

HURRICANE EVACUATION

When hurricanes approach us, many coordinated activities must begin simultaneously. Various local, state, federal and voluntary agencies must prepare to respond to the hurricane threat. One response is evacuation.

An evacuation order is the most important instructions you will receive from officials, relayed over local radio and television stations. Once issued, an evacuation order is mandatory under law. If you are ordered to evacuate, do so quickly and efficiently, remembering to take your Disaster Supplies Kit with you. All manufactured/mobile home residents must evacuate regardless of location. If you are going to a Red Cross Shelter, please note that pets, alcoholic beverages and weapons will not be allowed inside.

An evacuation order doesn't just happen. Government officials, who are responsible for evacuation decisions, must consider many factors before announcing that an evacuation is in effect:

- What does the National Weather Service expect from the storm system (wind strength, forward speed and direction, flooding, storm surge, etc)?
- Are local shelters appropriate?
- Are sea walls, levees and pumps functional and intact?
- Are Host Area shelters and officials ready to support evacuees?
- Are law enforcement and security personnel in place to assist evacuees and secure the evacuated community?
- Can most of the evacuation activities be completed before the hurricane reaches the immediate area?

Local government will provide the media and the general public with evacuation recommendations and instructions. Law enforcement agencies will provide security and traffic control. The American Red Cross will provide information regarding where safe shelters can be found. In the interest of safety, American Red Cross shelters will not be opened in areas under evacuation orders, nor in areas subject to major flooding or substantial wind damage. American Red Cross shelters will be located in safe areas outside the risk area.

You should plan on taking your Disaster Supplies Kit with you whether you go to an evacuation shelter or to another residence, hotel, etc. Gather these items and take them with you wherever you go if ordered to evacuate.

Your Disaster Supplies Kit should include...

- 3-day supply of water-- one gallon per person per day
- 3-day supply of nonperishable food and a non-electric can opener
- first aid kit, including a four week supply of prescription medicines and an extra written copy of prescriptions
- cash - with no power, banks may be closed, checks and credit cards unaccepted, and ATM's cannot operate
- battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- photo ID and proof of residency
- charcoal and ice
- bleach/water purification kit
- coolers for food and to store ice
- blanket/sleeping bag for each person
- flashlight and extra batteries
- infant necessities
- pet supplies
- clean up supplies
- toiletries
- camera and film

Store these supplies in sturdy, water resistant, and easy to carry containers, such as backpacks or duffel bags. Keep important papers and family documents in a weatherproof container.