

Emergency shelter FACTS

Many shelters in Virginia operate under a system developed by the American Red Cross. Shelter management and staffing may include municipal, social services and school employees as well as Red Cross volunteers.

Each locality has a list of facilities that may be used as emergency shelters. When a hurricane threatens, turn to your local radio or TV station for information about local shelter openings and locations.

Public shelters:

- Provide emergency, short-term shelter to the general public.
- Shelters meet state building codes and provide a place for people who must leave hazardous areas. All shelters in the path of a hurricane are subject to high winds.

Shelters may not be able to provide adequate supplies of food, water and bedding, so individuals coming to shelters should bring the following items to support their stay:

- Pillows, blankets, sleeping bags or air mattresses
- Extra clothing, shoes, eyeglasses, etc.
- Folding chairs, lawn chairs or cots
- Personal hygiene supplies
- Flashlights and batteries
- Quiet games, books and favorite toys
- Important papers
- Prescription medications
- Do not bring alcohol and fire arms

Pets are not allowed in public shelters. Call your veterinarian or local emergency manager for options in your area that include kennels or an animal shelter. Service animals are permitted to be with their owners in public shelters.

Shelters provide basic first aid only. Those recently discharged from hospitals, individuals receiving home health care or people with medical needs must contact their physician or home health care provider for instructions in the event of evacuation.

Do I Stay or Do I Go?

One of the most important decisions you will have to make is whether to stay and shelter in place or evacuate.

If you stay:

- Make sure your home is well prepared. Trim trees now and obtain supplies to cover windows, secure sliding glass doors and to reinforce garage doors. Make sure you have sufficient supplies to survive on your own for up to two weeks.
- High winds and tornadoes are associated with hurricane systems. Identify a safe room or area on the first floor of your home. This is usually an interior room or space away from doors and windows. Often bathrooms, central hallways, closets or areas under stairwells provide the best locations for protection. Be sure to keep flashlights, pillows and blankets with you.

If you go:

- Know in advance if you are in an evacuation zone and for what category of storm.
- If you must evacuate, plan in advance where you will go, where you will shelter, how you will get there, and what you must take with you.
- Have your supply kits ready to go at a moment's notice.
- Share your plan with family and friends and designate a contact person outside the area.
- Leave as early as possible.
- Top off your gas tank.
- Take cash in case ATMs are not working.

Children not immune to disaster stress

Children are particularly vulnerable to stress as a result of hurricanes and other disasters. Include them as much as possible when developing your family plan. This instills confidence in your actions and relieves their anxiety. If you are evacuating, make sure your children have their own disaster kits which should include clothing, a favorite toy and their own flashlight.

In the aftermath of a hurricane, it is difficult for everyone to cope with the changes in the environment, the disruptions to normal life and the loss of a sense of normalcy. Reassure your children that this will not last and that many people are working around-the-clock to help the community return to normal.

Be alert for signs of trouble and know how to respond.

For children ages five or younger, watch for the following behaviors: crying more frequently than usual, clinging, having nightmares, showing excessive fear of the dark, fear of animals, fear of being alone, changing appetites, speaking with difficulty or returning to outgrown behaviors such as bed-wetting or thumb-sucking.



Children ages five to 11 may exhibit increased irritability, aggression, and competition with their siblings for parental attention. They may also show anxiety through whining, withdrawing from their peers and losing interest in normal activities.

Those 11 to 18 may show outright rebellion, physical problems or sleep disturbances.

Children's mental health specialists offer several suggestions to help you and your child weather the aftermath of a hurricane.

Spend some time each day giving each child your undivided attention, even if just for a few minutes. Share experiences; reaffirm your love; make plans together; and just "be there" for each other.

Encourage them to talk.

Encourage children to describe what they are feeling. Let them talk about the disaster and ask as many questions as they like. Listen to what they say. Assure them that the disaster was an act of nature and not caused by them. Include the entire family in the discussion if possible.

Understand their fears. It is important that parents accept anxieties as being very real to children. Help them cope by getting them to understand what

causes their anxieties and fears. Recognize their losses, such as their pets, favorite toys and other personal items. Reassure them that everything will be all right.

Inform children. Every effort should be made to keep children informed about what is happening. Explanations should be in simple language. With children five or older, rehearse safety measures for use in case of future disasters.

Reassure them. Parents can help reassure children by telling them they are safe, holding and hugging them frequently, restoring normal routines, providing play experiences for them, and making bedtime a special moment of calm and comfort.

Encourage activities with their peers. As with adults, social time with friends is a very important part of the recovery process.

Temporarily lower expectations for them. Allow for the fact that stress from the disaster can show itself in many ways over a period of time, and make appropriate allowances.

Take advantage of opportunities to point out to your child the various people in your neighborhood and community helping with the recovery including power repair crews, police and fire, tree trimmers, debris haulers, etc.

Through your example, children will realize life will eventually return to normal. If a child does not respond to the above suggestions, seek help for them from a mental health professional.

Courtesy of FEMA

Do You Know Where To Turn To When You Need Emergency Information?



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like Frank Sinatra, Glenn Miller, Elvis and so many more...

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- www.jccEgov.com
- JCC TV48 on Cox Cable
- Emergency Hotline, 875-2424
- Local newspapers

Get ready, get set... hurricane



Emergency
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TV
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