

Riding Out the Storm

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Most Emergency Managers agree that if you are in a well built home and not in an evacuation zone the best option is often to secure your residence and ride out the storm. Residents who live in mobile homes or in a storm surge area should always evacuate to a public shelter or stay with relatives or friends. If you are elderly or have special needs or health concerns then you should also evacuate. The Special Needs Shelter for Port St. Lucie residents is located at the community center but you will need to pre-register with St. Lucie County Department of Health. Please refer to the special needs section of this pamphlet. If you are concerned with the structural integrity of your house then you should evacuate or seek public shelter.



When is it time to Evacuate?

When officials at the Emergency Operations Center give notification that conditions have escalated and it is time to evacuate particular areas!

How will you know?

Many Ways!

- Notified through the "Reverse 911" call system
- Police Patrol cars with their "Public Announcement" systems
- Commercial radio and TV stations
- Door to door warnings from local emergency officials
- Your neighbors
- Your own good judgment
- NOAA Weather and All Hazards radio

Reminder:

Only stay at home if you have not been ordered to leave. If you have been told to leave, do so immediately.

In Port St. Lucie, certain sections of Westmoreland Boulevard, Morningside Boulevard, Ballantrae and Tesoro (please refer to the evacuation map section) are prone to flooding from a storm surge and residents in these areas need to have a well thought out evacuation plan. Remember flooding from a storm surge is caused by heavy rainfall as well as wind and can occur several miles inland from the coast.

If you plan to evacuate remember heavy traffic will add several hours to your travel time. Be sure to leave early so you don't become trapped in your car as the storm approaches. Prepare an evacuation kit early and have it ready for when you need it.

I'm Staying. Now What?

- Fill bathtub and large containers for sanitary purposes.
- Fill sterilized containers with water for a two week supply of drinking water.
- Turn refrigerator and freezers to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- Stay inside a well constructed building.
- Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway.
- Take a battery powered radio and a flashlight with you.
- Close all interior doors. Secure and brace exterior doors, particularly double inward opening doors and garage doors.
- If in a two story house, go to an interior first floor room, such as bathroom, closet or under the stairs.
- Keep a full tank of gas.
- Be alert for tornadoes which often are spawned by hurricanes.
- If the "EYE" of the hurricane passes over your area, be aware that the improved weather conditions are temporary and that the storm conditions will return with the winds coming from the opposite direction sometimes in a matter of just a few minutes.

If you:

- Are in a multiple story building and away from the water, go to the first or second floors and take refuge in the halls or other interior rooms away from windows.
- Interior stairwells and areas around elevator shafts are generally the strongest part of the building.