

Evacuating During Hurricanes

Findings from an Online Survey (2023)

Background

Planning and preparing communities for hurricanes and other natural disasters can be stressful and complex. In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted [two online surveys](#) to assess people's attitudes and behaviors related to going to a disaster shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, CDC conducted an additional [online survey](#) on sheltering for disasters. In 2023, CDC followed up with another online survey to monitor people's attitudes and behaviors related to evacuation for disasters.



YouGov Survey Methodology

In January and February 2023, CDC surveyed 3,000 adults living in coastal counties in eight states along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts that have recently experienced multiple hurricanes: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Findings



Evacuations

17% of respondents reported **evacuating at least one time** in response to a hurricane during the 2021 or 2022 hurricane seasons. The most commonly reported evacuation location was **friends, family, or a second home (57%)**, followed by going to a **hotel or motel (40%)**; **8%** evacuated to a disaster **shelter**. These top evacuation locations are similar to results from the 2022 online survey.

Respondents were asked if they planned to evacuate in 2023 if there is a hurricane evacuation order issued in their area. **17%** said they **would always evacuate** and **33%** said they would evacuate if the hurricane were a **category 3 or higher**.

Barriers to Evacuation

Of respondents who did not evacuate for any hurricane during 2021 or 2022, **22%** had an evacuation request but **did not feel the need to evacuate**. Additionally, some respondents indicated that they could not evacuate because it was **too expensive (9%)** and that they **could not evacuate because of pets (9%)**.

46% of respondents are **aware of their area's current COVID-19 community levels**. Of all respondents, 21% indicated they **would not evacuate** if their area's COVID-19 community levels were high.

Concerns About Evacuating

People had the following **top concerns** about evacuating:

- Lack of certainty in weather predictions (31%)
- Too expensive to evacuate (31%)
- Concern about traffic jams (24%)
- Concern about leaving pets (24%)
- Inconvenient to evacuate (22%)



Reasons Why People Would Go to a Shelter Instead of Staying Home

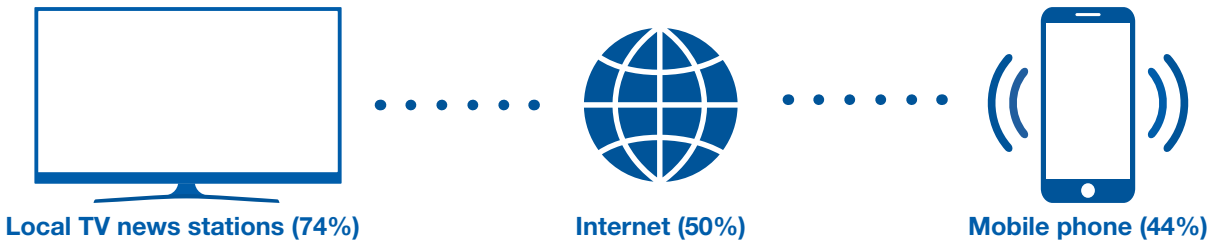


The top reasons that impact whether people **evacuate instead of staying home** were the following:

- Concerned about personal safety at home because of the storm (69%)
- Losing electricity at home (49%)
- Flooding at home (44%)
- Not having enough food and water (33%)
- No access to medical care at home (20%)

Methods of Communication

These were the top sources of communication:



Additionally, 88% reported receiving emergency alerts. Of those, most (80%) received text alerts.

Emergency Plans

Among respondents, **55%** have prepared an **emergency supply kit**. Additionally, **46%** have an **emergency evacuation plan**. This is higher than the percentage of respondents in the 2022 online survey who reported they currently have an emergency plan (38%).

The top components of respondents' emergency evacuation plan include:

- Stored copies of important documents in a safe location (56%)
- Multiple evacuation routes away from home (55%)
- Emergency communication plan (51%)

Related Resources

- » Sheltering During Hurricanes https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/disaster/sheltering-during_hurricanes.html
- » Sheltering During the COVID-19 Pandemic <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/disaster/sheltering-covid19-pandemic.html>
- » CDC Interim Guidance for General Population Disaster Shelters During the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://www.cdc.gov/view/cdc/95002>
- » Hurricanes and Other Tropical Storms: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes>