

May 26, 2021

CDC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEXUS

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, HEALTHY YOU



Take Actions to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones During this Year's Hurricane Season

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria created mass destruction in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2017. According to the [National Hurricane Center](#), Harvey is the second most costly hurricane in U.S. history, accounting for inflation, behind only Katrina (2005). At least 68 people died in Texas from the direct effects of the storm. The death toll was devastating but would have been far worse if not for many people's preparations.

We continue to see powerful hurricane seasons. The 2020 season was the most active on record; Louisiana suffered three direct hits from hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Zeta.

Hurricanes cause strong winds, flooding, heavy rain, and storm surges, all of which can be fatal. They can cause damage hundreds of miles from the shore. CDC's [Environmental Health Nexus](#) (EH Nexus) wants everyone to [be prepared](#) before a hurricane. This newsletter edition offers guidance for what to do prior to the warning, during a hurricane, and after the storm has passed.

CDC Environmental Health Nexus Webinar: Hurricane Safety and Preparedness

Be prepared for the start of hurricane season. Join the Environmental Health Nexus Webinar on Hurricane Safety and Preparedness. Subject matter experts from CDC will discuss strategies on how to keep you and your community safe during hurricane season.

This special webinar will be broadcast on [CDC's Emergency Preparedness and Response Facebook](#) page on **June 2 at 1 pm ET**. Closed captioning will be available through Streamtext.

Visit the Environmental Health Nexus [website](#) for more details.

Prepare Now for a Hurricane



Hurricane season starts May 15 in the north Pacific and June 1 in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. It ends November 30. You may need [supplies](#) after a hurricane, which can cut off your power and water supply—but you may not be able to drive because of damage to your car or flooded and blocked roads. Make sure you and your family are prepared by [planning ahead](#) before hurricane season each year.

Be on Alert

Regardless of where hurricanes land, they can cause significant harm to life and damage property. Know where to go for evacuations and [prepare to shelter](#). Listen for National Weather Service alerts on TV or radio or check online for information about shelters. If offered, sign up for text alerts by local weather or emergency service agencies. Consider practical skills you may need. Have a plan for staying at home if evacuating is not recommended, and a plan for relocating if evacuating is recommended. Map your route ahead of time, plotting alternative directions, and give yourself ample time to leave when the time comes.

Develop an [emergency action plan](#) in case you become separated from your family and cannot reach them. When services and supplies are limited, it is important to have the personal needs, prescriptions, paperwork, power sources, and practical skills you need to respond. Have an emergency kit with all the things that you and your family may need during an emergency, if the electricity is out, or when you may have to stay inside for longer than usual.

Prepare a “go kit” in case you need to evacuate. The following are some things to include:

- Extra batteries
- Nonperishable food and bottled water (at least a gallon for each person and pet per day for 3 days)
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Copies of important information
- Medications and other medical supplies
- Cash
- Disinfectant wipes and spray
- Bar or liquid soap
- [Hand sanitizer](#) with at least 60% alcohol
- Multiple, clean masks for everyone. Information on recommended [masks](#) use is here.

Find additional hurricane planning information [here](#).

Prepare Your Home and Help Your Neighbors

If a hurricane or severe flooding is coming, you may hear an order to evacuate (leave your home). **Never ignore an order to evacuate.**

Even sturdy, well-built houses may not hold up against an extreme storm with strong wind and high water. Staying home to protect your property is not worth risking your health and safety.

Know how to prepare and where you are vulnerable. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I in a flood-prone area?
- Do I live in a place that has limited access in and out?
- Will I have to navigate around potential hazards?

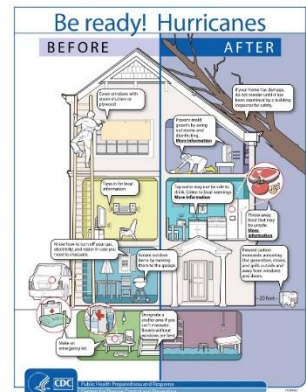
If you have friends, family, or other loved ones in hurricane-affected areas, you can help ensure they stay safe by sending them health and safety information.

CDC offers a [toolkit with different messages](#) in both English and Spanish. You can it send via text message, email, or social media. Post these messages on social media, and tag friends and family who live in affected areas.

During A Hurricane



There will be a lot going on as the hurricane gets closer to your area, but always remain calm and follow directives from experts. Most people who experienced hurricanes describe them as “vicious” and say they cause havoc. **We emphasize preparedness and safety first.**



Be Ready! Hurricanes
Infographic. [Learn More.](#)

Stay aware of alerts that give people enough time to prepare for the storm. Experts announce hurricane watches **48 hours before** they expect tropical-storm-force winds: sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph. Experts announce hurricane warnings, which are even more serious, **36 hours before** tropical-storm-force winds are expected.

