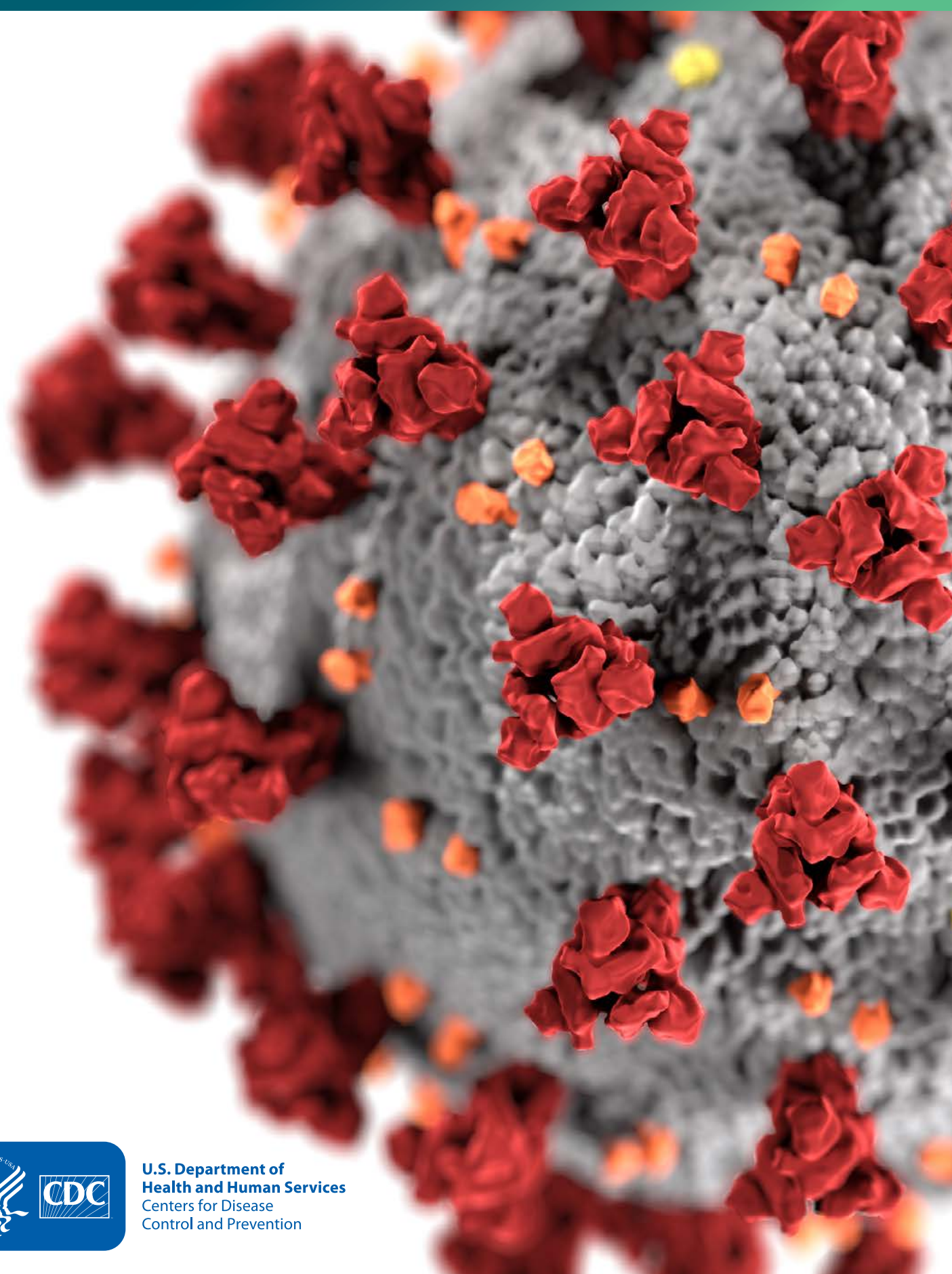


# HURRICANE KEY MESSAGES: COVID-19 ANNEX

## Preparing for Hurricanes During the COVID-19 Pandemic



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

---

## BACKGROUND

Planning for hurricane season and other potential disasters can be stressful, and because the 2020 hurricane season comes during the coronavirus disease 2019 ([COVID-19](#)) pandemic, it may be especially so.

