

Staying Connected During Hurricane Season

Sustainable Living

www.pinellascountyextension.org

In this technology driven era, staying connected during hurricane season is easier than ever but with so many resources available, it's difficult to choose reliable ones. You and your family can receive updated storm information from the following trustworthy sources. Keep in mind that power outages are common during hurricane season and results in loss of service to cell phones, televisions and computers. Be sure that you have a battery operated or crank radio to continue receiving crucial information.

Hurricane information is provided at three levels—federal, state and local. At the **local** level, information is provided by Pinellas County government's emergency management section.

1) Pinellas County Emergency Management

Pinellas County has dedicated a webpage to informing residents on hurricane news, evacuation maps, shelter information and more. You may also sign up for *Pinellas County E-Lert*—a free electronic newsletter. This year-round newsletter provides you with current emergency news, preparation tips, educational opportunities and emergency notifications.

www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/

2) Alert Pinellas

Alert Pinellas sends emergency notifications by voice or text to landlines, cell phone, and email. This service is **free** and allows you to register multiple lines as well as get alerts for several addresses.

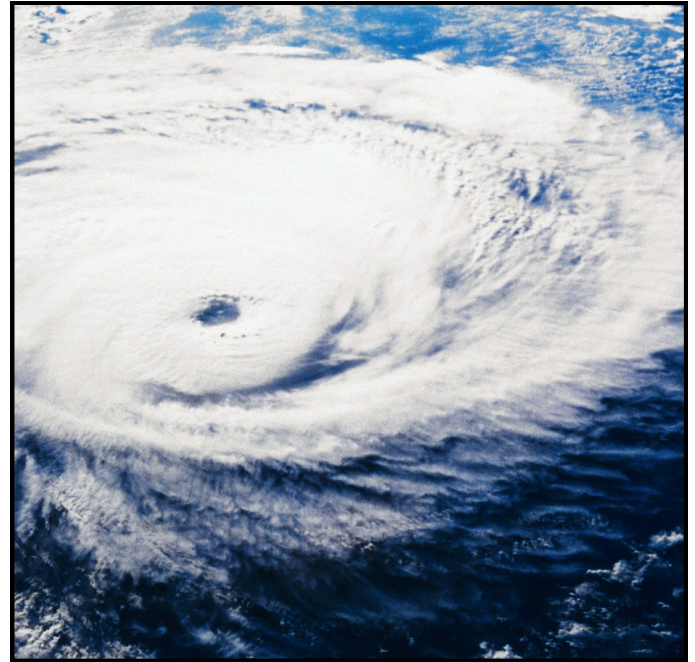
Sign up at www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas or call: (866) 484-3264 if you do not have access to internet.

3) Social Media

Pinellas County has several social media outlets that allow for residents to connect with and receive breaking news and storm information.

Twitter— www.twitter.com/PinellasEM

Facebook— www.facebook.com/pinellascountynews



Staying connected throughout the storm is important. Even after the storm, danger is present. Remain alert and follow recommendations of local authorities.

4) Citizens Information Center

To obtain further information regarding a storm residents may call the Citizens Information Center (CIC). The CIC provides information before, during and after the storm. This line is only open during emergencies. Call: (727) 464-4333. To learn about **Pinellas County road conditions** tune into **1690 AM**.

At the **state** level, emergency information is provided by several agencies.

5) Florida Division of Emergency Management

is a one-stop source for information across the State of Florida. Locating shelters, preparing a disaster plan and obtaining disaster assistance after a storm event can all be answered by visiting the website. Additionally, the state's Emergency Operations Center or EOC provides online updates on a range of disasters. Information is available at www.floridadisaster.org or via social

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media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. These tools allow you to have information delivered directly to your smartphones and personal email accounts.

www.facebook.com/FloridaSERT

<https://twitter.com/flsert>

6) The Florida Department of Transportation provides road condition information via its 511 service. The service is available in English and Spanish and is accessed at www.fl511.com or by calling 511 from your phone. You can also create a personalized evacuation route by using the My Florida 511 tool available at the website.

On a **national** scale, all weather related information is coordinated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

7) National Weather Service (NWS)

This national service provides weather information through a variety of sources, the most popular are the radio messages regarding severe weather events. Residents may sign up for alerts from the NWS via email, Facebook and Twitter.

www.weather.gov

For station listings in our local area, visit http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/coverage/station_listing.html and choose "Florida."

8) National Hurricane Center

Hosted by NOAA's NWS, the National Hurricane Center monitors storm activity in the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific. The seasons starts June 1 in the Atlantic and May 15 in the Eastern Pacific but ends on November 30 in both regions. Tracking charts, storm surge reports, 3 and 5 day storm outlooks are all available at this website. Find an active storm map and links to social media outlet:

www.nhc.noaa.gov

All of these resources can also assist in the recovery effort after a storm strikes.

9) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

This federal agency provides information on preparations for hurricane season as well as other disasters. FEMA also provides disaster assistance to help you get back on your feet after a major event. Visit www.fema.gov to sign up for alerts and check out ready.gov/hurricanes for additional information. FEMA's YouTube channel also has important video messages www.youtube.com/fema. FEMA also offers an app on the App Store and Google Play to help keep you informed.

Despite all of these levels of information, it is still important to use the old-fashioned approach.

10) Personal networks

Use your personal networks to check on your neighbors, friends, family and the elderly to be sure that they are prepared.

Get ready and stay ready during hurricane season.

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