



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

Hurricanes are strong storms that can be life-threatening as well as cause serious property-threatening hazards such as flooding, storm surge, high winds, and tornadoes. Preparation is the best protection against the dangers of a hurricane. Know the difference between the threat levels and plan accordingly.

HURRICANE WATCH

Hurricane conditions are a threat within 48 hours. Review your hurricane plans. Get ready to act if a warning is issued and stay informed. Don't forget your pets!

HURRICANE WARNING

Hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hours. Complete your storm preparations and leave the area if directed to do so by authorities.

- ✓ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for critical information from the National Weather Service.
- ✓ **Check your disaster supplies. Replace or restock as needed.**
- ✓ Bring in anything that can be picked up by the wind (bicycles, lawn furniture, etc.)
- ✓ Close your windows, doors and hurricane shutters. If you do not have hurricane shutters, close and board all windows and doors with plywood.
- ✓ Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest setting. Keep them closed as much as possible so that food will last longer if the power goes out.
- ✓ Turn off propane tank.
- ✓ Unplug small appliances.
- ✓ Fuel all vehicles.
- ✓ Create a hurricane evacuation plan with members of your household. Planning and practicing your evacuation plan minimizes confusion and fear during the event.
- ✓ Find out about your community's hurricane response plan. Plan routes to local shelters, register family members with special medical needs and make plans for your pets to be cared for.
- ✓ Obey evacuation orders. Avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges.
- ✓ **Know your evacuation routes**

General Flood & Emergency Information

Wakulla County

www.mywakulla.com

FEMA

www.fema.gov

National Weather Service

www.weather.gov

National Flood Insurance Program

www.floodsmart.gov

To Sign Up for Emergency Alerts, Please Visit:

www.wcso.org/emergency-management/alert-wakulla

Funding Sources for Repetitive Loss Properties

Repetitive loss properties represent only one percent of all flood insurance policies, yet historically, they account for one-third of the claim payments. Mitigation of flood risk to these repetitive loss properties reduces the overall costs to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as well as to the individual homeowners. FEMA has several grants and an extra flood insurance program available to help repetitive loss property owners reduce exposure to flood damage.

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)-a grant made available after a Presidential disaster declaration.

www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program

- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)-a grant that the County can apply for each year.

www.fema.gov/flood-mitigation-assistance-grant-program

Check websites

and read up on

the details of the

grant-funded

programs that are

appropriate for

your situation

- Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM)-a nationally competitive grant that the County can apply for each year.

www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program

- Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL)-a grant that is reserved for severe repetitive loss properties administered by FEMA's Special Direct Facility rather than a private insurance company.

www.fema.gov/government/grants/srl/index.shtm

- Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC)-an extra flood insurance claim payment that can be provided if an insured building was flood and then declared substantially damaged by the local permit office.

www.fema.gov/increased-cost-compliance-coverage

Contact Information

Emergency Management

(850)745-7200

www.wcso.org/emergency-management

Planning & Community Development

(850)926-3695

www.mywakulla.com/departments/planning_and_community_development

Building Department

(850)926-7636

www.mywakulla.com/departments/building_department1



FLOODING IN WAKULLA COUNTY



YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS BECAUSE YOU ARE LOCATED IN A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA (SFHA). YOUR PROPERTY IS SUBJECT TO FLOODING, AND MAY FALL UNDER THE REPETITIVE LOSS CATEGORY.

In Wakulla County, the primary threat of flooding results from the "ponding" of water during heavy storms and potential storm surge from hurricanes. Some flooding may result from the overflow of small ditches and streams during significant storm events, especially when the Gulf and river tides are higher than normal. Since the County is relatively flat, stormwater sometimes overwhelms street drainage and storm outfall devices. Leaves and other debris can clog storm drains, causing water to back up into lower-lying areas. To prevent clogging of stormwater grates and other similar devices, residents are encouraged not to blow yard waste into the street or roadway.

Many areas throughout the County have recurring flooding problems. Many stormwater catch basins are located in the County and are often overwhelmed, causing minor flooding. **On rare occasions, floodwaters may invade the lower-lying homes in those areas.** Other areas of the County subject to localized flooding include the inhabited areas adjacent to the Wakulla River, St. Marks River, Sopchoppy River, and Ochlocknee River, as well as other areas depending on the amount of rainfall and levels in streams and tributaries of these rivers and stormwater retention ponds.

A community can lose a portion of its drainage system flow or storage capacity due to dumping debris, soil erosion, sedimentation, and overgrowth vegetation. When this happens, flooding occurs more frequently and reaches high elevations, subjecting other protected properties to unnecessary risk of damage. Keep grass clippings, tree limbs, and other debris out of stormwater drainage systems to prevent clogging and loss of stormwater storage and treatment capacity. Remember, **“The Home You Flood May Be Your Own.”** If you experience or are aware of any localized drainage problems, including illegal stream dumping, please call:

Public Works Department at (850)926-7616.

Wakulla County Code of Ordinances prohibits the disposal of any solid waste on public or private property or in any waters within or contiguous to the County except in the containers and areas provided for disposal of such waste.

PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

Flooding causes more property damage in the United States than any other type of natural disaster. While recent construction practices and regulations have made new homes less prone to flooding, many existing structures remain susceptible. Several effective ways include relocation of a building to a site not subject to flooding, construction of floodwalls or berms to keep water away from the property or retrofitting structures to make them flood proof. Retrofitting is a different approach in that the property itself remains subject to flooding while the building is modified to prevent or minimize flooding of habitable space and can be accomplished by elevation of the structure above flood protection levels, construction of barriers (floodwalls, berms), and/or dry flood proofing (permits entry and passage of flood waters).

NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE FLOODPLAIN

Floodplains provide numerous flood loss reduction benefits because of their unique natural functions. Rivers and streams shape floodplain topography and influence riparian habitats and riverine ecosystems. Likewise, the physical characteristics of the floodplain shape water flows and can provide flood loss reduction benefits to include the following:

- Excess water storage
- Flow rate and erosion reduction
- Slowing runoff
- Flow regulation during non-flood periods

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Any development in a floodplain requires a Development Permit Application (DPA). To obtain a DPA, flood zone determination or to discuss any related inquiries, please call the **Planning & Community Development Department at (850)926-3695.** The Wakulla County Planning & Community Development Department and Building Department may be able to provide a FEMA elevation certificate for newer structures located inside special flood hazard areas. If you suspect illegal floodplain development is occurring, please call the Planning & Community Development Department.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Wakulla County requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitations, addition, or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's assessed tax value, the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. **Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards** (e.g., a residence damaged so that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged must be elevated at least one foot above the base flood elevation)



FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

Wakulla County Emergency Management works with our cities, town, and the State Division of Emergency Management to monitor flood and storm threats and to advise the community accordingly. Warning systems include NOAA Weather Radios, Wakulla Alert System, and local radio and television stations

FLOODS CAN BE DANGEROUS AND COSTLY. Protective measures should be taken to ensure the safety of life and property before, during and after a flood. Follow these steps to be prepared.

BEFORE A FLOOD

- ✓ Avoid building in a floodplain
- ✓ **Construct barriers (levees, beams, floodwalls) to stop floodwater from entering your home**
- ✓ Seal walls with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage
- ✓ If a flood is likely in your area, listen to the radio or television for information
- ✓ Know the difference between a flood watch and flood warning-a watch means that flooding is possible and a warning means flooding is occurring or will occur soon
- ✓ Designate a place where your family can rendezvous after an evacuation

WHEN A FLOOD IS IMMINENT

- ✓ Place sandbags to reduce erosion and scouring
- ✓ Elevate furniture and electronic equipment above flood protection levels
- ✓ Create floodway openings in non-habitable areas such as garage doors
- ✓ **Be prepared! Pack a bag with important items in case you need to evacuate. Don't forget to include needed medications.**
- ✓ If advised to evacuate your home, do so immediately
- ✓ If there is any possibility of a flash flood move to higher ground
- ✓ If possible, bring in outdoor furniture and move essential items to an upper floor
- ✓ Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances

DURING A FLOOD

- ✓ **Do not attempt to walk through moving water.** As little as 6 inches of moving water can make you fall
- ✓ If you must walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you. Wear rubber boots. Be aware that snakes and other creatures will be displaced from their regular habitat.
- ✓ Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car, and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. **“Turn Around, Don't Drown!”** More people drown in their cars than anywhere else

AFTER A FLOOD

- ✓ Listen for news reports to learn whether your water supply is safe to drink.
- ✓ Avoid floodwaters-water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- ✓ Avoid moving water.
- ✓ Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a vehicle.
- ✓ Stay away from downed power lines and report them to your power company.
- ✓ **Return home only when you are told it is safe**