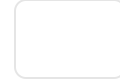


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# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



## See Related Pages

In the event of a disaster, you and your loved ones need a plan. In order to make an informed decision, you need to know your options. So, what are your options?

## Sheltering Options

- **Stay Home** – Before you choose this option, make sure you know your elevation. If we experience a storm that may put significant flooding in your home, you need to look at the other options. Also, people in manufactured and mobile homes cannot use this option. Mobile homes and manufactured homes are not built to withstand the high winds associated with tropical storms and hurricanes.
- **Stay With a Friend or Relative Who has a Safe Place** – If this is your plan, make arrangements in advance. You need to make sure that where you are going is safe. It defeats the purpose of evacuating if you go to an unsafe place.
- **Relocate Out of the Area** – You may wish to travel out of harms way. Be sure to take a road map and make sure that your car is full of fuel. Stay away from major bodies of water. Make arrangements in advance if you can. If you decide to use this option, go early. Traffic will be heavy if you leave at the last minute, so you may not make it to your destination
- **Emergency Public Shelters** – For more information on emergency shelters, finding storm shelters/finding hurricane shelters, and a list of available public shelters, including special needs shelters, please visit the [emergency shelters page](#). [Emergency Public Shelters](#) should always be the option of last resort.



## Seven Day Survival Kit

To prepare for a disaster, you should plan to be self-sufficient for at least seven days during and after a disaster. You should anticipate no water, electrical power or utilities for that period of time.

[SEVEN DAY HURRICANE SUPPLY >](#)

## Business Continuity

Businesses can do much to prepare for the impact of the many hazards they face in today's world including natural hazards like floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and widespread serious illness, such as the COVID pandemic.

FEMA's Ready Business will assist you in developing a preparedness program by providing tools to create a plan that addresses the impact of many hazards. More information can be found at [ready.gov/business](https://ready.gov/business).

## Sandbag Information



01:16

Sandbags will redirect storm water and debris flows away from homes and other structures, provided the sandbags are properly filled and maintained. Sandbags usually last for only one year. Consult your local environmental protection department before disposing of used sandbags. Sandbags exposed to contaminated floodwaters may pose an environmental hazard and require special handling.

Polk's sandbag fill sites and hours will be announced prior to emergency events.

## Sandbagging Your Home

Sandbag protection for your property could significantly aid in the reduction/mitigation of water damage during/after a storm; however, sandbagging must be done correctly in order to be effective. The following are procedural suggestions for properly sandbagging your home:



- If not working on concrete, a small ditch should be dug deep enough to go below ground level. The ditch should be back far enough from the entrance to allow room to place pumps into the protected area.
- The edge of your waterproof plastic sheeting should be placed in the ditch as a bottom layer.
- Place the first row of sandbags in the ditch, fold the plastic sheeting over the top of the first row, place a second row of bags on top, fold the plastic sheet back over that row, place a third row of bags on top, and so on. This creates an “S” pattern with the plastic sheeting.
- Depending on the size of the barrier, one or more submersible (sump) pumps should be utilized. The barrier will not completely stop water from entering the protected area; however, with the proper placement of bags, plastic sheeting and sump pumps, water, in most cases can be removed quickly.

## Keep in Mind

- Caution should be used when cutting plastic sheeting.
- Always get someone to help you fill sandbags and be sure to use the proper lifting techniques to avoid injury.
- Stack the sandbags at least three rows high to ensure proper coverage.
- When placing sandbags, be sure to leave space between the bags and the area being barricaded. This will allow room for the sump pump to drain seepage.
- Please remember that sandbagging does not completely eliminate the flow of water.
- Always use caution when dealing with electrical equipment in or near flooded areas, e.g., submersible pump.

## Display your House Numbers Properly

Posting the address numbers on the outside of your home correctly could prevent a delayed response by emergency services and could potentially save the lives of you and your family.



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## Resources

[FLORIDA DIV. OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT >](#)

[FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT >](#)

### Important Contact Numbers

Agency	Phone	Website
American Red Cross	<a href="tel:(863)294-5941">(863) 294-5941</a>	<a href="#">Red Cross</a>
United Way Information Referral Service - text your zip code to 898-211 or dial 2-1-1	<a href="tel:(888)370-7188">(888) 370-7188</a>	<a href="#">United Way of Central Florida</a>
Polk County Animal Services	<a href="tel:(863)499-2600">(863) 499-2600</a>	<a href="#">PCSO Animal Services</a>
Polk County Fire Rescue (Fire/EMS)	<a href="tel:(863)519-7350">(863) 519-7350</a>	<a href="#">Polk County Fire Rescue (Fire/EMS)</a>
EMERGENCIES ONLY (Police / Fire / Ambulance)	<a href="tel:911">911</a>	N/A





**Northeast Government Center**

200 Government Center Boulevard  
Lake Alfred, FL 33850  
Phone: (863) 534-4000

**Board of County Commissioners**

330 W. Church Street  
Bartow, FL 33830  
Main: (863) 534-6000  
(TDD): (863) 534-7777  
Toll Free: (800) 780-5346

Clerk of Courts

Supervisor of Elections

Polk County Sheriff

Property Appraiser

Tax Collector

Public Record Request

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