

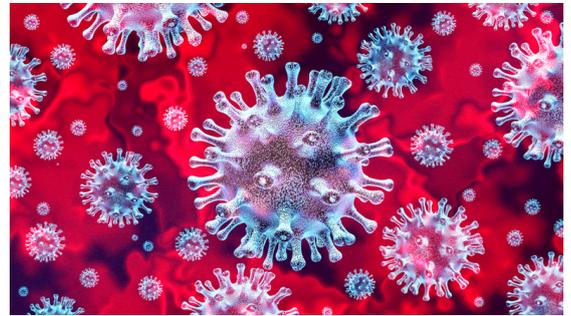
## BLOG

# Preparing for Hurricane Season During a Pandemic

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The Atlantic coast is accustomed to planning for hurricane season every year. But as the June 1 start of a predicted “busier than average” season draws closer, and the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, questions and uncertainties about how to handle two crises at once are bubbling to the surface. Without proper planning, the threat of hurricanes combined with COVID-19 is a recipe for disaster.



So how do you prepare for hurricane season in the middle of quarantine? What happens if you’re forced to evacuate while stay-at-home orders are in place? What help, if any, will local, state and federal governments be able to give as resources are already gossamer thin?

### Getting Prepared

Residents of Florida and the Gulf states should take all the precautions they typically take this time of year. Make sure you have non-perishable emergency supplies stocked, such as extra batteries, matches, materials for home repairs like plywood, water, food, first aid supplies, etc. But keep in mind the supply chain is already narrow, so it may take extra time to obtain these items from grocery and home improvement stores - the earlier you start building your emergency kit, the better.

It’s also wise to create your evacuation plan well before a disaster strikes. Locate the nearest shelter and map different routes you can take to get there from your home. If you’re a pet owner, pre-identify shelters, pet-friendly hotels or an out-of-town friend or relative where you can take them. While quarantine may be a factor of where you can go later, it’s best to have a plan in place now.

You should also prepare your business to ensure business continuity and the safety of employees. If your business is still operational during the pandemic, you can start by taking inventory of your assets, fortifying your location, backing up your data and reviewing all contracts closely. If you’ve been shut down, now is the time to conduct a check-in and ensure nothing has gone wrong while your doors are closed. Vacant, unoccupied buildings have more mishaps, because people aren’t there to make sure they’re okay.

### During the Storm

First, determine if your zone is being asked to shelter in place or evacuate. If asked to stay in place, stay inside and keep away from all windows, skylights and glass doors. Go to a safe area, such as an interior room, closet or downstairs bathroom. Use a portable radio to listen to important storm updates, information and instructions. Make sure to turn off electricity or major appliances if flooding threatens your home or you lose power. If asked to evacuate, follow your prepared evacuation plan. Be sure to follow state and federal guidelines as well as possible in the event that social distancing measures are still in place.

#### After the Storm

Remain indoors or away from your home until an official “all clear” is given. People often rely on cell phones, but the past few large storms have knocked out cellular service so have a back-up plan for communicating emergencies.

The reality is there could be a tough recovery following a hurricane amid the COVID-19 pandemic. First responders and volunteers are in short supply. Contractors, clean-up resources and materials are depleted. FEMA and insurance companies are already spread thin.

The best thing you can do when trying to plan for unknowns on top of unknowns is be extra vigilant. Have your supplies ready and ensure your emergency plans are in place. Even if they need to be shifted later, it's best to be prepared now. Your risk manager can help – give them a call.

*Want to learn more?*

*Find me on LinkedIn, [here](#).*

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