2020 CHARLOTTE COUNTY DISASTER GUIDE

Prepare NOW | **Survive DURING** | **Be Safe AFTER**

If a disaster struck, would your family be ready? Would your business be ready? Follow the tips and checklists in this guide to protect your loved ones, your home and your business.

OVERVIEW:

Prepare before hurricane season starts. Atlantic hurricane season starts June 1.

Know what to do before, during, and after a hurricane: prepare now, survive during, be safe after.

Put together a **disaster plan** with your family and for your business before a hurricane.

Have **emergency supplies** in place at home, at work, and in the car.

Know your local community's **evacuation** plan and evacuation routes and how to receive alerts.

Listen to local officials.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
FLORIDA

CHARLOTTE COUNTY • OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT • RESPOND RECOVER PREPARE EM

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DISASTER PLANNING GUIDE

Hurricanes are dangerous and can cause major damage because of storm surge, wind damage, and flooding. Storm surge is historically the leading cause of hurricane-related deaths in the United States.

This guide was developed by Charlotte County Emergency Management Office to help you make your family and business plans. It also directs you to additional resources where you can get more information and assistance.

Government cannot do this alone. It takes the "whole community" to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster. This includes our neighborhood and condo associations, faith-based, volunteer, civic organizations, schools, business community, and residents. Join a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in your neighborhood and get the training. Visit tinyurl.com/CharlotteCountyCERT for more information.

Get involved and spread the word at your school, work, club or place of worship. This is what it takes to make our community safer and more resilient.

Prepare NOW

PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do in an emergency by putting together a family disaster plan and a business continuity plan.

Plan Basics

- How will we receive alerts and warnings?
- Where will we go? What are the evacuation routes? As a last resort, what shelter will we go to?
- How will we communicate with each other?
- Where will we meet if we get separated?

Know Your Evacuation Zone: Is your house or business in a Hurricane Evacuation Zone (visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov to Know Your Zone)? You should also learn if your house is at risk for flooding—check your FEMA Flood Zone (visit msc.fema.gov).

Choose a Contact Person: Ask someone out of the area to be a contact if you are separated in a disaster, to have family members report their location.

Keep Contact Information Up-To-Date: Include contact information in your phones and make emergency contact cards to carry with you.

Think Ahead About Evacuation: Determine if and when you would evacuate, where you would go and how you will get there. Have multiple options. Stay with friends or family if they are in a safer evacuation zone and not being asked to leave. If you are in a safe area, invite them to stay with you.

Practice your disaster plans often with your family and office.

Find more disaster planning information at Ready.gov and the Charlotte County Emergency Management Office www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

Prepare Your Home, Office and Belongings Ahead of Time

- Check your disaster supplies.
- Refill prescriptions. Maintain at least a two-week supply of medication.
- Clear your yard of furniture, potted plants, bicycles, trash cans and other objects that can cause damage in heavy winds.
- Keep landscaping trimmed. Make sure yard waste will be picked up before storms.
- Protect windows and glass doors with plywood or storm shutters.
- If flooding could threaten your home, move important items such as electronics and antiques off the floor.
- Fill your car's gas tank and check oil, water and tires.
- Secure your boat early. Drawbridges will be closed to boat traffic after an evacuation order is issued.
- Get cash. Banks and ATM's don't work without electricity and few stores will be able to accept credit cards or checks.
- Never sweep or blow yard leaves, pine needles, grass clippings or soil into the street or stormwater system. This clogs up the stormwater pipes and prevents water from draining.
- If you own a business, follow your Business Continuity Plan. For more information on how to create a Business Continuity Plan, go online to disastersafety.org or ready.gov.

Keep Your Pets Safe

Don't leave your pets and don't use your pet as an excuse not to evacuate. Don't put yourself, your family and your pet at risk! You are responsible for planning for your pet.

Take your Pet Disaster Supplies if you evacuate, go to friends/relatives, a public shelter (Charlotte County public shelters are pet-friendly) or a hotel. Find pet-friendly hotels at petswelcome.com.

After the storm has passed, be careful with your pet outdoors. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and confuse your pet. Other dangers may be present, such as downed power lines, other animals and insects brought in with high water, and contaminated food or water. Nearly 80% of pets displaced by a storm are never reunited with their owners.

Pet Disaster Supply Checklist:

- ☐ Proper ID collar and rabies tag/license
- ☐ Vaccination papers (Pet-friendly shelters/ evacuation centers and boarding facilities may require proof of vaccinations within the past 12 months.)
- ☐ Carrier or cage (large enough for your pet to move around)
- ☐ Leash
- ☐ Ample food supply (at least two weeks) and non-electric can opener if needed
- ☐ Water (minimum of 7-day supply)
- ☐ Water/food bowls
- ☐ Any necessary medications
- ☐ Specific care instructions
- ☐ Newspapers, cat litter, scoop, plastic trash bags for handling waste
- ☐ Proper ID on all belongings (including emergency contact information if you evacuate)
- ☐ Photo of you with your pet
- ☐ A comfort item (favorite toy or blanket)
- ☐ Microchipping your pet is strongly recommended

Persons with a Disability, under Home Healthcare & Homebound Patients

People who are disabled or in poor health (either mentally or physically) or those who are without the support of family or friends should plan ahead for an emergency. Please ask for help if you need it and volunteer to help those who do.

- Identify if you may need additional help during an emergency.
- Plan ahead for accessible transportation or other needs based on disability. For home health patients, tell your health agency and oxygen company where you will be during a hurricane. If you are homebound but not under the care of a home health agency, contact your physician to determine a plan of action.
- If you require respirators or other electric-dependent medical equipment, make medical arrangements with your physician and register with FPL.
- If you evacuate, take medications, written instructions regarding your care, special equipment and bedding with you.
- If you will need assistance in an evacuation or need to go to a special needs/medically dependent shelter, you must pre-register ahead of time. Pre-registration can be done online snr.floridadisaster.org or download a printable application at www.charlottecountyfl.gov or contact Emergency.Management@CharlotteCountyFL.gov 941-833-4000.
- Special needs/medically dependent shelters do not provide hands-on medical care, only medical monitoring. Bring one caregiver with you.
- Certified service animals are allowed. Plan and bring their supplies.

About Insurance

Understanding what is—and is not—covered in your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy is a necessity. Insurance needs change over time, talk with your agent and make sure you are protected:

- Insure your home for its reconstruction cost, not its real estate value.
- If you rent, insure your belongings.
- Standard policies do not cover damage from floods, including storm surge. There is a 30-day wait period for flood insurance to go into effect. Don't wait until a storm is threatening.

alert CHARLOTTE

Get alerted about emergencies by signing up for our Emergency Alert Program. Receive alerts about:

- Tornadoes
- Hurricanes
- Tropical Storms
- Severe Thunderstorms
- Freeze Warnings
- Marine Warnings
- Road Construction Closures
- Mosquito Spraying

Receive messages wherever you specify: home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more. You pick where, you pick how.

Sign up today at www.AlertCharlotte.com

DISASTER SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST

General:

- ☐ At least two weeks supply of medication, medical supplies used regularly and a list of allergies
- ☐ List of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices
- ☐ Flashlight (Do not use candles and be sure to have enough batteries)
- ☐ Radio (Battery operated or hand cranked radio, a NOAA weather radio)
- ☐ Cash (Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm)

Pet Care:

- ☐ Pet food and water (at least two weeks worth)
- ☐ Proper identification
- ☐ Medical records/ microchip info/ Vaccination papers
- ☐ A carrier or cage
- ☐ Muzzle and leash
- ☐ Water and food bowls
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Supplies for your service animal

First Aid:

- ☐ First Aid Manual
- ☐ Sterile adhesive bandages and gauze pads of different sizes
- ☐ Hypoallergenic adhesive, tape
- ☐ Triangular bandages
- ☐ Scissors, tweezers, sewing needle
- ☐ Moistened towelettes
- ☐ Antiseptic
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Tube of petroleum jelly
- ☐ Safety pins
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Non-latex gloves
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Aspirin or other pain reliever
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal medicine, antacid, laxative
- ☐ Cotton balls, Q-tips

Special Needs:

- ☐ Be sure to include specialty items for infants,small children, the elderly, and those family members with a disability.

Important Documents:

(Items should be kept in a water proof container)

- ☐ Insurance cards
- ☐ Medical records
- ☐ Bank numbers
- ☐ Credit card numbers
- ☐ Copy of social security card
- ☐ Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
- ☐ Other personal documents
- ☐ Set of car, house, and office keys
- ☐ Service animal I.D., veterinary records, and proof of ownership
- ☐ Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug, and dosage
- ☐ Copy of will

Food and Water:

- ☐ Food (Enough for at least seven (7) days, nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, baby food, and any special dietary items)
- ☐ Non-electric can opener
- ☐ Paper plates and napkins
- ☐ Plastic cups and utensils
- ☐ Water (1 gallon per person

Clothing:

- ☐ Include seasonal or rain gear and sturdy shoes or boots.

Vehicle:

- ☐ Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gas

Phone Numbers:

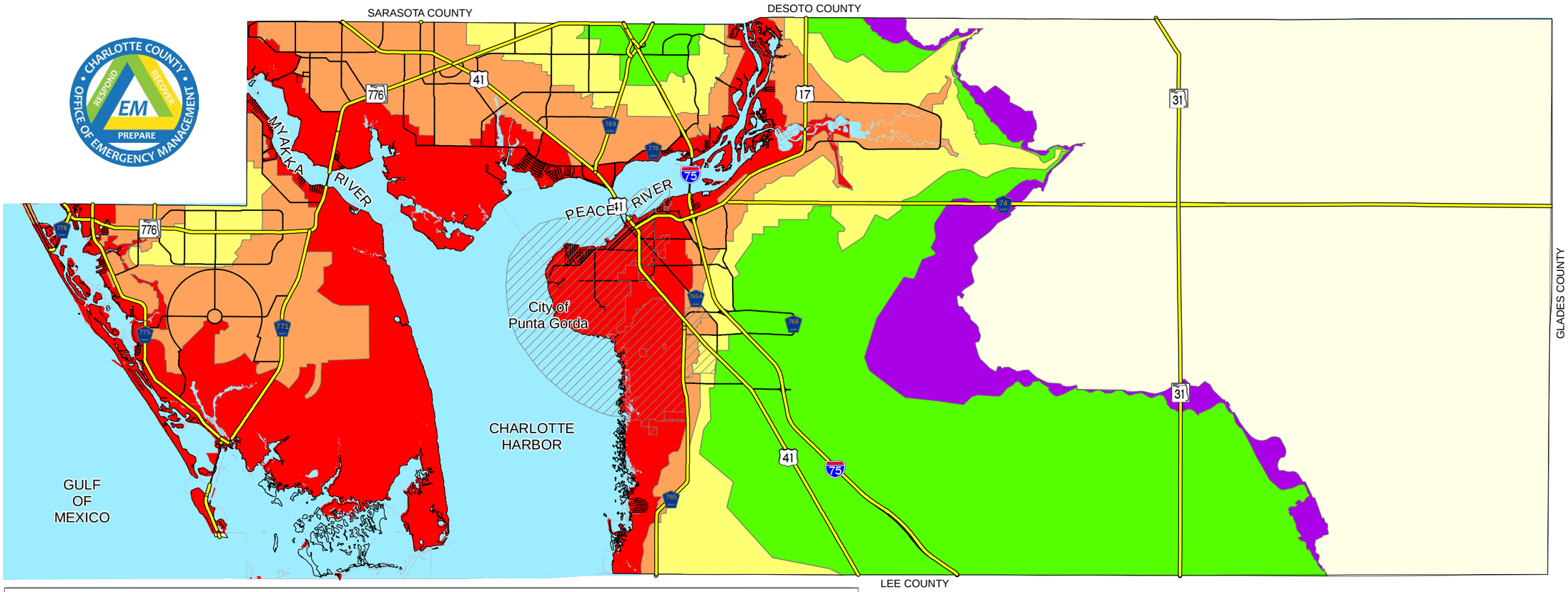
Maintain a list of important phone numbers including:

- ☐ Evacuation sites
- ☐ Doctors and Veterinarians
- ☐ Banks
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ An out of town contact
- ☐ Friends & family

COVID-19 Supplies:

- ☐ Face masks
- ☐ Disinfectant wipes
- ☐ Hand sanitizer

CHARLOTTE COUNTY EVACUATION MAP



LEGEND

Evacuation Zones

RED	A	YELLOW	C	PURPLE	E
ORANGE	B	GREEN	D	Non-Evac. Zone	

Evacuation Routes

N W E S

2 1 0 2 Miles

Using Your County Map

1. Locate where you live and work on the map
2. Determine whether you are in an evacuation area, and if so, what color and letter (ex. orange=B).
3. If you are in an evacuation area or a mobile home/manufactured home/RV, decide where you will go if ordered to evacuate. Your choices include:
   - Home of a relative or friend outside the evacuation zone
   - Hotel/motel outside the evacuation zone (make arrangements early)
   - Leave the area entirely
   - A public shelter (verify the shelter is open before you go).

Note: All persons living in mobile homes/manufactured homes/RVs should evacuate before the onset of Tropical Storm force winds, regardless of where you are located in the county.

Storm Surge is a Deadly Threat

The evacuation zones (colored areas) on the map are vulnerable to storm surge. Storm surge is produced by water being pushed towards the shore by the force of the winds moving around the storm. **Storm surge is historically the leading cause of hurricane-related deaths in the United States.**

Storm surge creates a path of destruction, wiping out structures as it rapidly surges inland and then recedes. This is a life threatening situation for anyone who ignores mandatory evacuation orders and stays in vulnerable areas.

Saffir-Simpson
Hurricane Wind Scale

Category	Sustained Winds
1	74 - 95 mph
2	96 - 110 mph
3	111 - 129 mph (major)
4	130 - 156 mph (major)
5	156 mph or more (major)

EVACUATE OR STAY?

If You Can Stay Home, Shelter-in-Place

If you live in a sound structure outside the evacuation area and do not live in a mobile home, manufactured home or RV, stay home and take these precautions:

- Protect windows, doors and garage doors.
- Clean and fill bathtubs and sinks before a storm so you'll have water for flushing and cleaning.
- Store enough drinking water in clean containers; plan on minimum one gallon per person per day for at least three days.
- Offer to shelter friends or relatives who live in vulnerable areas or mobile homes.
- Check your Disaster Supplies, including at least a three day supply of non-perishable foods. Don't forget a non-electric can opener.
- Find a safe room in your home, usually an interior, windowless reinforced room such as a closet or bathroom on the lower floor.
- Monitor your battery-operated radio, NOAA weather radio or TV for the latest advisories and other emergency information.
- Wait for official word that the danger is over.
- If flooding threatens your home, turn off electricity at the main breaker.
- If you lose power, turn off major appliances (air conditioner, water heater etc.) to reduce damage from surge when power is restored.
- Don't travel until you are told it is safe to do so.

Personal Safety

Wherever you are (evacuated, in a public shelter, or home) follow the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to protect yourself and family from COVID-19 and any other current health risks.

- What supplies will you need for protection (soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, face masks, etc.?)
- What are the current social distancing guidelines?

Visit CDC.gov for the most current information.

If You Must Evacuate

If you live in an evacuation area or a mobile home, manufactured home or RV when an evacuation order is given, don't panic. Move at a steady pace and leave as soon as possible to ensure you can get to where you will weather the storm. Do not take chances with your life by staying at home or waiting until it's too late!

- Move inland away from the storm surge and inland flooding, to a destination is not within a zone that has been ordered to evacuate.
- It is recommended that residents evacuate tens of miles, not hundreds, to avoid traffic jams.
- Take enough supplies for your family.
- Take your pets and their supplies.
- Take important papers, including driver's licenses, special medical information, insurance policies, property inventories.
- Let friends and relatives know where you are going.
- Make sure your neighbors have a safe ride.
- Turn off your electricity, water and gas if officials tell you to do so.
- Protect and lock your windows and doors.
- Stay tuned to your local radio and television station for emergency broadcasts.

Hotel or Motel

If you plan to go to a hotel or motel, check for availability and make your reservation well in advance. Make sure your destination is not in an evacuation zone. If you have pets, petswelcome.com can help.

Shelters

Charlotte County has very few buildings, public or private, above the Red and Orange evacuation zones and suitable for sheltering. Charlotte County has no certified Red Cross shelters.

Shelter space is extremely limited and all other means of evacuation and sheltering should be considered before going to a public shelter.

In the event of a hurricane, one or more Charlotte County-staffed shelters may be opened, depending on the size and direction of an approaching storm. Check local media and www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov to find open location(s).

- **Kingsway Elementary School**
  23300 Quasar Blvd., Port Charlotte
- **Liberty Elementary School**
  370 Atwater St., Port Charlotte
- **Neil Armstrong Elementary School**
  22100 Breezeswept Ave., Port Charlotte
- **Harold Ave. Regional Park Recreation Center**
  23400 Harold Ave., Port Charlotte

Special Needs Shelters

Special Needs Shelters are for individuals whose medical conditions cannot be addressed in a general shelter. Persons requiring the additional level of care must pre-register so that adequate planning can take place to open this specialized type of shelter. Pre-registration can be done online at snr.floridadisaster.org or download a printable application at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov or contact Emergency.Management@CharlotteCountyFL.gov 941-833-4000.

What to Bring to a Shelter:

You will need to bring supplies for each family member and pet (all Charlotte County shelters are pet friendly).

- ☐ Sleeping bag, sleeping pad and/or blankets
- ☐ Pillow
- ☐ Personal Flashlight & Headlamps
- ☐ Disinfectant supplies, hand sanitizer, soap, cloth face coverings
- ☐ Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- ☐ Soap – you may choose to purchase body wipes for quick wipe downs instead of soap
- ☐ Feminine hygiene products
- ☐ Cell phones
- ☐ Chargers/ backup battery
- ☐ Extra sets of clothes suitable for the season
- ☐ Extra socks and sturdy shoes
- ☐ Foods or snacks (72+ hours worth)
- ☐ Books or magazine
- ☐ Prescription Medications- Glasses
- ☐ Pet Care Items (see list on pg. 3)
- ☐ Important Documents (see list on pg. 5)

Survive DURING

- Stay informed: listen for emergency information, alerts, and weather updates on local radio and TV stations, websites, and on NOAA Weather Radio. Tune in to the latest information and listen to local officials.
- Take refuge in a safe room in your home, usually an interior, windowless reinforced room such as a closet or bathroom on the lower floor.
- If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising flood water.

Be Safe AFTER

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A DISASTER

After a disaster, you may be without power and many of the other services you rely on (water, sewer, phone, cell phone, and businesses) for days. Immediate response may not be possible, so you must be self-reliant.

Re-entry

Listen to local officials for information and special instructions. BE PATIENT. You might not be able to return to your home or business until search and rescue operations are complete and hazards are cleared.

- Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters. **Turn Around. Don't Drown!**
- Until power is restored, many traffic signals will not work. Treat any intersection where traffic signals are out as a four-way stop.

Once you arrive back, walk around your home or business first to survey damage and enter with caution.

- If you suspect a gas leak, leave immediately then call 911 or your natural gas provider from a safe location.
- If your building has been flooded, have a licensed electrician inspect the electrical system and appliances before turning the power back on.
- Be extremely careful with fire.
- Let your out-of-town contact know you are safe.

Post-Storm Safety Precautions

- Use grills outdoors and away from windows.
- Avoid candles; use battery-operated lights.
- Stay tuned to your local media for up-to-date emergency information.
- Always supervise children - DO NOT WADE IN FLOOD WATERS.
- Be aware of snakes, insects, and other animals driven to higher ground by floods.
- Drink plenty of fluids, rest and ask for help when you need it.
- Don't burn trash.

Clean-up & Repairs

- Know what your insurance policy covers and what you will need to submit a claim. Take photographs of all damage before repairs and keep all receipts.
- Be careful during clean-up. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
- Avoid downed or dangling power lines.
- Be careful when clearing fallen trees; call professionals to remove large, uprooted trees, etc.
- Follow all safety precautions when using a chain saw.
- Use proper safety equipment such as heavy gloves, safety goggles, heavy boots, long-sleeve shirts and long pants. Tie back long hair.
- Permits may be required for demolition or repairs, reconstruction, roofing, or filling. Contact the Charlotte County Community Development: www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov or call 941.743.1201.

Protect Against Contractor Fraud

- Hire only licensed contractors. Unlicensed contracting during a State of Emergency is a felony.
- Be cautious of anyone coming to your home uninvited and offering to do home repairs or asking you to pull the permits. These may be indications they are not properly licensed.
- Report possible unlicensed activity in Charlotte County by contacting the Community Development Department at 941.743.1201 or BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov
- Obtain a written estimate or contract. Insist on start/completion dates and payment terms in the contract. Do not pay in full before work begins or pay the final balance until work is completed to your satisfaction. NEVER pay with cash.

Portable Generators

- NEVER connect a portable generator to building wiring. Plug appliances directly into the generator.
- Place generators outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow deadly exhaust fumes to come indoors.
- Before refueling your generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Don't forget to check the oil.
- Keep the generator dry.
- Store fuel outside in labeled, approved containers.

Disaster Safety Tips

Tornado

Know the terms used to describe tornado threats:

Tornado Watch - Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms.

Tornado Warning - A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately if a Tornado Warning is issued for your area.

Safety tips

- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio and/or a batter-powered commercial radio and extra batteries.
- Many mobile phones are capable of receiving Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs). These alerts can inform you about life-threatening weather conditions in your immediate area.
- Seek shelter in a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- Mobile homes and RVs are not safe during tornadoes. Abandon mobile homes/RVs and go to the nearest sturdy building immediately.
- If you cannot quickly walk to a study building, immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy building.
- If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Otherwise, stay in your vehicle with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible.

Fire

- Evacuation Plan - Decide where you will go and how you will get there. Unlike a hurricane, with fire you may only have a moment's notice. Have two escape routes out of your home/business and out of your neighborhood. Have a plan for evacuating your pets.
- Fire Drills - Practice. Make sure everyone knows at least two escape routes from your home/business.

Flood

- If flooding threatens, get to higher ground. Take dry clothing, a flashlight and a portable radio with you.
- Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters. **Turn Around. Don't Drown!** Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Do not allow children or pets near high water, storm drains or ditches. Flood waters may be contaminated.

Hazardous Materials Incident

Follow the direction given by public officials quickly.

If told to evacuate:

- Move to the location designated by public officials.
- Stay calm. Quickly gather what you will need, unless you are told to leave immediately.
- Keep car windows/air vents closed. Do not use the air conditioner until you are out of the evacuation area.

If told to stay indoors & shelter-in-place:

- Stay inside until local officials say you can leave safely. Bring pets indoors.
- Close all doors and windows. Seal gaps under doorways and windows with damp towels and duct tape. Turn off heating, cooling or ventilation systems.
- If you are told to protect your breathing, cover your nose and mouth with a cloth or towel.

Terrorism/Violent Crime

See Something - Say Something. Call Charlotte County Sheriff's Office 941-639-2101 (Englewood 941-474-3233) or call Florida's toll-free hotline 1-855-352-7233 (1-855-FLA-SAFE) to report any suspicious activity. If it is an emergency, CALL 911!

Disease Outbreak

Follow the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.CDC.gov) for protecting yourself and family from any other current health risks.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police, Fire, EMS Emergencies	911
Charlotte County Sheriff's Office	941-639-2101
-Englewood	941-474-3233
Emergency Management	941-833-4000
Charlotte County Government	941-743-1200
Charlotte County Health Dept.	941-624-7200
Charlotte County Public Works	941-575-3600
Charlotte County Animal Control	941-833-5690
Charlotte County Solid Waste	941-764-4360
-Englewood	941-697-4000
Charlotte County Utilities	941-764-4300
Charlotte County School District	941-255-0808
Punta Gorda Government	941-575-3302
Punta Gorda Public Works	941-575-5050
Punta Gorda Utilities	941-575-3339
Florida Power and Light	1-800-468-8243
Salvation Army	941-629-3170
American Red Cross	941-629-4345
Official Information During Emergencies	211
-Englewood, TTY users & others	941-205-2161

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