

# How to Be Prepared for Hurricane Season

By Hector Flores

June 1 marked the start of the hurricane season, so now is the time to make sure you are prepared. Having a plan will take the guesswork out of what you need to do to protect you and your family.

One of the best things to do is to sign up for Alert Charlotte, the county's emergency notification system. This system enables us to provide you with critical information quickly in a variety of situations, such as severe weather, unexpected road closures, and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods. You will receive time-sensitive phone, email or text messages wherever you specify. Visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and enter Alert Charlotte in the search box.

Another important step to take is to know your evacuation zone, so if we must order residents to leave certain areas of the county, you'll know if it applies to you. Visit the county website and click the Know Your Zone banner under Popular Links.

Everyone has a couple more days to take advantage of the sales tax holiday for disaster supply purchases. Through Sunday, you'll save the sales tax on purchases of items such as flashlights, batteries, bottled water, canned food, propane, generators and more. For a complete list, visit <https://floridarevenue.com/disasterplan>. Check your disaster kit to ensure items aren't out of date.

Review important documents, such as property insurance, to ensure it is up to date or if your carrier has made any changes you need to be aware of. Check your family and friends contact lists in case you need to reach them in an emergency, whether it's seeking shelter or checking up on them before, during or after a storm. Print a copy. If your phone's battery dies, you'll need the contact info to make calls from a public, hotel, shelter or friend's phone.

Discuss your plan with your immediate family members so everyone knows what they're supposed to do. Share the plan with family and friends, so they know, too. Make sure you consider the needs of elderly family members or pets. Now is the time to check any prescriptions that may need to be refilled or renewed.

The things we need to do to be prepared may seem daunting, but imagine trying to pull all this planning together in a two- or three-day window when you're in the cone of uncertainty. For a complete primer of hurricane preparedness, including an online plan template, visit [ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://ready.gov/make-a-plan).

The best plan is one you never have to activate. But when you need it, you'll be glad you took the time to be ready.

## Calendar contest

One Charlotte, One Water is the holistic approach to water quality Charlotte County takes to ensure its policies and practices contribute to the long-term health, enjoyment, and availability of our water. It treats all water — our harbor, rivers, bays, canals, creeks, potable water, wastewater, stormwater, reclaimed water — as one water.

To celebrate this vital natural resource, the theme of our 2022 county calendar will be One Charlotte, One Water. We're calling on the public to submit photos that feature water in Charlotte County: our waterways, harbor, ponds, drinking water — anything water. We'll select 15 photos to be featured in the 2022 One Charlotte, One Water calendar.

It is free to enter. Email your photos to [Brian.Gleason@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:Brian.Gleason@CharlotteCountyFL.gov). Use the subject line One Charlotte, One Water and include your contact information and the subject of your photo. Winners will receive a free calendar and have their photos featured on the county's website and social media pages. You can enter as many photos as you would like. The deadline for entries is Aug. 13, 2021.

Winners will be notified by phone or email. Calendars will be available to the public in November at county facilities to be announced.

*Readers may reach County Administrator Hector Flores at [Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov).*