

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE



**BAYCOUNTY,**  
**FLORIDA**  
BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV





As we all learned on Oct. 10, 2018 with the arrival of Category 5 Hurricane Michael, Bay County is not immune to disaster. The third-strongest storm to ever strike the United States, Hurricane Michael killed more than two dozen people in Bay County, caused billions in damages to public and private property, and forever changed the collective psyche of our community. This book aims to help our citizens and visitors prepare for the worst, whether it is another hurricane or any of a number of potential threats. Preparation is key to navigating any natural or man-made emergency, and this publication sets forth practical steps and advice for ensuring the safety of you and your family should the worst occur.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners and the Bay County Emergency Management team strive to ensure that we provide excellence and efficiency in government and the services we offer.



# BAYCOUNTY, FLORIDA





## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### 2018-2019 LEADERSHIP BAY CLASS

**Ashlyn Alsobrooks** (Peoples First Insurance), **Christopher Clubbs** (Resource Realty Group, LLC), **Stephanie Conn** (Landrum HR), **Garrett Evans** (First Florida Bank), **Jennifer Guynn** (Summit Bank), **Shelby Husbands** (Port Panama City, USA), **Taveka Jackson-Ross** (Life Management Center), **Jennifer Jacobus** (Life Management Center), **Adam Knight** (Trustmark Bank), **Christina Lancaster** (Bay County Tax Collectors Office), **Christine Lance** (Keller Williams Success Realty), **Andrea Marsh** (Bay County Council on Aging), **Jonathan Morris** (Panama City Police Department), **Brian Pinelle** (Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center), **William Q. Platt** (Hand Arendall Harrison Sale), **Lauren Presser** (Holy Nativity Episcopal School), **Chel-sea Ray** (Capt. Anderson's Marina), **Dr. Suzanne Remedies** (Gulf Coast State College), **Angie Schreiber** (Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center), and **Joseph Scott** (GAC Contractors, Inc.)

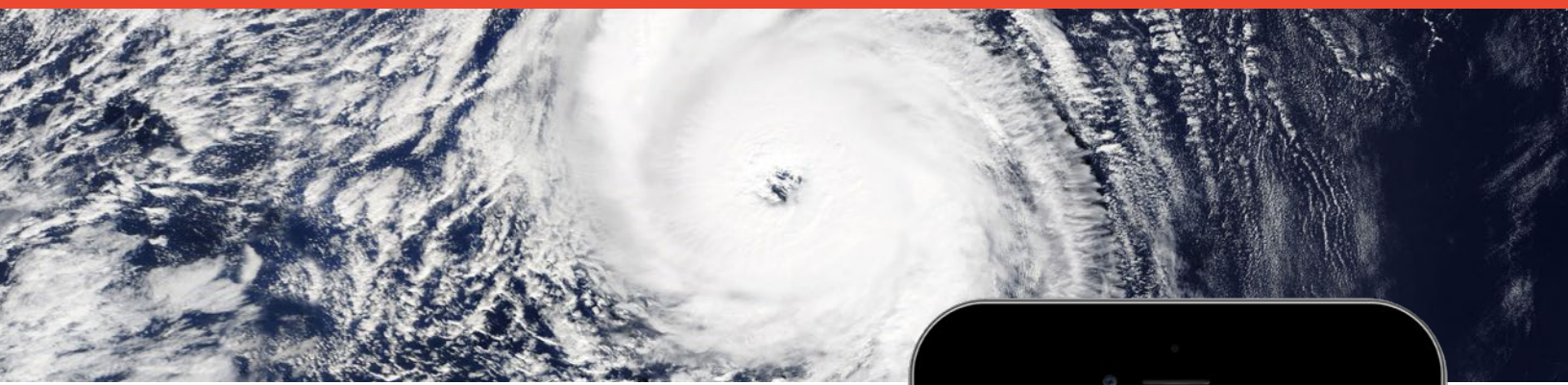
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BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
840 WEST 11TH STREET  
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32401  
**TELEPHONE:** (850) 248-8140

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[www.baycountyfl.gov](http://www.baycountyfl.gov)

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## WHEN DISASTERS STRIKES, HOW WILL YOU AND YOUR FAMILY BE NOTIFIED?

Protect yourself and your loved ones by signing up for AlertBay Emergency Notifications.

Get alerted about emergencies and other important community news by joining the AlertBay notification system. This system enables users to receive critical information in situations such as severe weather, unexpected road closures, missing persons, and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods

Residents will receive time-sensitive notifications wherever specified, such as home or mobile phones, email address, text messages, and more.

AlertBay allows users to receive notifications for specific cities to ensure they obtain updates for only the areas that could be impacted near them.

This emergency program is powered by Alert Florida and serves as a community notification system for unincorporated Bay County as well as the following cities and organizations:

- › Callaway
- › Lynn Haven
- › Mexico Beach
- › Panama City
- › Panama City Beach
- › Parker
- › Springfield
- › Bay District Schools

## TO SIGN UP FOR ALERTBAY, VISIT ALERTBAY.ORG.

For any additional questions about AlertBay, please contact [bcem@baycountyfl.gov](mailto:bcem@baycountyfl.gov) or 850-248-6040.





A family hurricane plan -- or outline specifying how a family is going to prepare for a hurricane -- should be in place before hurricane season begins. To establish a family hurricane plan:

- ☐ Find out if you live in an evacuation zone. Detailed maps are available at Bay County's GIS website: <https://gis.baycountyfl.gov/bayview/>. Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route, and shelter locations. You may have to leave quickly, so plan ahead.
- ☐ Sign up for AlertBay or the Emergency Alert System (EAS). A weather radio also provides emergency alerts.
- ☐ Decide in advance where your family will stay during a hurricane. Will it be at your home, a family member or friend's home, a hurricane evacuation shelter, or a hotel? Pick back-up locations in case there is a problem with your first choice. If you are not in an area that is recommended for evacuation, plan to stay at home and let friends and family know where you are.
- ☐ Plan how to communicate with family members if you lose power. For example, you may be able to call, text, email, or use social media. Remember that during disasters, sending text messages is usually more reliable and faster than making phone calls because phone lines are often overloaded.
- ☐ Make arrangements for those with special needs. Those with special needs should register in advance with the Florida Department of Emergency Management at <https://snr.floridadisaster.org/Signin?client=bay>.
- ☐ Talk to your employer about whether you will have to work in the event of a hurricane. If you have children, keep in contact with their school for dismissals.
- ☐ Create a list of needed supplies for your emergency preparedness kit. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Your emergency preparedness kit should include items such as food, water, and medications sufficient for at least 7 days for each household member, flashlights, candles, batteries, cash, fuel, and first aid supplies. Remember pets' needs.
- ☐ Keep important documents such as birth certificates, insurance policies, wills, bank information, licenses, and deeds in a safe, easy-to-locate place. Photograph and document the contents in your home. Store the evidence in the safe, easy-to-locate place. Create password-protected digital copies of important documents. Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before the hurricane strikes.
- ☐ Practice and review your plan with your family and members of your household.



# // PREPARING TO EVACUATE



## PREPARE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT FOR YOUR CAR TO INCLUDE:

- › Jumper Cables
- › Map
- › Flares or reflective triangle
- › Fire extinguisher
- › Tools
- › Flashlight and spare batteries
- › First aid kit
- › Blanket/sleeping bag
- › NOAA Weather Radio
- › Food/water
- › Car cell phone charger
- › Games or books to entertain children

## BE TECH READY

- › Register for AlertBay Notifications.
- › Download the FEMA App.
- › Be sure to "Like" or "Follow" the social media sites for Bay County, Florida Emergency Services, Bay County Sheriff, Bay District Schools, and local media outlets.
- › Save important documents in password-protected electronic files or on a thumb drive.

## PLANNING AHEAD IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT YOU CAN EVACUATE QUICKLY AND SAFELY IF NEEDED.

The National Weather Service will issue a hurricane watch generally within 48 hours of a perceived threat of hurricane conditions. The watch only means that conditions are possible, not that hurricane conditions will occur. A hurricane warning will be issued when hurricane conditions are expected in 36 hours or less.

## PRIOR TO, OR IMMEDIATELY WHEN A HURRICANE WATCH IS ISSUED, YOU SHOULD:

- ☐ Evaluate your evacuation route and destination options. During mandatory evacuations all lanes will be congested and it may take four times longer than usual to get to your destination.
- ☐ Get cash from the bank as credit cards may not work if the power goes out. Also, banks may be unable to immediately reopen after the storm.
- ☐ Fill the gas tank of each of your vehicles.
- ☐ Gather emergency contacts and notify friends and family of your destination should you evacuate.
- ☐ Pay attention to the television or radio for weather or local news updates.
- ☐ Fill sinks, bathtubs, and washing machines with water as an extra supply for washing or flushing toilets.
- ☐ Adjust thermostats on refrigerators/freezers to the coldest setting in case of power outages. Store extra containers of clean water in them.
- ☐ Cover all windows with hurricane shutters/fabric or with 5/8-inch exterior-grade plywood, cut to fit and ready to install.
- ☐ Park extra vehicles under covered protection or move to higher ground.
- ☐ Bring in any loose outside items which may damage property or become projectiles in high winds such as garbage cans, bicycles, lawn furniture, etc. Anchor any items that would be unsafe to bring inside such as propane tanks, gas grills, etc.
- ☐ Identify and gather documents such as prescriptions, medical records, identification, birth certificates, social security cards, marriage licenses, insurance policies, tax documents, wills, titles, deeds, banking documents, passports, credit card information, and documents that prove where you live.
- ☐ Photograph each room of the house along with key contents such as furniture, jewelry, china, guns, collectibles, electronics, etc. and/or itemize your belongings by room.

When emergency management officials order a mandatory evacuation, it is important to comply immediately. All residents and visitors must leave. Officials usually order evacuations from low lying areas within the greatest potential path of the storm.

## IF YOU DECIDE TO VOLUNTARILY LEAVE OR ARE ORDERED TO EVACUATE THE AREA:

- ☐ Leave as quickly as possible.
- ☐ Take only essential items.
- ☐ Put your packed bag with your clothes, toiletry items, medicines, cash, identification, water and food, etc. in the vehicle.
- ☐ Put your important documents in the vehicle.
- ☐ Load pets and pet food/supplies. (Remember, some shelters cannot take pets and may only allow service animals)
- ☐ If you feel safe doing so, turn off the gas, electricity, and water to your home.
- ☐ Unplug your appliances and electronic equipment (radios, computers, televisions) to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.
- ☐ Lock doors and windows.
- ☐ Put your emergency supply kit in your vehicle. (Booster cables, tools, bottled water, snacks, flashlight, flares, first aid kit, matches, blanket/sleeping bag, rain gear, extra clothes)
- ☐ Tune your radio for emergency instructions regarding evacuation routes and shelters.
- ☐ Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by the severe weather.
- ☐ Call your out-of-area family members to let them know where you are going.
- ☐ Leave a note in the house telling others when you left and where you are going.
- ☐ Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection such as long pants, long sleeved shirts, rain gear, and hats.
- ☐ Check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- ☐ Follow designated evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts, as other routes may be blocked, and expect heavy traffic.
- ☐ Be alert for road hazards such as washed out roads or bridges, downed power lines and trees, and other blown debris.
- ☐ Do not drive around any barricades for any reason.
- ☐ Do not drive into flooded areas. Water can be deeper than it appears. There is also the risk of driving off the roadway into a ditch or ravine that you cannot see. Turn around. Don't drown! Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down. One foot of moving water can sweep a vehicle away.
- ☐ If your car stalls out, do not walk or swim through flood waters. Stay with the vehicle.
- ☐ Never ever transport gasoline in any type of container inside your vehicle.



## // IF ORDERED TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE



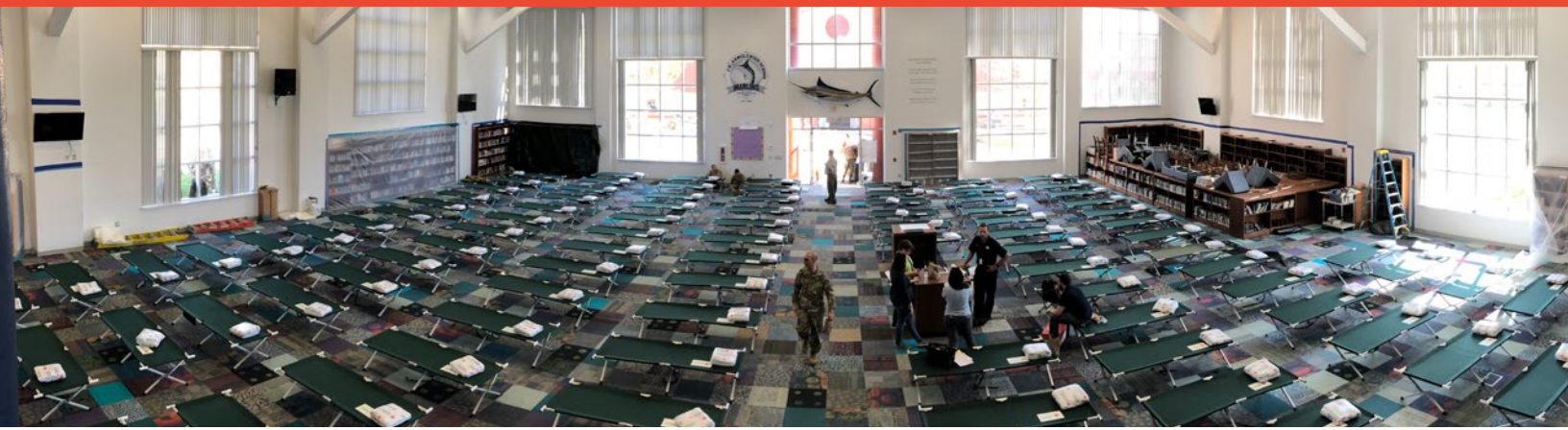
### THOSE FACING A DIRECT THREAT WILL HAVE TO WEIGH THE OPTIONS OF EVACUATING TO A SAFER LOCATION VERSUS SHELTERING IN PLACE.

If you have waited too long to evacuate and do not have time to get out, sheltering in place is probably the best option. In general, sheltering in place is appropriate when conditions require people to seek immediate protection in their home, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

- ☐ Seek shelter in the most interior room of a building surrounded by walls and without windows, such as closets or bathrooms, to avoid flying debris. Many injuries during a hurricane are cuts caused by flying glass or debris.
- ☐ Ensuring that you are equipped with enough supplies to last for at least seven days per household member is essential, as it may take time for rescuers to reach you. Have three gallons of water per person per day along with nonperishable food, any necessary medications, and supplies for pets.
- ☐ Make sure you have durable medical equipment for those with special needs that involve electricity, it is very likely the power will go out.
- ☐ Be sure to have plenty of cash on hand for once you can leave your shelter. Without power ATMs will not work.
- ☐ Be sure the generator is working properly before the storm arrives. You will also need adequate gasoline on hand to operate the generator until electricity is restored. Use a generator outside only to power only the most necessary items in your home.

- ☐ Do not go outside during the eye of the storm. Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or local radio stations and wait for authorities to give the okay that all is clear. If you go outside after the storm has passed, do not drive or walk through any standing water, as standing water could contain power lines, animals, or other serious hazards.
- ☐ Emergency kits should be compatible for both in-place sheltering and evacuation. At a minimum, your kit should include all daily necessities and basic resources that would allow you to live on your own for seven days.
- ☐ Keep a fire extinguisher nearby and only use hand cranked, solar powered, or battery operated lamps or flashlights.
- ☐ Be sure to leave a clear path to exit in case of a fire.
- ☐ If you need assistance getting out of your building and rely on an elevator, make sure you have a way to leave your home before you decide to shelter in place.
- ☐ Make sure there are other exits such as stairs, windows, or ramps if the electricity goes out and the elevator does not work.
- ☐ Have a list of personal contacts to help should you need assistance evacuating.





## BAY COUNTY HAS A SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER.

Please be sure to register yourself or your special needs family member or friend before an emergency occurs at <https://snr.floridadisaster.org/Signin?client=bay>. The purpose of this program is to provide local emergency responders with important information from individuals who reside in Bay County who might have special needs or need assistance in the event of an emergency situation such as a tornado, flood, hurricane, extended power outage, or disease outbreak. The program is strictly voluntary, and its intent is to provide the emergency response network with information pertinent to developing an effective response to emergency situations. Our local health department will decide whether a registered person qualifies for acceptance at a special needs shelter or a general population shelter.

Examples of people who may qualify for a special needs shelter include elderly people living in isolated areas, those unable to ambulate (i.e. wheelchair bound,

bedridden, etc.), people on oxygen, or the visually impaired, people on life-sustaining medication, the developmentally disabled, hearing impaired, or those requiring life-sustaining equipment. Knowing the status and location of people in our county with special needs would be critical in, for example, a hurricane. If power was lost to an area for an extended period, it could be life threatening for those unable to leave or who require electricity to maintain life-support equipment. Evacuating to a special needs shelter will not be comfortable.

People with both mental and physical health issues are eligible for admission to special needs shelters, but anyone who evacuates to a special needs shelter must bring a caregiver. Evacuees are also required to bring all medications and machines, as caregivers and special equipment will not be provided by the shelter. A list of emergency contacts must be submitted. For people who are already residents of an assisted living facility, it is the facility's duty to make the correct preparations, and those residents would not be pre-approved for the special needs shelter.



## THE STATE OF FLORIDA RULE 64-3.020 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTERS.

(1) A person shall be eligible for access to a special needs shelter if:

- (a) They are a person with special needs;
- (b) Their care needs exceed basic first aid provided at General Population Shelters; and
- (c) Their impairments or disabilities:
  1. Are medically stable; and
  2. Do not exceed the capacity, staffing, and equipment of the special need shelter to minimize deterioration of their pre-event level of health.

(2) Special needs shelter may choose to accept persons with care needs that exceed the criteria stated in subsection (1).

(3) Determination as to the capacity (either in skills or assets) of the special needs shelter is made by the local emergency management agency and the county health department or their designees.

