



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## NATURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE & PUBLIC RELIEF GUIDE (FLORIDA RESIDENTS)

### General Preparedness

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#### **Q1: What should I do before an emergency happens?**

- Create a family emergency plan, including evacuation routes and meeting points.
- Build a disaster supply kit with food, water, medications, flashlights, and important documents.
- Sign up for emergency alerts (local county, Florida Division of Emergency Management, FEMA).
- Review your insurance coverage (flood, windstorm, homeowners).
- Know your evacuation zone by visiting [FloridaDisaster.org](http://FloridaDisaster.org)

#### **Q2: What should I do during an emergency?**

- Follow evacuation orders immediately.
- Stay tuned to official alerts via radio, TV, or mobile alerts.
- Avoid floodwaters and downed power lines.
- Shelter in a safe interior room if unable to evacuate.

#### **Q3: What should I do after an emergency?**

- Check on family, neighbors, and pets.
- Report damages to local officials and insurance providers.
- Avoid driving unless absolutely necessary.
- Begin documenting damage with photos/videos.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT*

**[myescambia.com/beready](http://myescambia.com/beready)**

## Evacuations

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### Q4: How do I know if I need to evacuate?

Local emergency management will issue evacuation orders based on storm strength, surge zones, and flood risk. Orders are announced through TV, radio, county alert systems, [myescambia.com/beready](https://myescambia.com/beready) and [FloridaDisaster.org](https://FloridaDisaster.org).

### Q5: Where can I go if I must evacuate?

- County-designated shelters (check local county emergency websites).
- Friends or family outside evacuation zones.
- Hotels inland (book early if possible).
- If you need transportation, contact your county emergency management or dial 2-1-1.

## Safety Tips

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### Q6: Is it safe to use a generator after a disaster?

- Only operate generators outdoors, at least 20 feet from windows/doors.
- Never run a generator inside a garage or enclosed space.
- Use heavy-duty extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- Prevent backfeed: never plug a generator into a household wall outlet.

### Q7: Is my tap water safe to drink?

- After disasters, water supplies may be contaminated.
- Check local boil-water advisories.
- If in doubt, boil water for at least 1 minute or use bottled water.

### Q8: What should I do with spoiled food after a power outage?

- Throw away perishable food left above 40°F for more than 2 hours.
- “When in doubt, throw it out.”

### Q9: What about wastewater and stormwater safety?

- Avoid contact with standing floodwaters (may contain sewage, chemicals, or debris).
- Do not flush large amounts of debris down toilets or drains.
- Report sewage spills to your county utilities department.

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[myescambia.com/beready](https://myescambia.com/beready)

## Damage Assessment & Debris Cleanup

### Q10: How should I assess my property damage?

- Take photos/videos of all damage before making repairs.
- Keep receipts for temporary fixes (tarps, plywood, cleanup supplies).
- Report damages to your insurance company and county officials.

### Q11: How do I handle debris cleanup?

- Separate debris into categories: vegetative, construction materials, appliances, electronics, hazardous waste.
- Place debris curbside in separate piles.
- Do not burn storm debris unless approved by local officials.

## Accessing Assistance

### Q12: How do I apply for federal disaster assistance?

- Register with FEMA:
- Online at **DisasterAssistance.gov**
- Call **1-800-621-3362**
- Download the FEMA app
- You'll need your Social Security number, insurance information, a description of losses, and banking info for direct deposit.

### Q13: What if FEMA denies my claim?

- You have 60 days to file an appeal.
- Provide additional documents (insurance letters, contractor estimates, photos).
- Submit appeals online, by mail, or in person at a Disaster Recovery Center.

### Q14: Are there Florida-specific recovery programs?

- Florida Division of Emergency Management coordinates state aid.
- Long-Term Recovery Groups (such as Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies (BRACE) in Pensacola: **bereadyalliance.org**).
- Call 2-1-1 for United Way and local resources.

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## Building Recovery

### Q15: Can I begin rebuilding right away?

- Secure your property first (temporary repairs are encouraged).
- Check with local building officials before permanent reconstruction.
- Permits may be required for major repairs or rebuilding.

### Q16: Are there special rebuilding laws after a disaster?

- Floodplain management regulations may require elevating structures.
- Local codes may mandate storm-resistant materials.
- Federal funds may be contingent on code compliance.

## Natural Emergency Guidance

### Q17: What types of emergencies should I prepare for in Florida?

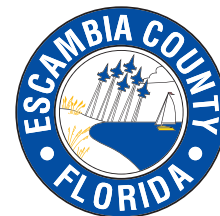
- **Florida Statutes Chapter 252** – governs state emergency management.
- **Stafford Act** – federal law for disaster relief funding.
- Local county ordinances also regulate debris cleanup and recovery.

- **Q18: What laws govern emergency response in Florida?**

- Floodplain management regulations may require elevating structures.
- Local codes may mandate storm-resistant materials.
- Federal funds may be contingent on code compliance.

## Quick Contacts for Residents

- **Emergency:** 9-1-1
- **Florida Division of Emergency Management:** [floridadisaster.org](http://floridadisaster.org)
- **FEMA:** 1-800-621-3362 / [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov)
- **United Way 2-1-1:** Local referrals to shelters, food, and assistance
- **BRACE (Pensacola & Escambia County):** [bereadyalliance.org](http://bereadyalliance.org)
- **Escambia County Citizen Information Center:** 850-471-6600



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[myescambia.com/beready](http://myescambia.com/beready)