



# ***Hurricane Preparedness for People With Disabilities or Mobility Limitations***

## **Hurricane Planning And Preparations - A Necessity**

---

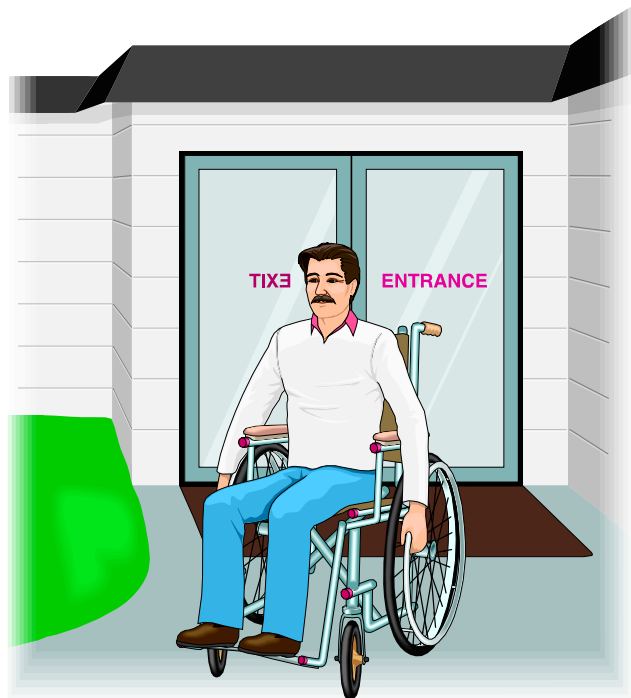
---

Hurricanes are a threat to the Hampton Roads area, and everyone must plan for a hurricane, particularly people with disabilities or mobility limitations. The time to start planning is NOW - if you wait until a hurricane threatens the area, it will be too late. Use the information in this publication as a guideline to develop your personal plan. Remember, **during an emergency, you are your own first line of defense.**

This publication lists information specifically for people with disabilities or mobility limitations. It is not all-inclusive, and must be used in conjunction with other hurricane preparedness publications. Use this information as a supplement to the Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency publications listed on the last page. Call the Virginia Beach Fire Department/Office of Emergency Management at 427-4228 if you have any specific questions about hurricane preparations.

Take the time now to develop your own personal plan for surviving a hurricane. Plan for actions to take before, during and after a hurricane. Consult your service support agencies, home healthcare service provider (if any), family, friends, neighbors, and physician, if necessary. Ask them to assist you with your hurricane plan. But remember, **you are ultimately responsible for your own preparations.**

This publication has four sections. Please review all sections, and start your planning now!



# What Are My Risks From A Hurricane?

---

---

## Are You At Risk?

Everyone in the area is at risk from hurricanes, and if you have a disability or mobility limitation, you face additional risk factors. Factors that can impact you include: isolation due to debris or flooding; wind damage and/or flooding of your residence; loss of electrical power for any assistive devices; loss of potable water and sewer service; and loss of communications, including assistive devices.

## Should You Evacuate?

Ask yourself these three basic questions:

- *First: Is my location safe from flooding?*
- *Second: Is my home likely to survive?*
- *Third: Am I independent of electricity and other people for my needs for at least 72 hours?*

### ***First: Is my location safe from flooding?***

There are two major factors determining the susceptibility of your location to flooding: elevation and proximity to a body of water.

**Elevation** - Know the elevation of your property and residence; if you don't know, contact the Beach Management office at 427-4167, or your homeowners insurance agent.

**Proximity to a Body of Water**-

- If you live on or near any waterfront area, or any area bordering on tidal creeks or ponds, or any canal or lake which could be affected by tidal flooding, your property may be at risk for flooding during a hurricane.
- If your area floods during heavy rains, your property could be at risk for flooding during a hurricane.

Using the information above, and information about the expected storm surge of an approaching hurricane will help you determine if you need to evacuate. Remember, just because your property has not flooded in recent years, does not mean that you will be safe from flooding in future hurricanes!

### ***Second: Is my home likely to survive?***

**Structure** - Is your home constructed in a manner that would make it vulnerable to wind damage? If so, you should seriously consider leaving for a more substantial structure.

**Trees/Debris** - Does your property have a large number of trees that could fall on your house? Do the roads going into your neighborhood have a risk of being blocked by fallen trees? If so, you may want to consider evacuation.

Manufactured or mobile homes are not built to survive high winds, even if properly tied down with hurricane straps. You should plan to leave your manufactured or mobile home if 74 mile-per-hour or greater winds are forecast for our area for a substantial building.

### ***Third: Am I independent of electricity and other people for my needs for at least 72 hours?***

- Do you rely on electricity to run medical equipment, mobility equipment or communications devices?
- Do you rely on others to run errands, bring you food, or provide routine medical care? If these people are not available, can you survive on your own for several days, possibly a week?
- Are you unable to lift and carry a one gallon water container alone?
- If you live in an multi-story structure, are you unable to use stairways to go up and down to your residence if the elevator is not working? Are you unable to use the stairs while carrying a small bag of groceries or a gallon jug of water?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you must seriously consider evacuating your residence before a hurricane strikes.