*Specific Authority 381.0303(6)(a) FS. Law Implemented 381.0303(6)(a) FS. History- New 11-21-07.*

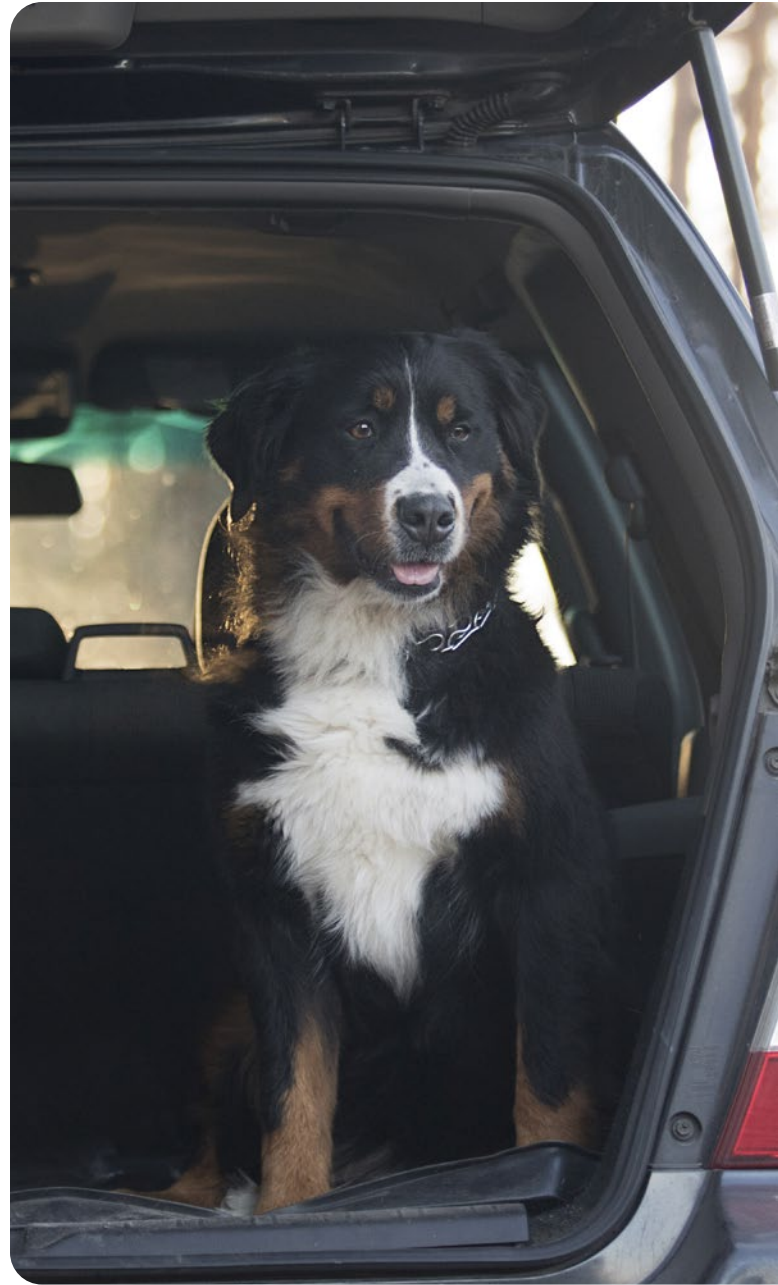
# // DISASTER PLANNING FOR YOUR PETS

## DO YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR FURRY FRIENDS IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY?

Pets are family, too. When a pet owner neglects to include a pet in emergency planning, they could place their pets and others in danger. A predetermined plan can help ensure that everyone is ready for any disaster.

Below are some simple steps to take now that will help you and your pet later:

- Keep a collar and identification tag on all animals, even those that only stay indoors. Pet microchipping is the best way to ensure reunification with your animal. Your cell phone number should be on the identification tag and your microchip registration should be kept current.
- Research and list of potential refuges for your pet. Contact Bay County Emergency Services for the most up-to-date information on shelters that are designated as pet friendly. Identify hotels outside of Bay County that will accept pets. While not required, some hotels may make special concessions to allow pets in the event of an evacuation.
- Be sure to keep shots current and have records handy as shelters and hotels may require shot records for your pet.
- Purchase a pet carrier that can be used to transport pets safely.
- Prepare an emergency/travel kit for each animal. Kits should include:
  - A current photo of your pet in case you are separated
  - Medications, medical records, and microchip registration
  - A leash and extra collar
  - Food and water bowls
  - Bottled water and seven days' worth of food
  - Pet waste clean-up supplies
  - Emergency contact information
  - First aid items
  - Favorite toys and treats



Always plan to take your pet if you evacuate. If it is not safe for you to stay, it is not safe for your pet.

Carefully monitor and bring pets inside at the first warning of a storm or disaster. Animals sense impending storms and can become disoriented and wander away. Keeping pets within sight when possible will reassure them. After a disaster, help reorient them by walking them on a leash. They may be confused if landmarks or scents are altered.

**IN AN EMERGENCY, PETS WILL NEED YOU MORE THAN EVER. PLAN AHEAD AND KEEP THEM SAFE.**



**TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES DURING CLEANUP AFTER A HURRICANE, FLOOD, OR OTHER NATURAL DISASTER. FOLLOW THESE CLEANUP TIPS AND MONITOR THE INTERNET, RADIO, OR TELEVISION FOR UP-TO-DATE EMERGENCY INFORMATION.**

## GET THE RIGHT SAFETY GEAR:

- › Hard hats
- › Goggles
- › N95 masks (or a respirator with a higher protection level)
- › Heavy work gloves
- › Waterproof boots with steel toes and insoles (not just steel shanks)
- › Earplugs or protective headphones (if you are working with noisy equipment)
- › At least two fire extinguishers (each with a UL rating of at least 10A)
- › If sewage is involved, make sure to wear the following during your cleanup:
  - Rubber boots and/or gloves
  - Goggles

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

- › Rest when needed and have teams of at least two people work together to move heavy or bulky objects.
- › Get support from family members, friends, counselors, or therapists.

## TAKE PRECAUTIONS WHEN USING A CHAINSAW:

- › When using a chainsaw, always follow manufacturer instructions. Make sure to wear appropriate protective gear, and be sure that bystanders are a safe distance away.
- › Avoid contact with power lines and take extra care in cutting trees or branches that are bent or caught under something else.
- › Use extreme caution to avoid electrical shock when using an electric chainsaw.

## PREVENT MOLD GROWTH:

- › Clean up and dry your home quickly after the storm or flood ends (within 24 to 48 hours, if possible).
- › Air out your house by opening doors and windows. Use fans to dry wet areas. Position fans to blow air out doors or windows.
- › Throw away anything that you can not clean or dry quickly (such as mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and paper products).
- › Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.

- › Thoroughly clean all wet items and surfaces with hot water and laundry or dish detergent. For example, clean any flooring, concrete, molding, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures.
- › Clean up mold with a mix of bleach and water. Mix one cup of household bleach with one gallon of water. Never use bleach in a closed space. Open windows and doors first.
- › Wear personal protective equipment to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin. Wear goggles, an N-95 respirator, and protective gloves.
- › Clean everything with mold on it.

## OTHER PRECAUTIONS:

- › Floodwater can contain dangerous bacteria from overflowing sewage and agricultural and industrial waste. While skin contact with floodwater does not pose a serious health risk by itself, eating or drinking anything contaminated with floodwater can cause diseases. If you have any open cuts or sores that will be exposed to floodwater, keep them as clean as possible by washing them with soap and applying an antibiotic ointment to discourage infection.
- › Stay away from any damaged buildings or structures until a building inspector or other government authority has examined and certified that it is safe. Wait until daylight to return to buildings so it is easier to see and avoid any hazards- especially if the power is out.
- › If you smell gas or suspect a leak, leave your house/building and contact emergency authorities right away! Do not turn on lights, light matches, smoke, or do anything that can cause a spark. Do not return to the building until it is safe.
- › Never use generators, pressure washers, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, or camper—or even outside near an open window, door, or vent. Carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas from these sources, can cause sudden illness and death. It can build up indoors and poison the people and animals inside.
- › If electrical circuits and electrical equipment have gotten wet or are in or near water, turn off the power at the main breaker or fuse on the service panel. If you must enter standing water to access the main power switch, then call an electrician to turn it off.
- › Never turn power on or off or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water.
- › Do not connect generators to your home's electrical circuits without the approved, automatic-interrupt devices. If a generator is on line when electrical service is restored, it can become a major fire hazard and it may endanger line workers helping to restore power in your area.



## BEFORE CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUILDING DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE IF:

- › The contractor is bonded and has a current and valid license, liability insurance and workers' compensation, required documents, and schedule of inspections.
- › Any complaints have been filed against the contractor.
- › Any other requirements or legal notices pertain to the job.

To determine the best local contractor, be sure to get recommendations from credible sources. Once you have solicited at least three contractors, compare each to determine the best option. Make sure the contractor has the correct licenses and certifications to complete the job so they are able to complete it safely and legally. Review examples of their finished projects.

Get bids for the job and hire your contractor. When hiring a contractor, always require a written contract, no matter how small the job. The contract should include the contractor's name, business name, address, phone and fax numbers, license number and type, insurance information, payment and inspection schedule, job plans and specifications, specific types and grades or materials, itemized total costs, warranties on materials and workmanship, start and completion dates, and the contractor's commitment to secure all permits.

Make sure your contract details exactly what will be done, including deadlines, milestone payments, and exact materials.

Work with your contractor to pull the proper permits for your renovation. Do not pay more than 10 percent of the job total before the job starts. The contractor should have included a payment schedule and requested progress payments. It is best to not sign a contract for your entire renovation budget.

Be prepared to spend at least 10 to 15 percent more than your contract. Verify insurance coverage and know what is covered by your homeowners and your contractor's insurance. Also, obtain a copy of the company's insurance policy.

Do not make a final payment until the job is 100-percent complete. Contractors finish most jobs before they get to the final details. Do not make the final payment until you're completely satisfied.

