non-existent for an extended period.

Beware of outside hazards and watch out for loose or dangling power lines. Walk or drive cautiously as debris-filled streets are dangerous; washouts may weaken roads and bridge structures that may collapse under vehicle weight. Guard against spoiled food; food may spoil if refrigerator power is off for more than a few hours. Use your emergency supply or boil water

before drinking until officials declare the water safe.

HOW DO I GET REIMBURSED AFTER A STORM?

Coast Guard personnel and dependents will be eligible for reimbursement for the expenses associated with an evacuation (e.g., travel, lodging and per diem). The Coast Guard will reimburse dependents for expenses related to an evacuation the following conditions exist: *The evacuation of relocation was caused by an unusual or emergency circumstances such as a natural or national disaster; and, the Fifth District Commander, in Portsmouth VA, will be the authorizes the evacuation.*

Whether the military member evacuates with his/her dependents depends on Command requirements. Military personnel are issued TDY orders, while dependents are separately issued evacuation orders. With or without the military member, dependents will be reimbursed for travel, lodging, and meals.

Some families choose to make separate evacuation arrangements and stay with family or friends. Please understand that these options may increase your expenses and are not reimbursable. If you stay with relatives or friends, CO designated location, or another location of your choosing, you will not be reimbursed for lodging, but you are eligible to be reimbursement of meals and mileage.

Reimbursement for mileage will only be provided for travel from your home to the authorized safe haven location and return. The maximum reimbursement you receive for lodging and meals cannot exceed the daily rates for the designated safe haven. Remember to save all your hotel and toll receipts. Understand that the entitlement to evacuation orders will end if you depart the evacuation location.

Travel orders and travel claims will normally be completed upon the return to the home unit; however, if the duration of the evacuation is longer than a week, the Personnel Support Team (PST) will be set-up to process travel claims to reduce the overall financial burden that may be placed upon member and dependents. This will be completed in a systematic way. Active Duty, their dependents, and civilian personnel will file their travel claim electronically in ETS.

Notes:

- If you evacuate to somewhere other than the designated safe haven, you will be reimbursed for your lodging at standard rate for meals and incidentals. If the area you go to has higher lodging, meals, and incidentals costs than the standard rate, you will
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have greater unreimbursed expenses.

- If you stay with relatives or friends, you cannot be reimbursed for lodging, but you can be reimbursed for meals and incidental expenses, and mileage. Again, if you are not at the designated area, your reimbursement cannot exceed the standard per diem rate.

RESOURCES

FEDERAL

CSU Seasonal Hurricane Forecast- 2026 Atlantic seasonal hurricane activity.

<https://tropical.colostate.edu/forecasting.html>

Ready Campaign (www.ready.gov) - Information, checklists, and printable forms to educate and empower Americans to prepare for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. Sponsored by DHS.

- *People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs* ([Build A Kit | Ready.gov](#)) provides information and an instructional video.

American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) - Preparedness guides and information for home, school, work, and community.

- *All Disaster Types* provides specific guidance for the range of natural and manmade disasters.
- *Safe and Well List* ([Disaster Relief Services | American Red Cross](#)) provides a way for disaster victims to communicate with family members about their well-being.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) - CDC is the principal federal agency for protecting the health and safety of all Americans (under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

- *Emergency Preparedness & Response* ([Hurricanes and Other Tropical Storms | CDC](#)) provides information on agents, diseases, and other threats.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov/plan) - FEMA's "Plan Ahead" site offers information on the range of natural and manmade disasters and guidance for protecting your family and property.

- *Are You Ready* ([Hurricane Planning and Response | FEMA.gov](#)) is a comprehensive online resource on individual, family and community preparedness.

LOCAL

Virginia Department of Health [Hurricane Preparedness - Newsroom \(virginia.gov\)](#) - Information, checklists and printable forms to educate and empower Virginia Residents to prepare for emergencies, including natural disasters.

Virginia Department of Emergency Management Hurricanes | VDEM (vaemergency.gov) - Protecting the lives and property of Virginia's citizens from emergencies and disasters by coordinating the state's emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. You can also check your local city website for additional information concerning hurricanes and their projected / likely impacts.

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT LIST

Put these essentials in your kit:

- Food that won't spoil, such as canned goods and packaged foods. Remember special dietary needs for those with medical or functional needs.
- Water, one gallon per person per day. Have extra water for those with functional or medical needs, children, and nursing mothers.
- A working battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- A written family emergency plan for your family and/or your support system

Once you have the essentials, add:

- Flashlights and extra batteries
- First-aid kit and extra contact lenses or glasses
- A written list of your prescriptions, allergies, and prescribing doctor(s) and at least a week's supply of medications
- Sanitation supplies: toilet paper, soap, plastic garbage bags and personal hygiene items
- Change of clothing, sturdy shoes.
- Blanket or sleeping bag, pillows, sheets.
- Manual can opener for food
- Whistle to signal for help
- Local maps
- Copies of important family documents, such as insurance policies, identification, and bank account records, in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash in small denominations, traveler's checks, and change
- Emergency reference material, such as a first-aid book
- Matches in a waterproof container.

- Paper cups, plates and plastic knives, forks and spoons, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children
- Baby formula, diapers, bottles, medications, etc.
- Those with medical or functional needs may need extra prescription medications and medical supplies (2-week supply), tools and/or extra batteries for their medical durable equipment (walkers, wheelchairs, communication devices, glasses, hearing aids etc.). Copies of important documents like medical records, health insurance cards, alert tags, contact information for their support system / personal attendants / doctors and prescriptions are important to remember.

Supplies for your pet or service animal:

- Medications, immunization records and a first-aid kit
 - Sturdy leashes, muzzles, harnesses
 - Carriers or cages to transport pets safely. Carriers should be large enough for your pet to stand comfortably, turn around and lie down. Include blankets or towels for bedding and warmth.
 - Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
 - Food, drinking water, bowls, cat litter/pan and can opener.
 - Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems and the name and number of your veterinarian
 - Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable
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