



2021 Hurricane Season Guide

Welcome to hurricane season in Louisiana! We know this time of year is especially stressful, so we work hard to make this annual *Imagine Water Works: Hurricane Season Guide* as **trauma-informed, practical, and accurate** as possible.

We recognize that everyone in our region has different needs and levels of experience with storms. This is why we cover a wide range of prep options, including special considerations for **COVID-19** and for **Queer and Trans Folks**. **We have also expanded our 2021 Guide to include information for New Orleans and Southwest Louisiana.**

Consider this a “choose your own adventure” version of a hurricane guide — we keep it simple, while providing as many details as possible. **You decide what you need to focus on** and, hopefully, are able to have some peace of mind. Now, let's jump in!

Start here.

Quick Checklist to make sure you've covered the basics. If you haven't done each of these things or need more information on a particular step, read on to the next section:

- ☐ **Who are your primary emergency contacts, both locally and out-of-state?**
Make a list and check in with them. Decide if you will be sheltering/evacuating together or if folks out-of- state can host you if there is an evacuation.
- ☐ **Who are your neighbors? Say hello!**
Exchange contact information and plans, if you feel comfortable doing so. You may have supplies (flashlights, water, a generator, etc.) that can be shared in the event of an emergency.
- ☐ **Where will you park your car in the event of street flooding?**
Pay attention to where the ground stays dry in your neighborhood during thunderstorms. Parking restrictions are usually lifted during storms, so this may include the neutral ground.

☐ **Do you have cash on-hand in case ATMs go down for days?**

Start squirreling away cash now, so that you have some on hand in case of an emergency. We recommend at least \$250, if possible. *For more info, go to Page 6.*

☐ **Have you created your own “Grab + Go” box, complete with space for valuables like important documents, jewelry, and artwork?**

Make a list of what can't be replaced so that it's easy to pack. *For suggestions, go to Page 7.*

☐ **Have you gathered survival supplies that will keep you safe?**

This includes food, water, and tools. *For a longer list of supplies, go to Page 9.*

☐ **Do you have a plan for your pets?**

Decide now whether you can evacuate with your pets. Make sure you have enough food, medicine, and supplies to keep them safe. *For feedback from our pets, go to Page 9.*

☐ **Is your home secure or are there any leaks from windows or roof?**

If you've noticed any leaks, consider patching them or use the trusty method of placing a bucket or bowl in this location. If you can, consider closing shutters or using plywood to cover openings if the winds are projected to be strong. *For more home tips, go to Page 12.*

☐ **Have you cleaned out your block's storm drain, including the ground around it?**

Take a shovel, gloves, and trash bags to clear out any leaves or debris that might keep the water from draining. *For more information, go to Page 13.*

☐ **Have you secured your trash/recycling bins and any outside furniture, plants, etc.?**

Move them to a safe place indoors or tie them down. Take 15 minutes and secure anything that might be blown around in the wind.

☐ **Have you taken photographs/video of your home to document items for insurance claims?**

Walk through your home using your phone's camera/video to document the condition of your space and any valuable items that could be covered by insurance. *For insurance info, go to Page 13.*

☐ **Have you made an evacuation plan?**

Include local, regional, and out of state options - where you evacuate will depend on the direction and strength of the storm.

☐ **Is your car ready for a long trip?**

Fill your tank, check your tires and oil, and make sure your car battery is working.

- ☐ **If you do not have reliable transportation in the event of a mandatory evacuation, do you have an alternative way to get to safety?**

New Orleans	SWLA
<p>City Assisted Evacuation: If you don't have access to a car, check out NOLA Ready at ready.nola.gov/evacuate or Text EVACNOLA to 77295 if you might need to use City-Assisted Evacuation to get a ride out of town. The City of New Orleans will text you if there is a mandatory evacuation.</p> <p><i>For more info, go to Page 14.</i></p>	<p>Calcasieu Parish: Communication about mandatory evacuations will be issued by press release to all local media outlets, as well as posted on the Parish website and sent out via Calcashout.</p> <p>To stay up to date, provide your contact info and preferred methods of alerts at www.calcashout.com. If you don't have the internet, or have trouble registering, call the Office of Emergency Preparedness at 337-721-3800.</p>

- ☐ **Do you have any medical needs or will you require assistance during an emergency?**

New Orleans	SWLA
<p>City of New Orleans Special Needs Registry: You can register if you use life support systems, are insulin dependent, have trouble walking, are blind, deaf or hard of hearing, have speech, developmental, or mental health disabilities, use service animals, are pregnant or breastfeeding, or have other medical needs that mean you might require assistance.</p> <p>Register by calling 311 or at https://specialneeds.nola.gov/.</p>	<p>Calcasieu Parish Special Needs Assistance Program: This program is "designed to assist the elderly community, special needs population, or any person that may have limitations that require additional or extraordinary efforts by emergency response personnel, or which hamper their ability to evacuate during an emergency".</p> <p>Sign up at http://www.calcashout.com.</p>

Quick Checklist: COVID ADDENDUM

- ☐ Who is in your "pod" i.e. who are you already socializing with, and is this who you would ride out a storm and/or evacuate with?
- ☐ Are you vaccinated? If not, consider getting vaccinated as part of your hurricane season prep. Make sure to keep a copy of your vaccination record in your evacuation supplies.
- ☐ Will you be sheltering-in-place or evacuating with people who are unvaccinated, immunocompromised, and/or especially susceptible to COVID?
- ☐ Where will you go if you have to evacuate? Would you be staying with people who are unvaccinated, immunocompromised, and/or especially susceptible to COVID?

Are you someone who likes more details and step-by-step plans? We got you! Keep on reading.

Now that you've reviewed the **Quick Checklist**, it's time for some additional information that may address your outstanding questions. If you're someone who likes *all the details*, this is the section for you! Here's where we'll include special considerations for **COVID-19** and for **Queer and Trans Folks** in color-coded text boxes, in addition to general tips. ***You'll also see personal tips and quotes from New Orleanians in boxes throughout the guide.***

Let's start with some special considerations. Here goes:

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

COVID presents extra challenges during hurricane season. Please consider the following changes to your usual hurricane prep:

- ❑ Even if you've done this before, your plans may need to be updated. Your circumstances may have changed: financially, who you feel safe evacuating with, and/or where you might feel safe going.
- ❑ Evacuation may take longer, so leave extra time to get out of town. See the green box near the end of this guide for extensive information about evacuating during COVID.
- ❑ Supplies may be less available. Try to stock up a little at a time as part of your regular shopping trips to avoid making a big store run at the last minute.

QUEER AND TRANS CONSIDERATIONS

Our entire team identifies as part of the LGBTQ community. Given that queer and transgender folks (QTs!) face specific health and safety barriers during times of crisis, we launched our first guide in 2017 specifically for our community. We include QT-specific information throughout this guide as well, drawing upon the expertise and lived experiences of LGBTQ folks from New Orleans — so look for the boxes that are this color! These tips are by us and for us.

First things first...

Take a deep breath. It will help your brain and keep you grounded. You got this.

And then...

Gather your people. Who are your friends/family (chosen and related!) and do y'all have a plan? Who are your neighbors? Do you have each other's emergency contact information? Reach out to folks in town and friends in other locations who might be able to host you in case of an evacuation.

Laura's Tips for Emergency Contacts

"It's a good idea to designate people as emergency contacts in case someone isn't responsive... and to provide other folks with trusted friends/relatives' contact info. For example, my mom has my best friend's phone number and my boyfriend's mom's phone number as well."

COVID CONSIDERATION

When checking on neighbors and friends, it's a good idea to still follow [social distancing](#) recommendations (stay 6 feet apart) and [other CDC recommendations](#) to protect yourself and others. If you haven't already been vaccinated, consider doing so as part of your hurricane season preparation. In New Orleans, you can view information on getting a vaccine [here](#).

Now you can...

Make a Plan. Things to think about:

1. **Elevation:** Who lives in an elevated house, ideally close to the levees or high ground?
 - a. Shelter in place together in the safest house. If evacuating but low on space, consider storing valuables in the safest possible location.
 - b. If you'd like to check your location's estimated flood risk, see how flood risk has changed over time, and see your location's estimated flood depth during a 1% annual chance flood (*aka* 100-year flood), click [here](#). But remember: There's no substitute for observing your own block during regular rain events!
2. **Drinking Water:** Do you have extra potable water in case there's a boil water alert?

- a. The rule of thumb is to have at least 1 gallon of water for each person and pet for at least 3 days. Consider storing extra water, given how hot it is in Louisiana, and extra water for pregnant people or people who are sick. If possible, try to store a 2-week supply.

Monique's Watery Pro Tip

"Before the storm hits, I always fill my bathtub to the top. If the water supply is affected, we use the tub water to flush toilets and wash up. I also like to fill up reusable water bottles, jugs, or mason jars in case of a boil water alert... which sometimes happens when the power goes out."

Chenier's Watery Pro Tip Addition

"These extra bottles and jars can be added to your freezer, if there's space, which will also help keep your food cold in the event of a power outage!"

- b. Store a bottle of unscented liquid household chlorine bleach to disinfect your water and to use for general cleaning and sanitizing.

Grant's Tips for Drinking Water

"I keep 2-3 gallons of filtered water under the sink. I replace the water each week, using it to water plants, so that I'm never without clean, filtered water. I have a Berkey water filter, which they claim can even filter river water in a pinch. I love that it's portable, and I've brought it with me on more than one evacuation."

3. **Transportation:** Who has a car that can evacuate safely out of town?

- a. Do you have enough spots in this car to get other people out? What about pets?
- b. Do you need to do anything to make your car evacuation ready? Does it need an oil change? Air in the tires? Do your windshield wipers work? Do you have a full tank of gas? If riding with a friend, can you offer to help with any of these things?
- c. If you don't have access to a car and are in New Orleans, check out NOLA Ready at ready.nola.gov/evacuate or Text NOLAREADY to 77295 if you might need to use City-Assisted Evacuation to get a ride out of town. (Go to page 14 for extensive information about City Assisted Evacuation.)

4. **Emergency Funds:** Do you have any cash you can set aside as an emergency fund? Can you pool your cash together with a friend?

- a. ATMs and credit cards may not work for several days if there's a major event. If possible, you'll want to withdraw cash long before the storm hits.
- b. At minimum, we recommend having enough cash for two tanks of gas and a hotel room if need be: around \$250.

5. **Emergency Packing:** What is most precious to you and could not be easily replaced? What do you need for survival?

- a. Family photos, legal paperwork, computer, journals, artwork, jewelry, etc.
- b. What can you scan/photograph to save digitally, preferably to “the cloud” today? What do you need hard copies of?

Alessandra’s Advice for Kids

“If you’re evacuating with kids, make sure to tell them what’s going on. It doesn’t have to be scary, just that there might be a storm, so we’re going to leave for a day or two. Also, make sure you have something fun and something comforting in a little evacuation activity bag for them.”

6. **Leaving:** Where will you go?

- a. Evacuation locations may differ depending on the path of the storm.
- b. Think about 2-3 places you could go to on short notice, depending on how long you will be gone for and how far inland you should go.

Miriam’s Evacuation Plan

“If I’m worried about heavy rainfall, I’ll shelter in place at my house close to the levee in the Lower 9th Ward. If it’s a Category 1 or 2 hurricane, I’ll likely go to stay with family on the North Shore (they have a generator!). If it’s a Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricane, I’ll likely go to Jackson or Atlanta, depending on the expected path. My friends and I keep in touch via text to check on each other’s evacuation needs. If we’re evacuating, my dog and cat will come with me, along with my Go Bag!”

Feeling a little better?

If you’ve got the time or feel better being even more prepared, there’s more:

1. **Pack a Grab + Go Box:** This is useful, regardless of whether you stay or evacuate.

- a. **Get a waterproof container:** A plastic storage bin works well, though you may want to check how well it seals shut. Ziplock bags work, too. If you’re able, you can also purchase water/fire proof bags online for around \$10-\$40.

Fill your container with...

- i. **IDs:** license/state ID, passports, birth certificates, Social Security Number card, immigration documents, copy of marriage certificate, copy of adoption or legal guardianship papers, etc.. *You can also take photos, make copies, or store your license digitally through the state approved [LA Wallet](#) app for \$5.99.*
- ii. **Medicines and/or prescription info:** vital meds (request/gather extra), contact lenses, menstruation supplies
- iii. **House papers:** lease, house deeds, insurance, repair receipts
- iv. **Car papers:** car title, registration, insurance cards, repair receipts
- v. **Bank stuff:** tax forms, checkbooks, ATM cards, credit cards
- vi. **Chargers:** external battery pack for your phone, car charger



Klie's Power/Charger Pro Tips

"When a storm's coming, I start charging everything asap. First, I plug in my phone's portable battery pack to get it fully ready. You can buy those pretty cheap on the internet these days.

When the storm gets closer, I turn off my laptop and leave it plugged into a surge protector 100% of the time so that I'll have a full charge when the power goes out. That way, when my phone's battery dies (and the backup pack runs out of charge too), I can use the USB port on my laptop to get another couple of charges in. Last, I track down my car charger. Over the years, I've charged lots of phones in cars when the power's out..."

- vii. **Pet papers:** vaccine info, recent vet paperwork
- viii. **Education docs:** transcripts, report cards
- ix. **First aid kit**

QT PACKING TIPS

- ❑ Any additional paperwork (i.e. a printed copy of your name change documentation, receipts from any gender affirming surgeries, your WPATH surgery letter)
- ❑ Syringes for HRT, PrEP, Antiretrovirals
- ❑ Special clothing and gender essential items (tucking gaffs, chest binders, packers, wigs, clippers/razors, makeup, wax kits, padded bras)

COVID-19 PACKING AND PREP

- ❑ Make sure you have face masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectants in your home kit and go-bag to prevent the spread during recovery activities.
- ❑ With folks staying home more, your car may have been sitting still for longer than it normally would. Double check to make sure your car battery is fully charged.

2. Gather Supplies for Staying or Going:

- a. **Toiletries:** soap, shampoo, deodorant, toilet paper, wipes, contact lens solution, eyeglasses
- b. **Pets:** food, water, medication (get extra if possible!), leash/crate, collar, current ID tag, sanitation items (litter, waste bags, wipes), toys, bedding

Gus and Turkey's Pet Evacuation Tips

"I love car rides! Just remember my bed, food, water, treats, and special toys!" - Gus, Age 9, Terrier Mix

"Cars are the WORST. If I know you're about to put me in my carrier, I'll hide and/or fight you... so give yourself extra time to find me if you dare. Calming treats may help. Don't forget my litterbox! And maybe an extra towel for any so-called 'accidents'... I'm still going to be mad." - Turkey, Age 10, Black Cat Boss

- c. **Flashlights and Candles:** with extra batteries or lighters
- d. **Radio:** battery operated
- e. **Clothing:** light and comfortable layers and shoes

Klie's "It's Hot Out There" Clothing Advice (and a QT Tip!)

"One of the things that I remember most about Hurricane Katrina is how hot we were with the power out for so long... everyone in our apartment basically stripped down and laid on the tile floor to keep as cool as possible.

For folks who might be less comfortable doing this, I'd recommend finding the coolest clothing possible. It's hard to feel super exposed when you're having anxiety or body dysphoria — planning ahead of time and finding the right clothes for a hot situation might help reduce some stress."

- f. **Infant Supplies:** food/formula, diapers, and other essential items
- g. **Food:** three-day supply of food per person
- h. **Water:** drinkable water at 1 gallon per person per day

- i. **Tools:** screwdriver, axe, hammer, knife, rope or bungee cords

Don's Shelter In Place Tool Tip

"I'm old school, but we've always stayed home and kept an axe in the attic. If the water rises and you get stuck somewhere, an axe can save your life."

- j. **Liquor/wine/tobacco:** *Whatever gives you joy or helps you cope with stress. We grew up with hurricane parties — no judgment!*
- k. **Fun:** an instrument if you have room for it, cards, books, anything to keep you calm + entertained through power outages

Whew, that was a lot! Time for self care...

Don't skip this step!

It's important that we remain as calm as possible during times of crisis — it not only feels better, but it helps us make quick decisions with a clear mind. It also helps us be more kind and patient with those around us. Here are a few things you can do to take care of yourself.

1. Remember to breathe.

Want a GIF to help practice breathing? [We recommend this one.](#)

2. Ask for support/give support.

Your people have your back.

New Orleans & Houma	SWLA
Imagine Mutual Aid: Join our Mutual Aid Response Network through Facebook groups in the Greater New Orleans area or Houma to request and offer whatever you need before, during, and after a storm.	Imagine Mutual Aid: Join our Mutual Aid Response Network through the Facebook group for Southwest Louisiana , in partnership with the Vessel Project .

- a. **Newer residents, it's time to step up to support native New Orleanians and others who have been through some of our harder storms.**

If you aren't experiencing Katrina or Laura PTSD, how can you support those who are having a hard time?

Laura on Offering Support

"I'm happy to help! There are several ways I can think of to check in and offer help to my New Orleanian native neighbors. I have a car, so I can offer a space or two to folks who need a ride out of town. I can also help folks by offering up any extra non-perishables I have... and can babysit if they need a few hours to relax or storm prep. I've got tools people can borrow, and I can help my neighbors board up windows and doors.

And for my older folks, I can help make copies of documents. If they have a cell phone, I can teach them how to text and how to save family + friends' phone numbers as favorites to access them quickly."

Klie's Bonus Tip on Technological Support

"After Hurricane Laura, we canvassed the streets and helped people get into the Imagine Mutual Aid (New Orleans) Facebook group. Sometimes, folks would just hand us their phones, and we would join the group for them. In other cases, we or someone else would post on their behalf. Check in on your neighbors, especially elderly folks, and make sure they have access to the group so that we can stay in touch and get them exactly what they need."

b. Anything else?

Do you need medication/self-care supplies? Contraceptives? Over-the-Counter meds? Vitamines? Insulin? Bath salts? Candles? Don't forget to sleep!

Home Sweet Home...

1. Preparing your home for wind and water:

a. Could rain get in through windows, doors, holes in the roof?

Do what you can to caulk them now. Use a tarp if needed.

b. Unplug electronics: If things need to remain plugged in, use a surge protector.

c. Elevate, wrap, and move valuables to higher ground or an alternate location (e.g. carpets, electronics, and furniture).

d. Eat/grill any meat products from the fridge/freezer.

Anonymous Food Safety Tip

"The coin trick! Fill a cup of water, and freeze it. After it's frozen, put a coin on top. If the power goes out for a long time while you're away, the water in your cup will melt and the coin will sink to the bottom. That way, you'll know whether your food is safe to eat when you come back home."

e. Clean out gutters and downspouts, allow water to flow away from your home.

f. Prepare sandbags using [these steps](#) to ensure they don't topple. (Don't forget to review safe disposal guidelines later.)

- i. If you can't find sandbags, you can use potting soil and pillow cases in a pinch. After the storm passes, repurpose the soil by using it in the garden!
- ii. Place trash bags and/or tarps between the bags and the door to create a seal that will prevent leakage.

g. Secure cleanup materials like masks, gloves, mops, buckets, and bleach.

h. Take photos/video of your property and belongings. Make sure the photos are time-stamped. Walk through your home using your phone's camera/video to document the condition of your space and any valuable items that could be covered by insurance

Waterproof Storage Advice from Locals

"In a pinch, you can buy Ziploc Storage Bags with Double Zipper or Rubbermaid tubs with locking lids. You can place things on top of counters, kitchen tables, or in the attic to keep them up high, or bring them in the car if you decide to evacuate. If you're leaving things behind and want to be extra careful, you can use Ziploc bags inside of sealed storage bins."

"Need even more space? Dry out your dishwasher and use it as a waterproof place to store things from floodwaters."

2. Securing outside your home:

- a. **Secure trash/recycling cans and any outside items:** patio furniture, plants, tools, wood pieces, anything that could blow away or become a projectile.
- b. **Clean out storm drains!** If your catch basin/storm drain near your house is clogged, the water won't drain.
 - i. Take 15 minutes to remove trash, leaves, grass, and other visible debris from in front of catch basin openings. Bag and place lawn debris in garbage cans — never blow or sweep grass down a catch basin. Use gloves and a rake/shovel if necessary.
 - ii. Call 311 to report catch basins that are clogged or not fully functioning.
 - iii. To reduce risk of street flooding, **do not park in front of or on a storm drain!**
- c. **Pick up trash:** Clear anything that could clog catch basins, including trash from nearby sidewalks or lawns. Water flows and will carry loose trash to the drain.
- d. **Buy insurance:** Homeowners, renters, and flood insurance policies are the most effective financial recovery tools currently available. Flood insurance is a separate policy and requires a **30-day waiting period**. It's likely that you won't be able to add a flood policy or change any of your regular policy coverage if there's a hurricane on the way, but you should still contact your agent or company in advance in order to:
 - i. Understanding your policy limits, co-pays, deductibles, and where to call with any claims will come in handy if you are affected by the storm.
 - ii. For more information, visit www.flash.org, email info@flash.org, follow [@FederalAlliance](https://twitter.com/FederalAlliance) on Twitter, follow FLASH on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FLASH), or call (877) 221-SAFE (7233).

We're getting there!

The next section provides extensive details on the New Orleans City Assisted Evacuation and Self Evacuation during COVID-19.



Source: NOLA READY

<https://ready.nola.gov/plan/hurricane/>

EVACUATING DURING COVID-19: New Orleans

Evacuating for a hurricane is already stressful. Below are some considerations for staying safe in an evacuation during COVID-19. Note: the City Assisted Evacuation plan has changed this year - see below!

Please note that this information is provided by the City. While we are happy to talk with folks and share what we've learned, **we are not affiliated with the City or NOLAReady.**

Evacuating to a shelter:

- ❑ Evacuation routes, shelter locations, and local plans may have changed - check NOLAReady for the latest local information.
- ❑ Bring items that can help protect you and others in the shelter, including: hand sanitizer, cleaning materials, and two cloth face coverings per person.
- ❑ While at the shelter, be sure to wash your hands regularly.
- ❑ If possible, maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet of space between you and people who aren't members of your household.

Evacuating with the New Orleans City Assisted Evacuation program:

- ❑ If you do not have transportation and plan to use the City Assisted Evacuation (CAE) program, check out NOLA Ready at ready.nola.gov/evacuate or Text NOLAREADY to 77295 if you might need to get a ride out of town.
- ❑ If there is a mandatory evacuation, the City will activate the CAE program to provide transportation out of town for folks without cars.

How City Assisted Evacuation (CAE) Works:

- ❑ If a CAE is activated, NOLA Ready will send out detailed information about where to go.
- ❑ This year, **evacuation will be coordinated at the Smoothie King Center (SKC)**. Residents needing assistance in an evacuation should take a bus, taxi, rideshare, or walk to the SKC.
 - ❑ When you arrive, you will receive an evacuation ticket outside.
 - ❑ You will then go into the SKC to board transportation to a shelter that meets your needs. You may be transported by bus (primary transportation), plane, train, or medical transport, if necessary.
 - ❑ We recommend arriving at the SKC and going through the evacuation ticketing process with the people you plan to evacuate & shelter with so that you can stay together throughout an evacuation.
 - ❑ **NOTE:** No IDs are required to use the CAE. The City has said that they “recognize chosen families, so any group that identifies as a family unit will be able to evacuate together.”
- ❑ Changes to the CAE:
 - ❑ In previous years, there were 17 “Evacuspots” for evacuation pickup that are designated with a big silver stick-figure sculpture (see above image). You can also find spots by looking at [this map on ready.nola.gov](https://ready.nola.gov).
 - ❑ In 2021, evacuation registration is at the Smoothie King Center (SKC). Residents should either transport themselves to the SKC or can still be picked up at the Evacuspots, where all buses will transport people to the SKC.
 - ❑ Note: there is no parking at the Smoothie King Center, so it is best to take the bus, rideshare, walk, or get dropped off.
 - ❑ All evacuees should wear masks. They will be provided if necessary.
 - ❑ Families will be kept together to the greatest extent possible.
 - ❑ Once it’s safe to return, the City will bring you back, either to a local shelter or to your home.
- ❑ To stay connected: text NOLAREADY to 77295

Additional Information:

- ❑ You’re allowed to evacuate with your pets!

Just bring an ID collar, leash, medications, and a carrier with you to the evacupot. Pets that are smaller than 20 lbs can ride with you on the bus. Your pet will be registered with you, and will travel to the same shelter, where you will care for them.

- ❑ If there is a mandatory evacuation, you must leave town.

Evacuating on your own:

- ❑ Pack 2 face coverings for each family member.
- ❑ Pack cleaning supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and general household cleaning supplies to disinfect surfaces.
- ❑ NOTE: After a hurricane, you may not be able to access supplies for days or even weeks. Prepare now so that you have what you need in an emergency. As you prepare, remember that not everyone can afford to stock up, especially due to job losses during the pandemic. If you can afford to, making essential purchases in advance allows for longer periods of time between shopping trips and helps those who are unable to buy essentials in advance.

What to expect from emergency officials due to COVID-19:

- ❑ FEMA will generally have fewer emergency personnel. This may impact the amount and speed of aid available — plan accordingly, where possible.
- ❑ Shelters and other emergency locations may have additional health/safety precautions, including: temperature and health screenings, increased cleaning and disinfection requirements, and reduced personnel for social distancing.

Sources: [NOLA READY Evacuate](#), [FEMA COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season](#), and [CDC's Going to a Public Disaster Shelter During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

What comes next?

1. If it floods and you have not evacuated:

a. Shelter in Place During Heavy Rainfall.

It is very dangerous to leave during heavy rainfall. During a storm, residents will be allowed to park on the neutral ground and sidewalks, as long as vehicles do not block intersections or streetcar tracks. Move your car beforehand and then stay put.

b. Don't Drive.

IF YOUR CAR TAKES ON WATER...

DON'T TRY TO START IT.

BEGIN DRYING OUT YOUR INTERIOR ASAP.

CONTACT A TOWING SERVICE TO GET IT BACK TO HIGHER GROUND, IF NECESSARY.

CHECK THE OIL DIPSTICK FOR WATER DROPLETS.

CHANGE THE OIL AND TRANSMISSION FLUID.

CHECK ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS.

CHECK THE FUEL TANK AND LINE.

Driving through a flooded area can be extremely dangerous and can also create a wake (wave) that floods homes and businesses as you drive by them. If you absolutely must drive, go slow and stay safe by watching for flooding in low lying areas, especially under bridges and highway dips. As little as six inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Just a couple of inches can hide a dangerous pothole.

2. If your home flooded:

- a. Wear an N-95 mask and gloves for protection from mold, mildew, and other health hazards** - be careful when reentering your property.
- b. Watch out for any electrical wires that may be damaged, gas leaks, or other hazards** when entering the property.
- c. If your drywall got wet**, keep the walls open until they are completely dry to avoid mold. Remove vinyl wallpaper, which can trap moisture, and run fans/dehumidifiers. .
- d. Before you repair or rebuild, consider the following:**
 - iii. Document all damage for insurance or assistance claims.
 - iv. Move electrical outlets and breaker boxes above expected flood level.
 - v. Replace drywall or gypsum wallboard with a flood resistant material, such as wood paneling, tile, or marine-grade plywood.
 - vi. Select insulation that can be protected or easily replaced. FEMA recommends using rigid foam board insulation.
 - vii. Elevate your water heater, A/C unit, and washer/dryer on a platform or cinder blocks.
 - viii. Replace carpet with waterproof flooring such as tiles, brick, vinyl, stained concrete, terrazzo, or solid wood planks.
- e. Remember, you may need a permit to repair damages to your home.** Check with local officials and insurance agents before beginning repairs.

Additional Resources:

Anonymous Storm Prep Q&A: We host anonymous Q&A's in our Instagram Stories, every time there's a named storm in the Gulf, so you can ask anything that's on your mind regarding storm prep or flooding. Find us at @imaginewaterworks.

Mutual Aid Response Network: We have a vast network of thousands of neighbors across the Greater New Orleans Area, Southwest Louisiana, and Houma who offer and request support, information, and specific supplies before, during, and after storms. Visit our website to learn more or to join your local "Imagine Mutual Aid" Facebook group:

<https://www.imaginewaterworks.org/mutual-aid-response-network/>.

[NOLA READY:](#) The City’s NOLA READY site has information in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese on how to prepare for a storm, shelter in place, evacuate, and return home.

[LSU AgCenter Flood Smart:](#) Includes resources on flood risk & vulnerability, river stages and forecasts, activities for kids, and tips for avoiding flood damage.

Center for Disease Control: Hurricanes and COVID-19

The CDC has additional resources on how the COVID-19 pandemic can affect disaster preparedness and recovery, and what you can do to keep yourself and others safe. Available in English and Spanish [HERE.](#)

Additional guidance on “Going to a Public Disaster Shelter During the COVID-19 Pandemic” is available in English and Spanish [HERE.](#)

Resources for “Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event” are available in English & Spanish [HERE.](#)

Stay informed about weather:

<https://www.wunderground.com/hurricane/>

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Alerts:

Text your zip code to 77295 to receive updates from the City of New Orleans. Look for updates regularly posted on <https://ready.nola.gov>, on Twitter @NOLAReady, and on Facebook @NOLAReady. Additionally, sign up for NOLA Ready alerts, which will notify residents of emergency situations, at <https://www.nola.gov/ready/alert/>.

Preparation/Recovery/Funding

Imagine Water Works' [Free business/hardening/home guides](#)

Business continuity resources and loan information are available on websites such as [Ready.gov/business](#) and [SBA.gov/disaster-planning](#).

You made it to the end of the guide!

Thanks for trusting us with your safety. Our best resource will always be each other.

If you found this guide useful, there are several ways to show your support:

- [Donate here](#) to help keep our work going.
- Share this guide with your friends and neighbors.
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#).

About Us:

Imagine Water Works is reimagining the future through art, science, and human connection. Founded in New Orleans in 2012, we've organized to help keep each other safe and informed for nearly a decade. **Our core focus areas are water management, climate justice, and disaster readiness and response.**

Some of our current projects and resources include:

Mutual Aid Response Network (Imagine Mutual Aid: New Orleans, SWLA, Houma)

2021 Hurricane Season Guide

COVID-19 Guide to Hurricane Season

Queer/Trans Guide to Hurricane Season

Anonymous Storm Prep Q&A (via Instagram)

Business Storm Survival Handbook

Little Library of Water

Art of Science / Science of Art Symposium

Joy of Water: A Resident's DIY Guide to Becoming Water Wise