Power lines, particularly overhead power lines, are very vulnerable during hurricanes. While every effort will be made to restore power as soon as possible, it may be days or even weeks, in the case of a major hurricane, before power is restored.

Flooding, downed trees, downed power lines, and other debris, can block streets and roads, which can prevent access by caregivers and emergency workers. In some areas, water can undermine pavement and bridges, which could cause long delays in restoration of access.

# Create A Personal Support Network For Yourself

---

---

## Recruit Your Own Support

- Form a network of at least three people who can check on you, and assist you as necessary before and after a hurricane; your network members can be roommates, family, friends, or neighbors
- Provide network members a copy of your emergency information, medical information, and disabilities-related supplies and equipment (see below)
- Arrange for your network members to notify you when hurricane watches and warnings, evacuation notices, or sheltering information are given
- Arrange how and when you will contact each other during an emergency
- Assure they have access to your home and vehicle
- Familiarize your service animal or pets with your network members
- Show your network members how to effectively operate and safely move your equipment, and have them practice with the equipment regularly
- Develop written instructions for them to follow while assisting you
- Revise your plan regularly, particularly if there is any change in your condition

## Develop An Emergency Information List

- List telephone numbers of people who should be contacted if you need assistance quickly, including all members of your personal support network
- List at least one out-of-town contact at least 100 miles away, for use if normal local telephone communications are disrupted; it is usually easiest to call out of an impacted area
- Note any communications disabilities you may have, and the best way for people to communicate with you

## Develop A Medical Information List

- List your medical providers, including physicians, specialists, and any medical service provider
- List your medications, dosages, specific usage information, any drug sensitivities, prescribing physician, and normal pharmacy
- Attach copies of health insurance cards and related information
- Attach a copy of your prescriptions
- Attach copies of any information necessary to assist you with your medical care

## Develop A Disabilities-Related Supplies and Equipment List

- List any adaptive equipment, mobility aids, or assistive devices you may use
- Label and attach instruction cards on the use of the equipment
- List all information about your service animal (if any)

## Assemble A Disaster Supplies Kit

- Include a minimum three-day supply of food, water and essential items specific to your needs (see the Red Cross Publication, "Preparing for Emergencies A Checklist for People with Mobility Problems")
- Maintain a two- to three-week supply of essential medications, if possible
- Include important personal/family documents
- Assemble a small kit of spare/replacement parts for your equipment
- For electrically powered equipment, have backup power sources or alternative equipment that does not require electrical power

## Transportation & Sheltering

### Sheltering

Sheltering is limited in the area, and which public shelters will be opened for a given hurricane will be announced through the local media just prior to the opening of the shelter. Most shelters are in public schools, but only selected schools will be used as shelters.

In brief, the shelters will only provide floor space, in structures chosen based on existing Red Cross guidelines. There will be:

- no cots, blankets or other equipment provided at the shelters;
- no guarantees of services, including food, water, sewer, or electrical service;
- no attendant care at the shelters;
- no pets permitted (service animals permitted)

#### **You must bring your own:**

- equipment, including bed;
  - medical and personal supplies;
  - food and water (including special diets);
- and
- attendant care, if needed.

In short, if you need it, bring it with you.

The shelters are generally accessible, but access to all points within the building can not be guaranteed.

There will be no medical care provided at the shelters other than first aid. Shelter staff cannot provide medical assistance, nor administer medications.

If you have a medical condition that requires medical care, bedding, or electrical equipment, or if you need assistance with the activities of daily living, you should make plans to shelter somewhere other than a public shelter.

### Transportation

You should plan now for transportation if you will need to leave your residence. Ask the members of your Personal Support Network if they will transport you to where you need to go.

Also, contact your para-transit provider for information on how they will handle transport requests in the event of a hurricane.

## Additional Preparedness Information Sources

### National Printed Materials

There are other sources of information for making preparations for emergencies and disasters. Many of them are available from the American Red Cross or the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Publication numbers of both agencies are listed.

- ***Preparing for Emergencies - A Checklist for People with Mobility Problems***  
FEMA L-154M/ARC 4497
- ***Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit***  
FEMA L-189/ARC 4463
- ***Hurricane Awareness Action Guidelines for Senior Citizens*** FEMA (no publication number)
- ***Food & Water in an Emergency***  
FEMA L-210/ARC 5055
- ***Your Family Disaster Plan***  
FEMA L-191/ARC 4466
- ***Emergency Preparedness Checklist***  
FEMA L-154/ARC 4471

The Tidewater Chapter of the Red Cross can be reached at 446-7700.

The above are also available on the Internet at:  
<http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/down.html>  
<http://www.fema.gov/library/lib07.htm>

### Other Sources

- ***Hurricane Information*** City of Virginia Beach. Available at most Virginia Beach Public Library branches, and the Office of Emergency Management.

### Library Reference Materials

Storm Surge Atlas. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1990. Available in the Reference Section of all Virginia Beach Public Library branches.

### For Flood Insurance Zone Information

Contact the Office of Beach Management at 427-4167. Based on your address, they can determine the base (property) elevation. Please note this process takes time, so contact them early.

**Office of Emergency Management**  
**voice: 427-4228 fax: 426-5676**