

Sheltering During Hurricanes

Findings from a Recent Online Survey

Background of Shelter Surveys

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 followed up with an additional online survey to continue to monitor people's attitudes and behaviors related to sheltering for disasters such as hurricanes.



YouGov Survey Methodology

In July 2022, 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.

What we Learned



Evacuations in Response to a Hurricane

22% of respondents reported evacuating at least one time in response to a hurricane. Of those who had a mandatory or voluntary evacuation order in response to a hurricane during 2020–2021, **53% of respondents** indicated that they **evacuated at least one time**.

The most commonly reported evacuation location was the home of **friends, the home of family members, or a second home (60%)** followed by going to a **hotel or motel (43%)**. **11%** evacuated to a public disaster **shelter**.

If there is an evacuation order in 2022, **32%** of respondents **planned to evacuate**. An additional **53%** said it would **depend on the severity of the hurricane**.

Barriers to Evacuation

Among those who did not evacuate but did have a mandatory or voluntary evacuation order in response to a hurricane, **65%** reported they **did not feel the need to evacuate**.

46% of respondents indicated that they had **made changes** to their plans for going to a disaster shelter during a hurricane because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those who made changes to their plans, **95%** said they were very or somewhat concerned about getting sick from other people in the facility. **49%** of respondents said their area's **current COVID-19 community levels would impact their decision** to evacuate to a shelter during a hurricane.

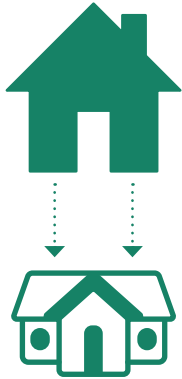
Concerns About Going to a Hurricane Shelter

People had the following **top concerns** about going to a disaster shelter:

- Lack of faith in the media/news (58%)
- Concern about leaving valuables and property (42%)
- Lack of certainty in weather predictions (38%)
- Inconvenient to get to a disaster shelter (31%)
- Too expensive to evacuate (28%)



Factors that Would Make People More Likely to Go to a Hurricane Shelter



Respondents indicated the following factors would make them **more likely to go to a hurricane shelter**:

- Adequate soap/hand sanitizer is available at the disaster shelter (31%)
- Hotels being used as disaster shelters (31%)
- Medical care available at disaster shelters (30%)
- Mandatory testing of all occupants for COVID-19 at the disaster shelter (30%)
- Mandatory use or wearing of face masks at the disaster shelter (29%)
- Masks provided at the disaster shelter (29%)
- Strict distance or space requirements kept between groups of households (27%)
- Pets can be kept at or near the disaster shelter (27%)

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



The top reasons that impact whether people **go to a shelter instead of staying home** were the following:

- Concerned about personal safety at home because of the storm (62%)
- Losing electricity at home (49%)
- Flooding at home (44%)
- Not having enough food and water (35%)
- No access to medical care at home (26%)

Methods of Communication

These were the top sources of communication:



Local TV news stations (72%)



Internet (51%)



Mobile phone (46%)

Additionally, 89% reported receiving emergency alerts. Of those, most (81%) received text alerts.

Related Resources

- » CDC Guidance for General Population Disaster Shelters During the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/general-population-shelters-guidance.html>
- » Natural Disasters & COVID-19: Resources for Professionals & Emergency Workers: https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/covid-19/covid_19_resources_for_professionals.html
- » Hurricanes and COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/covid-19/prepare-for-hurricane.html>
- » Hurricanes and Other Tropical Storms: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes>