



COVID-19 and Pasco County Special Needs Shelters



Pasco County anticipates that COVID-19 will still be active throughout the 2020 hurricane season. To best protect yourself from both hurricanes and COVID-19, it is vitally important to **develop a plan that does not include evacuating to a shelter**, if at all possible. The safest plan is to evacuate to an inland area or to stay with friends or family in a safe structure.

Shelters will be available for public use in the event an evacuation is necessary, and precautions will be in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. However, we cannot guarantee 6-feet of separation between individuals, and **sheltering in a public, group setting will increase your risk of COVID-19 exposure. COVID-19 is highly contagious, and individuals with special medical needs are at high risk for severe illness.**

Others **at high-risk for severe illness** from COVID-19 include:

- Anyone 65 years and older
- People with pre-existing conditions, including:
 - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - Serious heart conditions
 - Immunocompromised systems (e.g., cancer patients)
 - Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] greater than 40) or certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease

Develop Your Disaster Plan

1. Know Your Risk

Determine if you live in a [Hurricane Evacuation Zone](#). Evacuations are identified by zones A-E. During an evacuation, it is important to monitor local media to determine what zones are being called for evacuation. Evacuation Routes are clearly marked on the Evacuation Zone map. For safety and disaster information, visit www.pascoemergencymanagement.com.

2. Plan for Evacuation

Only evacuate if ordered to do so. If you live in an evacuation zone, mobile home or RV, determine if and when you will have to evacuate, where you will go, and how you will get there. If you must evacuate, ensure your destination is not located within a zone that has been ordered to evacuate. Take enough supplies for your family and pets. Pack important papers, including your driver's license, special medical information, insurance agent's name and number, and property inventories. Your choices for evacuation include:

- **Leave the area entirely**

If you are leaving the area, remember to take supplies with you - including medical supplies. Move inland and away from the storm surge and flooding. Plan for enough time to travel to your destination as roads will be congested.

- **Hotel/motel outside the evacuation zone**

If you plan to go to a hotel or motel, you will need to check for availability and make your reservation well in advance. Some hotels/motels have standing hurricane reservation programs and may relax pet restrictions during an emergency. Ensure your destination is not located within an evacuation zone.

- **Home of a relative or friend outside the evacuation zone**

- **As a last resort**, go to a public shelter.

3. Bring Personal Protective Supplies

Whatever your evacuation plan is, ensure you have the following items in hand, **especially if evacuating to a public shelter: masks, hand sanitizer, soap, tissues and cleaning and disinfecting supplies.**

For more information about preparing for disasters – including how to sign up for emergency notifications through [Alert Pasco](#) – please visit the Pasco County [Division of Emergency Management](#) website at: pascoemergencymanagement.com and follow us on Twitter at [@Pasco FL OEM](#).