**NEVER PAY CASH, PULL YOUR OWN PERMITS, OR WITHDRAW MONEY FROM THE BANK FOR A CONTRACTOR.**

# EMERGENCY CHECKLIST / DISASTER SUPPLY KIT //

## ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Water (3 gallons per person, per day for seven days)
- ☐ Non-perishable food
- ☐ Sterile gauze pads
- ☐ Flashlight and batteries  
*Do not use candles and be sure to have enough batteries*
- ☐ NOAA weather radio
- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ At least two weeks' supply of medication, medical supplies used regularly, and a list of allergies
- ☐ Information about your pharmacy, the name of the drug, and dosage
- ☐ Important phone numbers  
*Maintain a list of important phone numbers including the county Emergency Management Office, evacuation sites, doctors, banks, schools, veterinarian, and a number for out-of-town contacts.*
- ☐ Medical records and primary care physician contact information
- ☐ List of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of needed medical devices
- ☐ Service animals' credentials, veterinary records, and proof of ownership
- ☐ Supplies for your service animal
- ☐ Special needs items  
*Be sure to include specialty items for infants, small children, the elderly, and family members with a disability*
- ☐ Clothing  
*Include seasonal or rain gear and sturdy shoes or boots*
- ☐ Radio  
*Battery operated or hand cranked radio, a NOAA Weather Radio*
- ☐ Cash  
*Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm*
- ☐ Vehicle  
*Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline throughout hurricane season*

## FIRST AID KIT

- ☐ First-aid manual
- ☐ Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
- ☐ Sterile gauze pads
- ☐ Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- ☐ Triangular bandages
- ☐ Scissors and tweezers
- ☐ Sewing needle
- ☐ Moistened towelettes
- ☐ Antiseptic
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Tube of petroleum jelly
- ☐ Safety pins
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Latex gloves
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Aspirin or other pain reliever
- ☐ Anti-diarrhea medicine
- ☐ Antacid

## FOOD

*Enough for at least seven days, non-perishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, baby food, and any special dietary needs.*

- ☐ Non-electric can opener
- ☐ Paper plates
- ☐ Napkins
- ☐ Plastic cups
- ☐ Utensils

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Insurance cards
- ☐ Medical cards
- ☐ Bank numbers
- ☐ Credit card numbers
- ☐ Copy of Social Security card
- ☐ Copies of birth and or marriage certificates
- ☐ Other personal documents
- ☐ Set of car, house and office keys

*Items should be kept in a waterproof container*

## PET CARE ITEMS

- ☐ Pet food and water
- ☐ Proper identification
- ☐ Medical records
- ☐ A carrier or kennel cage
- ☐ Muzzle, collar, and leash
- ☐ Water and food bowls
- ☐ Medication
- ☐ Cat litter
- ☐ Cat litter box



A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornado intensities are classified on the Fujita Scale with ratings between F0 (weakest) to F5 (strongest). They are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees, and hurling objects through the air. Although severe tornadoes are more common in the plains states, tornadoes have been reported in every state.

## PREPARING BEFORE A TORNADO

### BUILD AN EMERGENCY KIT AND MAKE A FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN:

In the event your family is not together when a tornado strikes, it's important to have a plan for contacting each other. Compile contact information for relevant family members and keep it handy in a wallet or purse. Do not rely on reaching each other by cell phone, because service may be intermittent or unavailable.

### DESIGNATE A "SAFE ROOM" IN YOUR HOME:

Since few Florida homes have basements, select an interior room without windows, such as a bathroom or walk-in closet. If possible, have a mattress readily available in your safe room to serve as a barrier against flying debris and wind in case your roof develops a hole or blows off completely. Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes.

### BE READY TO ACT QUICKLY:

- If a tornado watch is issued, tune in to NOAA Weather Radio or your local news station for information and updates.
- Pay attention to changing weather conditions and be on the lookout for the following warning signs:
  - A dark, greenish sky
  - Large hail
  - A large, dark, low-lying cloud that is rotating
  - A loud roar, similar to a freight train

## RECOVERING AFTER A TORNADO

- Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.
- If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Use battery-powered flashlights when examining buildings—do NOT use candles.
- If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out of the building quickly and call the gas company or fire department.



## EF SCALE / TORNADO STRENGTH

EF RATING	WIND SPEED	EXPECTED DAMAGE
EF-0	65-85 mph	<b>LIGHT DAMAGE</b> Peels surface off some roofs; some damage to gutters or siding; branches broken off trees; shallow-rooted trees pushed over. Confirmed tornadoes with no reported damage (i.e., those that remain in open fields) are always rated EF0.
EF-1	86-110 mph	<b>MODERATE DAMAGE</b> Roofs severely stripped; mobile homes overturned or badly damaged; loss of exterior doors; windows and other glass broken.
EF-2	111-135 mph	<b>CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE</b> Roofs torn off from well-constructed houses; foundations of frame homes shifted; mobile homes completely destroyed; large trees snapped or uprooted; light-object missiles generated; cars lifted off ground.
EF-3	136-165 mph	<b>SEVERE DAMAGE</b> Entire stories of well-constructed houses destroyed; severe damage to large buildings such as shopping malls; trains overturned; trees debarked; heavy cars lifted off the ground and thrown; structures with weak foundations are badly damaged.
EF-4	166-200 mph	<b>DEVASTATING DAMAGE</b> Well-constructed and whole frame houses completely leveled; some frame homes may be swept away; cars and other large objects thrown and small missiles generated.
EF-5	>200 mph	<b>INCREDIBLE DAMAGE</b> Strong-framed, well-built houses leveled off foundations and swept away; steel-reinforced concrete structures are critically damaged; tall buildings collapse or have severe structural deformations; cars, trucks, and trains can be thrown approximately 1 mile (1.6 km).

**FACT:**

Everyone lives in a flood zone! Floods can happen anytime and anywhere, making flooding the nation's most common and costly natural disaster. Hurricanes and tropical storms have posed the most dangerous flood threats to our coastal areas throughout our history, but these storms are not the only risk. In Bay County, flooding typically results from frequent and often intense large-scale weather systems. Bay County averages about 80 thunderstorms annually, giving us an average rainfall of 61 inches. In recent years we have seen an increase and a record breaking high of 81 inches in 2018.

**FACT:**

Bay County residents living on or near our numerous bay systems, lakes, coastal, and bay areas in high-risk flood zones are not the only ones at peril. In fact, more than 20 percent of flood claims come from properties outside of the high-risk flood zone. It is imperative to know your flood zone to better prepare and protect yourself, your home, and your business.

**FACT:**

Only flood insurance protects you from damages due to flood waters. Traditional homeowner's and renter's insurance policies do not cover damages or losses due to flooding. FEMA estimates that just one inch of water can cause \$25,000 of damage to a home. Flood insurance can be the difference between recovering and being financially devastated. Flood insurance coverage for homeowners in moderate- to low-risk zones can be as low as \$325 per year. Flood policies have a 30-day waiting period to take effect. To purchase flood insurance, contact your insurance agent. For additional assistance, call the National Flood Insurance Program Help Center at 1-800-427-4661 or visit online at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).

**FACT:**

You can help reduce the risk of flooding. Do not place any debris, lawn, trash or otherwise in stormwater inlets, ditches, and other waterways. Not only does it violate county code, but dumping into the drainage system can easily create blockages preventing rain from properly draining which could create otherwise preventable flooding.



A wildfire is an unplanned fire in a natural area such as a forest, grassland, or prairie. It is often caused by humans or lightning. Wildfires can cause flooding and create problems with communications, transportation, gas, and power. Wildfires can happen anywhere, at any time, and spread rapidly. Periods of little rain and high winds increase the threat of wildfires.

Be prepared if a wildfire threatens. Know the evacuation routes in Bay County, and follow Emergency Management and local media for reports and evacuation information. Follow instructions of local officials, and leave if told to do so.

## BE PREPARED IN THE EVENT A WILDFIRE THREATENS YOUR HOME.

- › Keep important documents in a fireproof, safe place. Create password-protected digital copies. Plan to take these items with you in the event of an evacuation.
- › Review insurance coverage to make sure it is enough to replace your property.
- › Create a fire-resistant zone that is free of leaves, debris, or flammable materials of at least 30 feet from your home.
- › Find an outdoor water source with a hose that can reach any area of your property.
- › Gather emergency supplies including N95 respirator masks.
- › Back your vehicle into the garage, or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape.
- › Shut your vehicle's doors and leave them unlocked. Roll up the windows. Leave the key in the ignition. Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- › Close all doors and windows to your home. Make sure you lock up your home if you need to evacuate.

- › Confine pets to one room and make plans to take your pets with you in the event of an evacuation. Make arrangements to stay with a friend or relative outside of the threatened area in case of an evacuation.
- › Take your disaster supply kit.
- › Tell someone where you are going. Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke.

## BE SAFE WHEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR HOME AFTER AN EVACUATION.

- › Listen to authorities to find out when it is safe to return and whether water is safe to drink.
- › Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire. Consider the danger to pets and livestock walking the ground.
- › Document property damage with photographs. Conduct an inventory and contact your insurance company for assistance.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WILDFIRES:

- › **National Fire Protection Association**  
[www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire](http://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire)
- › **Ready.gov**  
[www.ready.gov/wildfires](http://www.ready.gov/wildfires)



## BURNING OUTDOORS IN FLORIDA

### WHEN BURNING OUTDOORS, FLORIDA LAW REQUIRES A BURN PERMIT UNLESS:

- › You are burning only yard waste; and
- › You burn inside a burn barrel or properly prepared fire pit; and
- › You have prepared all the necessary tools to control the fire.

Yard waste is any vegetative debris such as grass clippings, brush, leaves, tree limbs, palm fronds, etc. that is a result of yard maintenance. You may burn yard waste if it was generated on your property and will fit in an 8-foot diameter pile or non-combustible container. The fire has to be ignited after 8 a.m. and be extinguished one hour before sunset.

If you are not sure about burning yard debris or land clearing or you need a permit, contact the local Forestry Office.

**Chipola Forestry Center**  
**Florida Forest Service**  
 9040 Highway 77  
 Southport, FL 32409  
**Phone:** (850) 691-0800

For burn permits from the Florida Forest Service call (850) 373-1801.

Before burning, check with local city and county officials to find out if there are any restrictions in your area. Burn bans can be imposed by local governments if conditions have been dry and it is unsafe to burn.

Clear an area down to bare soil around your pile to prevent the fire from spreading. Cover a non-combustible container with wire mesh to keep sparks from flying out and starting new fires.

**REMEMBER - SAFETY SHOULD ALWAYS BE A PRIORITY!**

### REQUIRED SETBACKS FOR YARD WASTE BURNING:

- › 25 feet from any wooded area
- › 25 feet from your residence
- › 150 feet from any other occupied dwelling
- › 50 feet from any paved, public road





Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Florida is considered the "lightning capital" of the country with more than 2,000 lightning-related injuries occurring within the state over the past 50 years. The dangerous part of thunderstorms is that they occur all year and may rapidly appear. On top of producing dangerous lightning, thunderstorms may also spawn tornadoes and cause flash flooding.

In preparing for thunderstorms, cut down or trim trees that may fall on your home or personal property, pay close attention to weather reports and warnings, and have a plan of action in case of emergency.

## **IMPORTANT FACTS TO REMEMBER REGARDING THUNDERSTORMS AND LIGHTNING:**

- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- If you are in a body of water, immediately get out and seek shelter.
- A sturdy building is the safest place during a thunderstorm. If you are unable to safely reach a sturdy building, a fully-enclosed vehicle is the next best option. Otherwise, find a low-lying area and crouch down – do not lay down. Make yourself as small as possible with as little of your body touching the ground as possible.

- If outdoors, do not seek shelter under isolated trees, avoid open fields, hills, tall buildings, or the beach, and avoid objects that conduct electricity such as metal fences and power lines.
- If indoors, stay away from windows and doors, avoid using running water or landline phones, televisions, etc., as they conduct electricity, and do not lean against or lay on concrete walls or floors. If you need to use electrical equipment, limit the use to cell phones or other battery-operated devices.

The **"30-30" rule** – When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If you hear thunder under 30 seconds from seeing the lightning, immediately seek shelter. If you can hear thunder, you are still in range of lightning – even if you don't see the lightning striking. Remain in your shelter until after 30 minutes has passed since the last time you heard thunder.

After a thunderstorm has passed, avoid flooded roadways and any fallen trees or powerlines. Make sure to report any dangerous conditions to local authorities.



Bay County, Florida is not typically known for its cold weather. However, overnight temperatures in January average 46.5 degrees. The lowest temperature ever recorded was 11.3 degrees on Dec. 13, 1962. Since Florida residents are not accustomed to colder temperatures, homes often lack adequate heating and insulation. In January 2014, a powerful ice storm hit Panama City, causing many local bridges to close for most of the morning.

### COMMON COLD WEATHER TERMS

**FREEZE** – When the surface air temperature is below freezing (32 degrees) over a widespread area for a significant amount of time. A freeze is a term used for the conditions when these low air temperatures injure vegetation.

**FREEZE WARNING** – This is issued by the National Weather Service to make agricultural interests in the public aware of anticipated freeze conditions over a large area.

**FROST** – A covering of ice crystals produced by moisture in the air directly on a surface at or below freezing.

**HARD FREEZE WARNING** – This is issued by the National Weather Services to make agricultural interests and the public aware of anticipated freeze conditions that are of a four-hour duration or greater and below 28 degrees and over a large area.

**HYPOTHERMIA** – When the body reaches a point of 95 degrees. Signs for this include shivering, exhaustion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness. Should

you suspect hypothermia, get to a warm room and wrap with blankets. Warm the center of the body first, chest, neck, head, and groin.

**WIND CHILL** – The temperature that it feels like when the wind blows.

### HOW CAN YOU BE PREPARED? REMEMBER THE 5 “Ps”

**PEOPLE** – Stay indoors if at all possible. If you go outdoors, wear multiple layers of loose-fitting, warm clothing, including a windproof coat, mittens, hats, scarves, and waterproof boots. Children and older adults are more at risk in cold weather.

**PETS** – Give them shelter, preferably inside. Check under the hood of your car, as some animals will hide here. Use plastic food/water bowls instead of metal.

**PLANTS** – Bring plants indoors. Others should be covered with burlap or sheets to protect from the cold weather or frost.

**PIPES/PUMPS** – Let water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Bring hoses inside. Try to insulate any exposed pipes.

**PRACTICING FIRE SAFETY** – Ensure that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors work. Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys. Be aware of the fire dangers from space heaters and open flames.

# // HEAT-RELATED DANGERS



In Florida, thousands of individuals suffer heat-related illnesses each year. Individuals at highest risk include older adults, young children, and those with chronic diseases and mental health issues. Young, active, and healthy individuals can be affected if they participate in vigorous physical activities during hot weather. Heat-related illnesses are preventable.

Heat-related illnesses happen when the body is not able to properly cool itself. Heat-related illnesses can damage the brain and other vital organs. Serious forms of heat-related injuries include heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Heat cramps, sunburn, and heat rash are other forms of heat-related injuries that should be closely monitored.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It is a condition caused by the body overheating. Heat stroke occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature and rises to 104 degrees or higher. This rise in temperature can take place within minutes. Heat stroke is usually a result of prolonged exposure to or physical exertion in high temperatures. Individuals lose the ability to sweat and are therefore unable to cool down.

Heat stroke requires immediate medical treatment. If untreated, heatstroke can quickly damage your brain, heart, kidneys and muscles. The damage worsens the longer treatment is delayed, increasing your risk of serious complications or death.

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after being exposed to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Heat exhaustion is often accompanied by dehydration. Through a milder heat-related illness, heat exhaustion should not be taken lightly as it can progress to a heat stroke without proper intervention.

## **WARNING SIGNS: HEAT STROKE**

- › An extremely high body temperature (104°F or higher)
- › Red, hot, dry, or damp skin (no sweating)
- › Rapid, strong pulse
- › Throbbing headache
- › Dizziness
- › Nausea
- › Confusion
- › Loss of consciousness (passing out)

## **WARNING SIGNS: HEAT EXHAUSTION**

- › Heavy sweating
- › Paleness
- › Muscle cramps
- › Tiredness
- › Weakness
- › Dizziness
- › Headache
- › Nausea or vomiting
- › Fainting
- › Moist, cool skin
- › Fast, weak pulse
- › Fast, shallow breaths

## **PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES**

- › Drink cool, non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated beverages
- › Rest
- › Take a cool shower or bath
- › Seek air-conditioning
- › Wear lightweight clothing
- › Remain indoors during the hottest portion of the day
- › Do not engage in strenuous activities

## **WHAT TO DO FOR HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES**

If you suspect someone is suffering from severe heat stress, call for medical help and get the person out of the sun immediately. Cool the individual by immersing or dousing in cool water, or by wrapping in a wet towel and fanning them. Continue to monitor the person's body temperature until the body temperature drops to 101 degrees or lower. If emergency personnel are delayed, ask the 9-1-1 operator about any additional steps to take until help arrives.



## PROTECTING YOURSELF IN A TOXIC INCIDENT

If an accident involving hazardous materials occurs in your community, emergency services personnel will notify you as to what steps to take. The following information is meant to assist in minimizing your risks.

**CAUGHT OUTSIDE: STAY UPSTREAM, UPHILL, AND UPWIND.**

**DISTANCE:** Wind and distance all play a factor, but in general go at least 10 city blocks (one-half mile) from the danger area; for many incidents you will need to go much farther.

**EVACUATION:** If asked to evacuate because of a hazardous materials emergency, do so immediately. Tune in to local media for precise directions. If possible, close windows and shut all vents to minimize contamination. If time permits, place a sign on your door indicating occupants have evacuated.

**IN-PLACE SHELTERING:** In certain circumstances, it is safer to stay indoors. Follow all instructions provided by local authorities and:

- › Close windows and doors and seal drafty areas with wet towels, blankets, or tape.

- › Turn off all ventilation, including furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans.
- › If dangerous vapors are entering the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or towel.

**CONTAMINATED:** If you believe you may be contaminated and medical assistance is not immediately available, remove all of your clothing, shower thoroughly, don fresh, loose, warm clothing, and seek medical help. Advise all who come in contact with you that you may have been exposed to a toxic substance so they can take proper precautions. To avoid contaminating your home and others, place exposed clothing in a non-permeable container without allowing it to contact other materials, and arrange for proper disposal.

## REPORTING A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

If you witness a hazardous materials accident, spill, or leak, call 9-1-1 or the numbers listed below, and provide as much information as possible:

- › Florida State Warning Point: 1 (800) 320-0519
- › National Response Center: 1 (800) 424-8802



Unlike a hurricane or a flood, there will likely be no warning of terrorist attack. Families should know how to account for each other in the event of an act of terrorism. A family plan is critical and should be in place at all times. Your family's plan should include emergency contacts, identification of rally points, and a disaster supply kit. A little advance planning can help alleviate the fear of the unknown.

## **TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM TERRORIST INCIDENTS:**

- › Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times.
- › Take precautions when traveling — be aware and notify authorities if you witness suspicious or unusual behavior.
- › Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
- › Know where emergency exits are located at all times.
- › Be ready to enact your Family Disaster Plan.

## **SHOULD A TERRORIST INCIDENT OCCUR, SUCH AS AN EXPLOSION:**

- › Follow evacuation plans set forth for the building you are in, exiting as quickly and calmly as possible.
- › If items are falling from above, get under a sturdy table or desk.

- › In the event of a fire, stay low to the floor and exit as quickly as possible. Cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth. If a door is hot to the touch, do not open it — seek an alternate escape route. Stay below the smoke at all times.
- › If you cannot escape, keep your nose and mouth covered with a piece of cloth.
- › Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can find you. Use a whistle if available and shout only as a last resort — shouting can result in the inhalation of dangerous amounts of dust.
- › Untrained personnel should not attempt to rescue people in a collapsed building. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive.
- › If a chemical agent is involved, authorities will instruct you either to seek shelter and seal the premises or to evacuate immediately.

**IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 9-1-1.**

## **LINKS FOR MORE INFO:**

- › **Florida Division of Emergency Management**  
[www.floridadisaster.org/hazards/terrorism/](http://www.floridadisaster.org/hazards/terrorism/)
- › **Department of Homeland Security**  
[www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something](http://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something)



POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

An **“active shooter”** is an individual who is engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined or populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

- › Victims can be targeted or random.
- › The event is unpredictable and evolves quickly.
- › Knowing what to do can save lives.

When an active shooter is in your vicinity you must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with the situation.

### YOU HAVE THREE OPTIONS:

1. RUN
2. HIDE
3. FIGHT

#### 1. RUN

- › Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- › Leave your belongings behind.
- › Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- › Help others escape if possible.
- › Do not attempt to move the wounded.
- › Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- › Keep your hands visible.
- › Call 9-1-1 when you are safe.

#### 2. HIDE

- › Hide in an area out of the shooter's view.
- › Lock the door or block entry to your hiding place.
- › Silence your cell phone (including vibrate mode) and remain quiet.

#### 3. FIGHT

- › Fight as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger.
- › Attempt to anticipate the shooter.
- › Act with as much physical aggression as possible.
- › Improvise weapons or throw items at the active shooter.

**COMMIT TO YOUR ACTIONS...YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT**

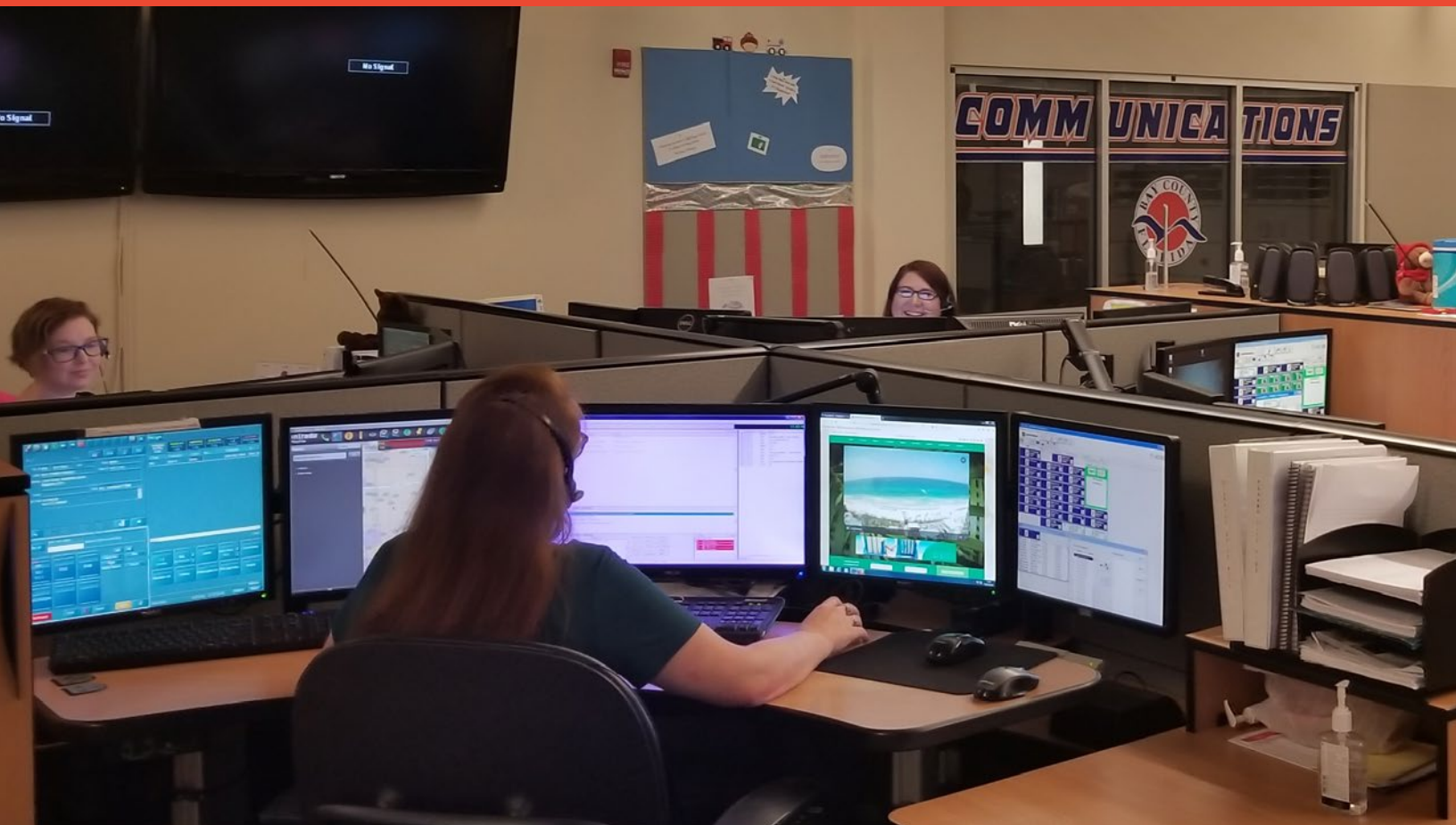
### WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES:

- › Remain calm and follow instructions
- › Drop items in your hands (e.g., bags, jackets)
- › Raise hands and spread fingers
- › Keep hands visible at all times
- › Avoid quick movements toward officers, such as holding on to them for safety
- › Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling
- › Do not ask questions when evacuating

### INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO 9-1-1 OPERATORS:

- › Location of the active shooter
- › Number of shooters
- › Physical description of shooters
- › Number and type of weapons shooter has
- › Number of potential victims at location

# // WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT 9-1-1



What happens when you dial 9-1-1 really depends upon two variables: where are you dialing from and whether you are dialing from a landline or a cellular phone. The most important thing to remember is that you are calling a trained professional prepared to assist you with your emergency.

In Bay County, the Bay County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) is designated as the Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) except when dialing from within Panama City's city limits, in which case Panama City becomes the PSAP. These rules do not apply for cellular phone calls, which remain the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office regardless of where within the county the call originates.

When you call 9-1-1 from any phone, you should clearly state the nature of the emergency and your address or location and remain calm. Be patient if you are asked to repeat the information. It is important to provide your location as soon as possible so you may be transferred to the first responding agency without having to repeat information numerous times.

After you tell the operator you are requesting law enforcement or fire/rescue response, then your call will be transferred to the appropriate respondent. Any time calls are transferred, you will be asked to repeat some of the same information to a different operator, as some operators are in entirely different buildings in different areas of the county.

In the event that you or someone in your home accidentally dials 9-1-1, stay on the line and explain what happened, otherwise emergency services will be dispatched to determine if a caller was unable to complete their emergency call for help.

## WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN CALLING 9-1-1:

- › Stay calm and identify yourself, the emergency, and the address.
- › Be familiar with the local 9-1-1 practices/procedures.
- › Be prepared to tell the operator what the emergency is. This includes: where emergency personnel should respond (a physical address is always preferred – if traveling in a vehicle, you may need to identify street names and nearby businesses), if the emergency is still happening, who is involved (this includes, names, vehicle descriptions, tag numbers).
- › Never hang up unless you are told to do so by the 9-1-1 operator, except in those instances where staying on the line any longer will put your safety or the safety of someone else in jeopardy.

Bay County is home to the World's Most Beautiful Beaches that provide an excellent escape from the day-to-day stress of life. As with most great things, however, the beach also has risks. This section reviews three beach dangers to be aware of and how to protect yourself.

## DROWNING

Drowning can happen to anyone and often occurs when people try to push themselves further than their bodies can handle. Here are a few simple rules to ensure everyone makes it back to shore safely:

- › Always remember that the swim back to shore may be more difficult than the swim out. As a good rule, allow twice as much swimming to get in as it takes you to get out.
- › Always know your limits and never allow family or friends to push you beyond them. There is no shame in staying in shallow areas near the shore.
- › Always supervise children. Children are more likely to swim or be pulled out farther than they can make it back.
- › Always bring a flotation device when leaving areas where you can comfortably stand and maneuver. Floats, rafts, and life jackets save lives.
- › Always observe the Warning Flag System to determine whether it is safe to be in the water. Remember, the water is closed to the public when double red flags are flown.

## RIP CURRENTS

### WHAT IS A RIP CURRENT?

Most of the Gulf beaches have two sandbars that run parallel to the shore. As water gets pushed over these bars by wave or tidal actions it hits the shore and must find a way to escape back to the open Gulf. This constant outflow of water moves the sand to create "breaks" in the sandbars which become swift moving channels for es-

caping water. If you are in between the shore and these sandbars, the water may carry you along the shore to one of these breaks and then quickly pull you out into the Gulf.

### HOW DO I AVOID RIP CURRENTS?

- › Rip currents are worse on days with large tidal swings and big waves. Always observe the beach warning flags to determine the best days to enjoy the water.
- › Though rip currents can be strong even in shallow water, never swim out past where you can comfortably stand and maneuver. If you start to feel a current pulling you along the beach or out into the Gulf, just turn back and enjoy the beach a little closer to shore.

### WHAT DO I DO IF I GET CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT?

- › Because rip currents are often very strong, never spend energy fighting the current. Instead, if you feel yourself being pulled out into the Gulf, swim parallel to the shore until you escape the break current. Upon reaching the sandbar you should be able to turn and swim to shore.