If a watch is issued, make sure all possible steps in the previous section have been completed. Don't forget to plan for your—**do not leave pets at home when evacuating.**

If evacuations are ordered, prepare a “go kit” with [personal items](#) you cannot do without during an emergency. Follow guidance from your local public health or emergency management officials on when and where to shelter. Remain calm. Contact family members to let them know where the designated shelter is located. When a storm is only hours away and an evacuation was not ordered, stay at home.

Watch tv to stay current on the storm's progress. Local news and weather websites also provide updated information. Keep a portable, battery-operated radio nearby. Charge all electronics. Go to the safest place inside your home, the area farthest away from exterior doors and windows.

After A Hurricane

After an evacuation, do not return home until local officials say it is safe to do so. Keep current with updates. Stay away from debris and bowed or fallen power lines. **Do not walk or drive through flood waters.**



The storm might be over, but that doesn't mean the danger is. Keep your loved ones safe after the storm by [following our safety tips](#):

- [Stay out of flood water.](#)
- [Never use a wet electrical device.](#)
- If the power is out, use flashlights instead of candles.
- [If you have a generator, keep it outdoors](#), at least 20 feet from any door, window, or vent, to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Use a battery-powered CO detector.
- Be careful near damaged buildings.
- Stay away from power lines.
- Protect yourself from animals and pests.

- [Drink safe water. Eat safe food.](#)
- Wash your hands.
- Take care of any wounds or injuries to prevent infection.
- Clean up your home safely: [wear clothing and equipment that protects you.](#)
- Take care of your emotional health.

Taking care of your and your family's [emotional health](#) is essential after a hurricane. The days and weeks after a hurricane are rough. In addition to your physical health, you need to take some time to consider your mental health as well. Remember that children need extra care and attention before, during, and after the storm. Your state and local health departments will help you find the local resources, including hospitals or health care providers that you may need.

Taking care of your emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react wisely to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family during an emergency.

ADDITIONAL WEB AND MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

Below are useful resources to educate and prepare yourself and your family.

- Be prepared for 2021 hurricane season. [Learn more.](#)
- [Stay Safe After a Hurricane](#) or Other Tropical Storm
- Visit [Prepare Your Health | CDC](#) to learn more about disaster planning during a pandemic
- Learn more about [electrical safety after a disaster or emergency.](#)
- [Preparedness and safety messaging](#) for hurricanes, flooding, and similar disasters.
- [Information about pet safety during an emergency](#)
- Video for [safe use of a portable generator](#) following a hurricane or other severe weather.
- Homeowner's and renter's guide to [mold cleanup after disasters](#)
- Prevention guidelines for [emergencies and generators.](#)
- [Mold Clean-Up After Disasters](#): When to use bleach.

Environmental Health Updates and Resources



Find response and recovery activities for environmental health

Find [response activities](#) by environmental health mission to help you fulfill your important roles in all-hazards emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.



Promote healthy and safe swimming throughout the year.

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week is May 24–30, 2021, but healthy and safe swimming is important year-round. Find [steps everyone can take](#) to protect themselves and those they care about from injury and illness when swimming.



Celebrate 20 years of food safety research with the Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net).

Learn how EHS-Net uses data to improve food safety practice. Review highlights from [20 years of EHS-Net research](#), including key findings on restaurant actions linked with food safety and how EHS-Net research has strengthened food policies and practices.



June 7 is World Food Safety Day. The Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization [Food Safety Guide to World Food Safety Day 2021](#) describes how governments, organizations, food businesses, and the general public can take part.



The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR's) new [Community Stress Resource Center](#) outlines a framework for reducing community stress and building resilience as part of public health responses to environmental contamination. Communities have different practical, informational, social, and emotional needs and assets. The framework provides guidance and resources to understand, prevent, and address problems that can cause stress related to

environmental contamination.



Disaster Epidemiology eLearning Training Modules

To aid in effective planning for disasters, NCEH has developed multiple [eLearning courses](#) that highlight the public health-related effects of disasters. We anticipate that once state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments and other partners have received the web-based training, they will have a better understanding of how to apply epidemiologic concepts to disasters and emergencies.

The course is made up of four modules:

- Public Health Impacts of Disasters
- Public Health Emergency Management
- Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER)

- Disaster Surveillance. Continuing Education (CE) is available for all modules



CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) commemorates 30 years of funding state and local childhood lead poisoning prevention programs to eliminate childhood lead poisoning as a public health problem. To mark this milestone, we have launched a [webpage](#) and have planned a social media campaign to raise awareness that childhood lead poisoning persists.

Thank you for reading.

**Do not keep this great resource to yourself!
Please share it with your colleagues and networks.**

**If you are not yet a subscriber, please click [here](#),
enter your email address, and click the subscribe button
at the bottom of the webpage.**