

Emergency Management Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do before an emergency?

- Know your evacuation zone and the evacuation routes.
 - <https://myescambia.com/apps/knowyourzone/index.html>
- Create a family emergency plan and practice it.
 - Prepared an emergency kit with food, water, medications, flashlight, radio, and important documents.
- Sign up for emergency alerts through your local emergency management agency.
 - <https://myescambia.com/our-services/public-safety/beready>

How do I stay safe during an emergency?

- Follow instructions from local authorities.
- Evacuate if ordered.
- Stay indoors and away from windows if sheltering in place.
- Monitor weather updates and emergency alerts.

What steps should I take after an emergency?

- Avoid floodwaters and downed power lines.
- Check on neighbors and loved ones.
- Document any damages for insurance and FEMA.
- Contact local emergency services for support or guidance.

Resident Evacuations

- How will I know if I need to evacuate?
 - Evacuation orders will be issued by local emergency officials via radio, TV, official social media accounts, and emergency alert systems.
- What should I bring when evacuating?
 - Take your emergency kit, personal documents, medications, cash, clothing, food, water, and cellphone charger. Don't forget pets and their supplies.

Safety Tips

- How can I stay safe around floodwaters?
 - Never walk or drive through floodwaters. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down, and 2 feet can sweep away vehicles.
- Are there any specific dangers after a storm?
 - Watch for fallen power lines, gas leaks, damaged structures, and contaminated water.

Generator Safety

- How do I use a generator safely?
 - Only operate generators outdoors, far from windows and doors.
- Never use inside homes, garages, or enclosed spaces.
- Use proper cords and avoid backfeeding into the power grid.

Food and Drinking Water Safety

- Is my food safe after a power outage?

- Discard perishable foods if the refrigerator has been above 40 degrees for more than 4 hours. When in doubt, throw it out.
- How can I ensure my drinking water is safe?
 - Follow boil water notices. If unsure, boil water for at least one minute or use bottled water.

Will EMS and Fire respond after a hurricane?

- EMS and Fire will be able to respond once sustained winds fall under 40mph.

Wastewater and Stormwater Safety

- Can I flush toilets or use sinks after a storm?
 - If the sewer system is damaged or flooded, avoid flushing or draining until the system is inspected or restored.
- What should I do about stormwater flooding in my yard or neighborhood?
 - Avoid contact. Report any blocked storm drains or chemical odors to local public works or emergency services.

Damage Assessment and Recovery

- How do I report property damage?
 - Contact your insurance provider and document damage with photos. Report major structural issues to your local emergency management office.
- Can I return home after an evacuation?
 - Only return when officials declare it safe. Follow local guidance for cleanup and utility restoration.

Debris Cleanup

- Who is responsible for debris removal?
 - Local government agencies may coordinate debris pickup. Follow their schedule and sorting rules (e.g., separating vegetation from construction debris).
- Is it safe to clean up debris myself?
 - Use gloves, masks, and protective clothing. Be aware of sharp objects, mold, or chemical exposure.

FEMA and State Assistance

- How do I apply for FEMA assistance?
 - Visit www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). You'll need your Social Security Number, damage documentation, and insurance information.
- What state assistance is available?
 - The state may offer shelter, food, unemployment aid, and debris removal services. Check with your local emergency management or state relief agency for details.