CDC has prepared public messaging to help people safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter for severe storms while protecting themselves and others from COVID-19. These messages are based on a collaboration between natural disaster and COVID-19 subject matter experts.

Public health and emergency management partners can add these public messages as a resource to their communication plans that address hazards expected from extreme weather involving strong wind and high water. Partners can also use these messages to develop products with protective information for diverse audiences before, during, and after a hurricane, flood, or similar disaster.

---

## PUBLIC MESSAGING

---

### Prepare for hurricane season

- Understand that your planning may be different this year because of the need to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
- Give yourself more time than usual to [prepare your emergency food, water, and medicine supplies](#). Home delivery is the safest choice for buying disaster supplies; however, that may not be an option for everyone. If in-person shopping is your only choice, take steps to [protect your and others' health when running essential errands](#).
- Protect yourself and others when filling [prescriptions](#) by limiting in-person visits to the pharmacy. Sign up for mail order delivery or call in your prescription ahead of time and use drive-through windows or curbside pickup, if available.
- Pay attention to local guidance about updated plans for evacuations and shelters, [including shelters for your pets](#).
- If you need to evacuate, prepare a “go kit” with [personal items](#) you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19, such as hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes (if available), and two masks for each person. Masks should not be used by children under the age of 2. They also should not be used by people having trouble breathing, or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- When you check on neighbors and friends, be sure to follow [social distancing](#) recommendations (staying at least 6 feet from others) and [other CDC recommendations](#) to protect yourself and others.

---

## Prepare to evacuate

- If you may need to evacuate, prepare a “go kit” with [personal items](#) you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19, such as hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes (if available) and two masks for each person. Masks should not be used by children under the age of 2. They also should not be used by people having trouble breathing, or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Know a safe place to shelter and have several ways to receive weather alerts, such as National Weather Service [cell phone alerts](#), [NOAA Weather Radio](#), or ([@NWS](#)) Twitter alerts.
- Find out if your local public shelter is open, in case you need to evacuate your home and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Follow guidance from your local public health or emergency management officials on when and where to shelter.
- [Make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pets](#). Find out if your disaster shelter will accept pets. Typically, when shelters accommodate pets, the pets are housed in a separate area from people.
- Follow [safety precautions when using transportation](#) to evacuate. If you have to travel away from your community to evacuate, follow [safety precautions for travelers](#) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

---

## Staying with friends or family

If you will be staying with friends or family outside your household to evacuate from the storm:

- Talk to the people you plan to stay with about how you can all best protect yourselves from COVID-19.
- Be sure to consider if either of your households has someone who is at [higher risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19](#), including older adults or people of any age who have underlying medical conditions. Make sure everyone knows what they can do to keep them safe from COVID-19.
- Follow [everyday preventive actions](#), including covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Consider taking extra [precautions for people living in close quarters](#).
- Know what to do if someone in your family or in the household you are staying with becomes sick with COVID-19. Take steps to [keep your pets safe](#) too.

---

## Staying in a public disaster shelter

- If you need to go to a disaster shelter, follow CDC recommendations for staying safe and healthy in a [public disaster shelter](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Practice social distancing](#). Stay at least 6 feet from other people outside of your household.

- Follow [CDC COVID-19 preventive actions](#)—wash your hands often, cover coughs and sneezes, and follow shelter policies for wearing [masks](#). Avoid sharing food and drink with anyone if possible.
- Follow disaster shelter policies and procedures designed to protect everyone in the shelter, especially those who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including [older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions](#).
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces, such as handrails, as much as possible. [Wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol immediately after you touch these surfaces.
- Keep your living area in the shelter [clean and disinfect](#) frequently-touched items such as toys, cellphones, and other electronics.
- [If you feel sick](#) when you arrive at the shelter or start to feel sick while sheltering, tell shelter staff immediately.

.....