## DANGEROUS MARINE LIFE

- › Sharks - While Florida's beaches are home to many shark species, attacks are very rare given the frequency of contact. Sharks often come to the area between the first and second sandbars, known as the "trough," to feed, which also happens to be where most humans like to swim. For the most part, sharks and humans share the water harmoniously and studies show that most recorded attacks have been accidental in nature. In most cases, humans are safer straight up and down.
- › Stingrays
- › Jellyfish
- › Sea Urchins

## THE BEACH WARNING FLAG SYSTEM

Each of Bay County's public beach access points on the Gulf are equipped with a flagpole flying either green, yellow, red, or double red flags updated to reflect the current water safety conditions. In addition, Bay County may fly a purple flag to indicate an abundance of marine life, such as sea urchins or jellyfish. Double red flags indicate that the water is closed to the public.



**WATER CLOSED TO PUBLIC**  
Agua Cerrada al Público



**HIGH HAZARD**  
**High Surf and/or Strong Currents**  
Peligro Alto, Resaca Alta y/o Corrientes Fuertes



**MEDIUM HAZARD**  
**Moderate Surf and/or Currents**  
Peligro Medio, Resaca Moderada y/o Corrientes Fuertes



**LOW HAZARD**  
**Calm Conditions, Exercise Caution**  
Peligro Bajo, Condiciones Calmas, Tenga Cuidado



**DANGEROUS MARINE LIFE**  
Vida Marina Peligrosa

If you'd like text alerts when the flags change, you can sign up by texting "PCBFLAGS" to 888777.

Having a backyard pool can be a fun way for you and your family to be active at home or just relax. However, it is important to know what to do to reduce the risk of injury and illness. Keep your backyard pool safe and healthy to maximize all the health benefits that swimming can bring.

## TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT DROWNING

Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death in young children 1–4 years old, but there are things you can do to prevent drowning from happening in your pool:

- › Make sure everyone has basic swim skills and water safety awareness.
- › Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets as directed.
- › Provide continuous and close supervision to swimmers.
- › Know how to recognize and respond to a swimmer in distress and how to perform CPR.
- › Prevent access to the water when the pool is not in use.
- › Install and maintain barriers such as four-sided fencing.
- › Use locks/alarms for windows and doors.

## HANDLE POOL CHEMICALS SAFELY

Pool chemicals, like chlorine, are needed to protect swimmers' health. However, mishandling pool chemicals can cause serious injuries. Pool chemical injuries lead to about 4,500 U.S. emergency department visits each year, and over one-third of these preventable injuries are in children or teens.

If you store pool chemicals at your home, take the following steps to prevent pool chemical injuries:

- › Read and follow all directions on product labels.
- › Wear safety equipment—such as masks, gloves, and goggles—when handling chemicals.
- › Keep chemicals secure and away from children and pets.
- › Order pool chemical safety posters for free.

## KILL GERMS IN YOUR POOL

Disinfection (with chlorine or bromine) and pH are the first defense against germs that cause recreational water illnesses. At the recommended levels, chlorine or bromine can kill most germs in the water within minutes.

As a backyard pool owner, you should check the disinfectant (chlorine or bromine) level and pH at least twice per day (and more often when the pool is in heavy use) to make sure they are correct:

- › 1–10 parts per million (ppm) free chlorine or 3–8 ppm bromine
- › pH 7.2–7.8

If the pH is too high or too low, it can cause problems, including decreasing chlorine's or bromine's ability to kill germs. It can also cause skin and eye irritation in swimmers and damage pool pipes and other equipment.



## DIARRHEA AND SWIMMING DON'T MIX

While enjoying your pool with your loved ones, it's important to make sure not to swim or let others swim if sick with diarrhea. Just one diarrheal incident in the water can release millions of diarrhea-causing germs like *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, norovirus, and *E. coli*. These germs can make other swimmers sick if they swallow just a mouthful of contaminated water. Although most germs are killed within minutes by chlorine or bromine at the recommended levels, *Cryptosporidium* is a germ that can survive in properly treated water for more than 7 days.

We can all help protect ourselves and those we care about from germs in the pool by following a few simple but effective steps.

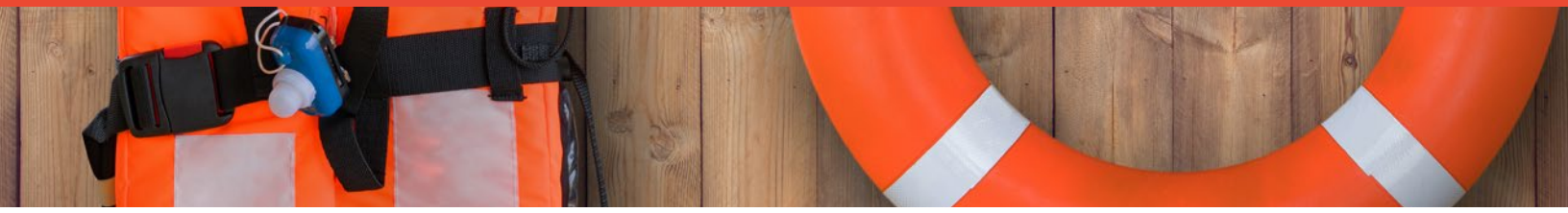
## BEFORE GETTING IN

- › Don't swim or let others swim if sick with diarrhea.
- › Shower for at least 1 minute before you get into the water to remove dirt or anything else on your body. Chlorine mixed with dirt, sweat, urine, and feces creates chemicals that make swimmers' eyes red and sting and provides less chlorine to kill germs.

## ONCE YOU ARE IN

- › Don't swallow the water.
- › Take kids on bathroom breaks and check diapers every hour.
- › Change diapers away from the poolside to keep germs from getting in the water.
- › Dry ears thoroughly with a towel after swimming.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



## COMMON BOATING SAFETY ITEMS INCLUDE:

- › Life jackets for everyone on board
- › A noise producing device (i.e., horn, whistle, ext.)
- › Type IV throwable
- › Fire extinguisher
- › A visual distress signal (i.e., flares)
- › Anyone operating a vessel born after Jan. 1, 1988 must have a Florida Boating Safety ID Card.
- › Anyone 13 years old or younger is not permitted to operate a personal watercraft.

## PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REMINDERS:

- › Each person operating, riding on, or being towed behind a personal watercraft must wear an approved non-inflatable Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device. Inflatable personal flotation devices are prohibited.
- › The operator of a personal watercraft must attach the engine cutoff switch lanyard (if equipped by the manufacturer) to his/her person, clothing, or personal flotation device.
- › Personal watercraft may not be operated from one half-hour after sunset to one half-hour before sunrise.
- › Maneuvering a personal watercraft by weaving through congested vessel traffic, jumping the wake of another vessel unreasonably close or when visibility around the vessel is obstructed, or swerving at the last possible moment to avoid collision is classified as reckless operation of a vessel (a first-degree misdemeanor).

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

Source: [www.floridamarineguide.com/pwc\\_rules.html](http://www.floridamarineguide.com/pwc_rules.html)

- › Re-fuel on land to reduce any chances of spilling oil or gas into the water.
- › Slow down when filling the tank, do not overfill, catch any accidental spills with an absorbent pad, and dispose of it properly.
- › Check and clean your engine well away from shorelines. Oil can harm the water's delicate micro-organisms and the animals that feed on them.
- › In shallow waters, boats may stir up the bottom, suspending sediments which limit light penetration and deplete oxygen. This can affect fish and bird feeding.

- › Ride in main channels, and limit riding in shallow water.
- › When it is necessary to ride in shallow water, keep watercraft at an idle speed. This will help reduce turbidity (the stirring up of bottom sediments which limits light penetration and depletes oxygen, affecting fish and bird feeding).
- › In coastal areas be aware of the low tide. The waters may be substantially shallower at these times, exposing valuable fish nurseries such as seagrass beds and other delicate vegetation.
- › Birds feeding in shallow areas or on the shoreline should not be disturbed.
- › If you are riding near coral, do not use an anchor, and be careful when diving to avoid disrupting these delicate organisms.
- › Avoid grass marshes found in salt or freshwater coastal areas or rivers. Hidden in the thickets may be nesting birds, frogs, turtles, snakes, or alligators.
- › Observe posted no-wake zones near shore. Excessive boat wakes may contribute to shoreline erosion, which can affect the habitats of plants and animals.
- › Be a courteous boat operator. Be aware that noise and movements of boats may disturb waterfront homeowners, birds, and marine mammals and other wildlife.
- › Ride at controlled speeds and avoid areas of high animal population.
- › If you see an animal hit by a boat, note the location and report it immediately to the local wildlife commission.
- › When docking or beaching, look for evidence of turtles, birds, alligators, and other animals along shore.
- › Avoid docking or beaching where plants such as reeds, grasses, and mangroves are located. These essential plants control erosion and provide a nursery ground for many small animals and fish.
- › Be aware of the endangered species in your riding area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for listing the hundreds of species in decline.
- › Wash off your boat after you use it to prevent the spread of exotic plants to other lakes and rivers. Exotics have no natural enemies and spread easily, killing off native species and decreasing important plant and animal diversity.



## HAVE A PLAN

- › Know at least two escape routes from each room.
- › Install smoke alarms in each area of the home and check them at least once a month.
- › Avoid clutter around areas such as furnaces, water heaters, and outlets.
- › Practice your fire escape plan and make sure everyone knows where to meet once safely outside.
- › Purchase fire extinguishers and consider obtaining Class K extinguishers for the kitchen in case of grease fires.
- › If your home has a fireplace, have your chimney inspected and swept regularly.
- › If your home has natural gas, know where your main shut-off valve is located.
- › Make copies of important documents and photos to leave at a close friends or family member's home and store the originals in a fireproof safe.

## MAJOR CAUSES

- › **Cooking Equipment:** Never leave food unattended while over a heat source.
- › **Heating:** Make sure to leave plenty of room around heating sources.
- › **Smoking:** Never smoke in bedrooms.
- › **Electrical Equipment:** Be sure to check for frayed cords or overcrowded electrical outlets.
- › **Candles:** Left unattended, candles can catch fabrics on fire.
- › **Children and Fire:** Curious children can accidentally start fires by playing with things they should not.

- › **Faulty Wiring:**
  - Lights dim if you use another appliance
  - Frequently blown or tripped fuses
- › **Outdoor Grills:** Make sure to keep grills away from the house, plants, or picnic tables.
- › **Flammable Liquids:** Make sure to keep these far from heat sources.
- › **Lighting:** Make sure that shades and globes are not too close to bulbs.

## STEPS TO FOLLOW

- › Make sure you, your family, and pets get out safe.
- › Call the fire department no matter how small the fire.
- › Call your insurance company and begin the claims process.
- › Do not return to your home for any reason until you are given the all clear from the fire department or other officials.
- › Once cleared to go back inside, take an inventory of what has been damaged.
- › Find a safe place to stay until you can return to your home.
- › Hire a professional to clean up the damage.

The American Red Cross is a good source for assistance before and after a fire. They can be reached by phone at (850) 763-6587.



## UNINCORPORATED BAY COUNTY

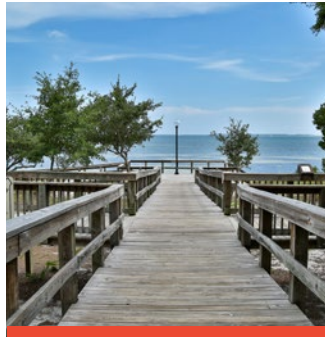
**SQUARE MILES:** 689 (INCLUDING NAVY BASE AND TYNDALL AFB)

**BAY COUNTY COMMISSION**  
840 W. 11TH STREET  
PANAMA CITY, FL 32401

**GOVERNMENT CENTER:**  
850-248-8140

**BAY CO. SHERIFF'S OFFICE:**  
850-747-4700

**WWW.BAYCOUNTY.GOV**



## PANAMA CITY

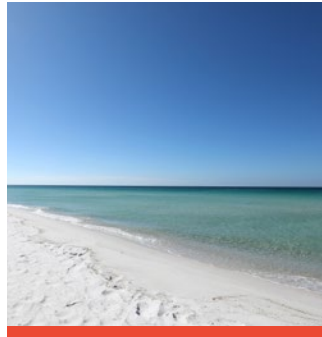
**SQUARE MILES:** 35.21

**CITY OF PANAMA CITY CITY HALL**  
501 HARRISON AVENUE  
P.O. BOX 1880  
PANAMA CITY, FL 32402

**TELEPHONE:** 850-872-3000

**PANAMA CITY POLICE DEPT.:**  
850-872-3100

**WWW.PCGOV.ORG**



## PANAMA CITY BEACH

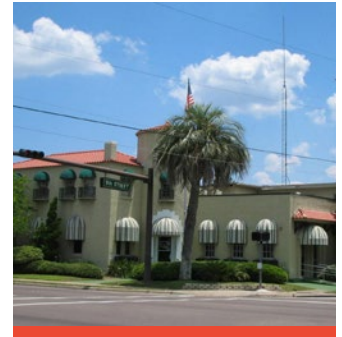
**SQUARE MILES:** 12.776

**CITY OF PANAMA CITY BEACH**  
110 S. ARNOLD ROAD  
PANAMA CITY BEACH, FL 32413

**TELEPHONE:** 850-233-5100

**PCB POLICE DEPT.:**  
850-233-5000

**WWW.PCB.GOV**



## LYNN HAVEN

**SQUARE MILES:** 11.78

**CITY OF LYNN HAVEN**  
817 OHIO AVENUE  
LYNN HAVEN, FL 32444

**CITY HALL:** 850-265-2111

**LYNN HAVEN POLICE DEPT.:**  
850-265-4111

**WWW.CITYOFLYNNHAVEN.COM**



## CALLAWAY

**SQUARE MILES:** APPROX. 12

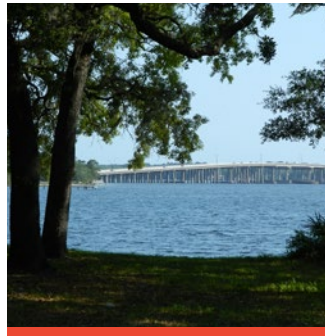
**CITY OF CALLAWAY CITY HALL**  
6601 STATE ROAD HWY. 22  
CALLAWAY, FL 32404

**TELEPHONE:** 850-871-6000

**ARTS & CONFERENCE CENTER:**  
850-874-0035

**RECREATIONAL COMPLEX:**  
850-874-0031

**WWW.CITYOFCALLAWAY.COM**



## PARKER

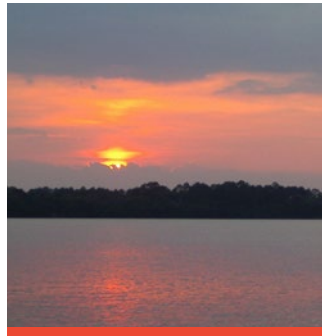
**SQUARE MILES:** 2

**CITY OF PARKER**  
1001 WEST PARK STREET  
P.O. BOX 10619  
PANAMA CITY, FL 32404

**CITY HALL:** 850-871-4104

**PARKER POLICE DEPT.:**  
850-871-4100

**WWW.CITYOFPARKER.COM**



## SPRINGFIELD

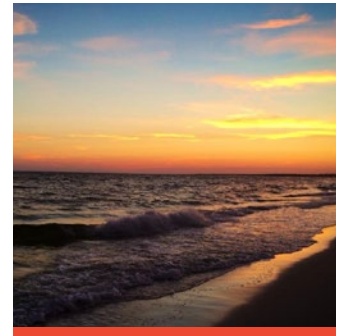
**SQUARE MILES:** 4.4

**CITY OF SPRINGFIELD**  
3529 E. 3RD STREET  
PANAMA CITY, FL 32401

**CITY HALL:** 850-872-7570

**SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPT.:**  
850-769-7545

**WWW.SPRINGFIELD.ORG**



## MEXICO BEACH

**SQUARE MILES:** 3

**CITY OF MEXICO BEACH**  
P.O. BOX 13425  
MEXICO BEACH, FL 32410

**TELEPHONE:** 850-648-5700

**MEXICO BEACH POLICE DEPT.:**  
850-648-4790

**WWW.MEXICO-BEACH.COM**

## BAY COUNTY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
ADMINISTRATION	248-8140
ADDRESSING	248-8374
ANIMAL CONTROL	767-3333
BUDGET OFFICE	248-8240
BUILDERS SERVICES	248-8350
CAFE	248-8196
CODE ENFORCEMENT	248-8290
COMMUNICATIONS	248-8170
CO-OP EXTENSION	784-6105
COUNTY ATTORNEY	248-8175
EMERGENCY SERVICES	248-6040
EMS	248-6070
ENGINEERING	248-8301
FACILITIES	248-8120
FIRE SERVICES	248-6040
GENERAL SERVICES	248-8732
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	248-8071
HUMAN RESOURCES	248-8201
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	248-8004
LIBRARY	522-2100
MEDICAL EXAMINER	747-5740
MOSQUITO CONTROL	248-8720
PARKS & RECREATION	248-8730
PLANNING	248-8250
PUBLIC WORKS	248-8302
PURCHASING	248-8270
RECORDS MANAGEMENT	248-8278
RISK MANAGEMENT	248-8230
ROADS	248-8810
SECURITY	248-8195
SOLID WASTE	236-2212
TRANSIT	248-8161
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING	248-8740
UTILITY SERVICES	248-5010
VETERANS SERVICES	248-8280

## CONSTITUTIONAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT	747-5100
CLERK FINANCE	747-5219
PROPERTY APPRAISER	248-8401
SHERIFF	747-4700
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS	784-6100
TAX COLLECTOR	248-8501

## MUNICIPAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CALLAWAY	871-6000
LYNN HAVEN	265-2121
MEXICO BEACH	648-5700
PANAMA CITY BEACH	233-5100
PANAMA CITY	872-3010
PARKER	871-4104
SPRINGFIELD	872-7570

## OTHER

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL	233-5070
FLORIDA STATE INFO CENTER	1-866- 693-6748
ONLINE	<a href="http://411.myflorida.com">http://411.myflorida.com</a>
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE	215-9965

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
FIRE / POLICE / AMBULANCE	9-1-1
BAY COUNTY DISPATCH	784-4000
ANIMAL CONTROL DISPATCH	767-3333
POISON INFORMATION	1-800-222-1222

# WE WILL REBUILD



AS BAY COUNTY REBUILDS, **WE'RE WITH YOU.** IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS.

***WE STAND WITH YOU.***

VISIT THE FOLLOWING FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[REHOUSEBAY.ORG](https://rehousebay.org) | [RECOVERBAYCOUNTY.ORG](https://recoverbaycounty.org) | [REBUILDBAYCOUNTY.ORG](https://rebuildbaycounty.org)



**BAYCOUNTY,  
FLORIDA**  
BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV



**A PUBLICATION OF**

BAY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND  
BAY COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

**BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER**

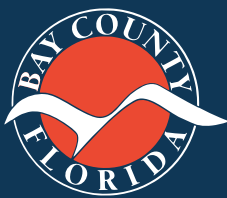
840 WEST 11TH STREET  
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32401

**TELEPHONE:** (850) 248-8140

**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

700 HIGHWAY 2300  
SOUTHPORT, FL 32409

**TELEPHONE:** (850) 784-4000



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