## Help your children stay safe while in a public shelter

- Teach and reinforce [everyday preventive actions](#) for [keeping children healthy](#).
- Make sure children aged 2 and older wear masks. Masks should not be used by children under the age of 2. They also should not be used by people having trouble breathing, or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Be a good role model—if you wash your hands often, your children are more likely to do the same.
- Help your children stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who is not in your household.
- Watch your child for [any signs of illness](#) and tell shelter staff if your child may be ill.
- Try to deal with the disaster calmly and confidently, as this can provide the best [support for your children](#). [Help children cope with emergencies](#).

.....

## Stay safe after a hurricane

In addition to following guidance for staying safe and healthy [after a hurricane](#), note that

- You should continue to follow [preventive actions](#) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, like washing your hands and wearing a [mask](#) during cleanup or when returning home.
- It may take longer than usual to restore power and water if they are out. Take [steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning](#) if you use a generator.
- If you are injured or ill, contact your medical provider for treatment recommendations. [Keep wounds clean](#) to prevent infection. Remember, accessing medical care may be more difficult than usual during the pandemic.
- Dealing with disasters can cause stress and strong emotions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is natural to feel anxiety, grief, and worry. [Coping with these feelings and getting help](#) when you need it will help you, your family, and your community recover.

- People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) page.
- After a hurricane, it's not unusual for rats, mice, and other pests to try to get into your home or building. Be aware that with restaurant and commercial closures related to COVID-19, there are already reports of [increased rodent activity](#) as they try to seek other sources of food. Follow recommendations for [keeping pests out of your home](#).

.....

## Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- Know [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#), including cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell. Know what to do if [you or someone in your household gets sick](#).
- [Practice everyday preventive actions](#) to keep yourself and others safe from COVID-19.
- Follow additional [precautions if you are considered at higher risk](#) of developing severe illness from COVID-19, including if you are an older adult or anyone with an underlying health conditions.
- Consider following [additional precautions](#) if you have a disability, are experiencing homelessness, are pregnant or breastfeeding, are a racial or ethnic minority, or are a caregiver for someone with dementia.

---

## SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

- This year, preparing for hurricane season is a little more complicated. Give yourself more time to gather supplies, and if possible, include hand sanitizer and masks in your Go Kits in case you need to evacuate. <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/prepare-for-hurricane.html>
- Hurricane season starts June 1. During the #COVID19 pandemic, give yourself more time than usual to prepare your emergency food, water, and medical supplies. <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/prepare-for-hurricane.html>
- Preparing for hurricane season? To avoid exposure to #COVID19, try home delivery services to buy your disaster supplies. If that is not an option for you, be sure to take steps to protect your health and the health of others when running essential errands. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html>
- Create a “go kit” for personal items you can’t do without in case you need to evacuate for #HurricaneName. Include hand sanitizer, soap, and two masks per person to protect yourself and others from #COVID19. <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/prepare-for-hurricane.html>
- Keep your pets safe during #HurricaneName. Contact your local emergency management office and ask if they offer accommodations for owners and their pets. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/emergencies/index.html>

- Find out if your local public shelter is open during #HurricaneName, in case you need to evacuate. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the #COVID19 pandemic. <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/public-disaster-shelter-during-covid.html>
- If you need to stay at a disaster shelter during #HurricaneName, take actions to protect yourself and others from #COVID19. Learn more: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/public-disaster-shelter-during-covid.html>
- Wash your hands often and cover coughs and sneezes while at a disaster shelter. Follow shelter policies for wearing masks. Follow other preventive actions to keep yourself and others safe from #COVID19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
- Continue to use preventive actions, like washing your hands and wearing a mask, while you clean up or when returning home after #HurricaneName. <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/prepare-for-hurricane.html>
- It might take longer than normal to get power and water back up after #HurricaneName. Take steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning if you're using a generator. <https://www.cdc.gov/co/generatorsafetyfactsheet.html>

---

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) website
  - » <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- COVID-19 Communication Resources
  - » <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>
- COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
  - » <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- Going to a Public Disaster Shelter During the COVID-19 Pandemic
  - » <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/public-disaster-shelter-during-covid.html>
- Natural Disasters, Severe Weather, and COVID-19
  - » [https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/disasters\\_severe\\_weather\\_and\\_covid-19.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/disasters_severe_weather_and_covid-19.html)
- Preparing for Hurricanes During the COVID-19 Pandemic
  - » <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/prepare-for-hurricane.html>



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention