



CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH

HURRICANE INFORMATION

www.fwb.org

2023 EDITION

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HURRICANE SEASON JUNE 1 to NOVEMBER 30, 2023



Hurricane season for the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico region runs June 1 through November 30, and hurricane researchers are predicting a near-normal 2023 hurricane season. According to The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is forecasting a range of

12 to 17 total named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher). Of those, 5 to 9 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 1 to 4 major hurricanes (categories 3, 4, or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher).

Now is the time to go over your disaster plan with your family. Make sure you know your evacuation route if you plan to leave the area, and provide a neighbor/friend with your contact information should you leave.

The City of Fort Walton Beach encourages all residents to be safe before, during and after a storm. Inside this newsletter you will find helpful tips and information for this hurricane season.

DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

At the start of hurricane season, it is important to assemble a disaster supply kit. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy to carry containers. Keep important documents in a waterproof container. A disaster supply kit should include the following:

- At least a 3-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day).
- Food that won't spoil/can opener.
- One change of clothing and shoes per person per day.
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person and pillow.
- First-aid kit with bandages,

antiseptic wipes, antibacterial ointment, tweezers, adhesive tape, etc.

- Prescriptions.
- Battery-powered portable radio, flashlight and extra batteries.
- Emergency tools.
- Phone and extra batteries/charger.
- Credit Card and cash.
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- Personal hygiene supplies and sunscreen.
- Other items needed on daily basis.

MISSION

TO ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE COMMUNITY BY PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES.

DEBRIS REMOVAL FOLLOWING A STORM

Fort Walton Beach **Ordinance No. 10.80.06** states that no resident, contractor or business shall cut, trim or remove trees when the City of Fort Walton Beach is under a Tropical Storm Watch Hurricane or Hurricane Watch/Warning. Loose tree limbs can clog storm drains and become wind borne debris.

General guidelines for separating storm debris:

Make two piles - one for vegetation (tree trunks, branches, etc) and one for construction debris (shingles, lumber, etc.). Place the separate piles in the public right-of-way next to the street in front of your property. Only storm debris in the right-of-way will be collected. Debris should never be placed in the street and should be kept away from fire hydrants, manholes, storm drains, mail boxes, utility meters, etc.

Insurance-covered debris collection and disposal is not eligible and should not be placed in the right-of-way for collection.

Businesses and private road residents must make their own arrangements for debris removal.

STORM TERMS FOR HURRICANE SEASON

The following terms may be helpful as you listen to weather information on your radio or television before and during a storm. Hurricanes are a type of tropical cyclone - organized rotating weather systems that develop in the tropics. Tropical cyclones are classified as follows:

Tropical Depression An organized system of persistent clouds and thunderstorms with a closed low-level circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less.

Tropical Storm An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph.

Hurricane An intense tropical weather system with a well-defined circulation and sustained winds of 74 mph or higher.

Other terms important to know to help identify a hurricane hazard include:

Storm Surge A dome of water pushed onshore by hurricane and tropical

storm winds. Storm surges can reach 25 feet high and be 50 to 100 miles wide.

Storm Tide A combination of storm surge and the normal tide (i.e. a 15-foot storm surge combined with a 2-foot normal high tide over the mean sea level creates a 17-foot storm tide).

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are possible in the specified area, usually within 36 hours.

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area, usually within 24 hours.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale Hurricanes are classified into five categories based on their wind speed, central pressure, and damage potential. Category 3 and higher hurricanes are considered major hurricanes, although Category 1 and 2 storms are still extremely dangerous and warrant our residents' full attention.

ALERT OKALOOSA COUNTY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Fort Walton Beach residents, business owners, and visitors are strongly encouraged to enroll in **Alert Okaloosa County**, a notification system used to alert residents about weather emergencies and actions to take.

Alert Okaloosa County is operated by the county's Emergency Management team. The system notifies residents in an area where severe weather is predicted, to let them know ahead of time of tornadoes, flash flooding, or other threats.

Users can select how they would like to receive notifications.

Notifications can be sent via:

- Email
- Business phone
- Home phone
- Cell phone (text)
- Cell phone (automated call)

Text **OKALOOSAFL** to **888777** to anonymously sign up for emergency notifications delivered to your phone via text. To sign up for notifications via email, and/or automated calls to home or business phones, visit: **www.Myokaloosa.com/ps/alert**

GASOLINE SAFETY

The Fort Walton Beach Fire Department would like people to know that the improper storage and handling of flammable liquids like gasoline can be very dangerous.

Gasoline vapors are explosive and can be ignited by smoking materials, an electrical spark, or appliance pilot lights. The following actions can prevent the build-up of unseen gasoline vapors.

When storing gas at home, be sure to use only approved "UL" listed safety containers. Never use a glass jug, discarded bleach bottle or other container not specifically designed for gasoline storage.

Store the fuel in a well-ventilated area where tipping over or accidental damage is unlikely to occur.

Do not store flammable liquids in the same room as household heating equipment. Home utility rooms can be unsafe because a pilot light or sparking switch can set off an explosion of unseen vapors.

Many local regulations prohibit the storage of large amounts of flammable liquids in inhabited buildings.

Carrying an extra supply of gasoline in the car is not recommended. This practice enhances the likelihood of injury from explosion. However, if gasoline must be carried in your vehicle, store it in a heavy, un-vented can. The container must have vapor tight seals on the cap of the fill opening and the pouring spout.

Leave room in the container for gas to expand as it is warmed by the heat of the day or heat of the car.

Securely anchor the fuel can to prevent damage in the event of an accident or sudden stop. And of course, do not smoke.

Remember, always keep cigarettes, lighters, matches and small children away from gasoline. When refilling yard equipment, do so in a well-vented area, and allow the engine to cool before pouring in the gas.

INSURANCE TIPS AND INFORMATION

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers these tips for filing insurance claims:

When you call your insurance agent to make a claim, have your policy number and an address and telephone number where you can be reached.

During the call, ask when an adjuster can be expected to visit your property. The adjuster will work with you to calculate your losses and prepare a settlement estimate. If you do not hear from the adjuster within a week of the expected time, contact your agent again.

Evidence of your loss will be important in reaching an estimate. Photographs and videotape of the property showing damage are valuable.

Make a list of your damaged property including age and value. Show your adjuster any repair estimates you have received from contractors or technicians.

Contact FEMA at 800-621-3362, or **www.fema.gov** to register for disaster assistance.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency 911

City of FWB
850-833-9500

City Building Permits
850-833-9605

FWB Police
850-833-9546

FWB Fire Dept
850-833-9565

FWB Sanitation
850-833-9655

**Okaloosa County
Citizen Information
Line 850-651-7583 or
311**

**Okaloosa County
Sheriff's Office**
850-651-7410

FEMA 800-621-3362

**Small Business
Administration
Hotline 800-827-5722**

Florida Power & Light
800-468-8243

Salvation Army
850-243-4531

American Red Cross
850-682-3356

**United Way Emerald
Coast 850-243-0315**

**FL Dept. of Financial
Services 800-227-8676**

2023 STORM NAMES

Tropical storms and hurricanes are given a name due to their long-term persistence and need for a unique identifier for issuing warning & information. The National Hurricane Center has six different lists of names that are used. The lists are recycled every six years, but notable names, such as Ivan, Katrina, Opal and Irma can be retired. Below is the list of names for the 2023 hurricane season. If all of these names are used before the end of the season, additional storms will take names from an alternate list of names approved by the World Meteorological Organization.

ARLENE
BRET
CINDY
DON
EMILY
FRANKLIN
GERT
HAROLD
IDALIA
JOSE
KATIA
LEE
MARGOT
NIGEL
OPHELIA
PHILIPPE
RINA
SEAN
TAMMY
VINCE
WHITNEY

CSU PREDICTS BELOW-AVERAGE 2023 SEASON

Colorado State University hurricane researchers are predicting that the 2023 Atlantic basin hurricane season will have slightly below-average activity, citing the likely development of El Niño as a primary factor.

Eastern and central tropical and subtropical Atlantic sea surface temperatures are much warmer than normal, while Caribbean Sea surface temperatures are near their long-term average. These conditions would favor an above-normal hurricane season.

However, El Niño tends to increase upper-level westerly winds across the Caribbean into the tropical Atlantic Ocean. The increased upper-level winds result in vertical wind shear, which can tear apart hurricanes as they try to form.

Given the conflicting signals between a potentially robust El Niño and an anomalously warm tropical and subtropical Atlantic, the team stresses that there is more uncertainty than normal with this outlook.

The CSU Tropical Meteorology Project team is predicting 13 named storms during the Atlantic hurricane season. Of those, researchers expect six to become hurricanes and two to reach major hurricane strength (Saffir/Simpson category 3, 4, or 5) with sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or higher.

The CSU team will issue forecast updates on June 1, July 6 and August 3.

GET A PLAN AT FLORIDADISASTER.ORG



In a major disaster, emergency workers may not be able to reach everyone right away, and in some cases it may take three or more days for help to arrive. What would you do if you had no electricity, no gas, no water and no telephone service? Having a plan for your family and their needs will help ensure their safety and comfort during these difficult times.

That's why citizens are encouraged to create a disaster plan in the event our area is struck by a storm. One way to do this is through the Florida Division of Emergency Management's website, www.Floridadisaster.org.

This website provides residents with information and help on developing a family plan, a business plan, a kids plan and strengthening your home. There is also information for disabled residents.

Get your plan together today. Remember, it is always better to plan before a disaster strikes.

ONLY RAIN DOWN THE DRAIN

Most coastal residents are fully aware of Hurricane season (June 1-November 30) and the issues storm surges can cause.

What some residents might not think about, however, are what stormwater mechanisms are in place to remove the flood waters during and after these and other storm events.

The City of Fort Walton Beach currently has approximately 44 miles of underground stormwater pipe, 63 outfalls (end of pipe meeting open body of water), 14 stormwater retention ponds, 3.25 miles of ditches and streams, and over 1,500 curb and surface inlets.

The city maintains this infrastructure by cleaning ditch lines, inspecting and mapping stormwater infrastructure, rehabbing and replacing outdated pipes, as well as designing, and planning necessary upgrades.

The general public can help the city keep the stormwater system clean and ready for the next big rain event, and also keep area waterways clean, by keeping these items out of stormwater infrastructure:

Motor oil - 5 quarts of motor oil can create an oil slick two football fields in size. Keep your car tuned up & repair leaks. Do not store these items in low lying areas.

Household hazardous waste - (antifreeze, batteries, paint cleaners, etc.) Do not pour these items down a stormwater inlet. Dispose of this waste properly or recycle it at designated centers.

Sediment – suffocates and kills oysters and submerged vegetation, which filters local waterways to help keep them clear and clean. Sediment also clogs stormwater pipes, reducing their effectiveness.

Trash – Create a compost pile with yard clippings and kitchen scraps. Do not put leaves in ditches or storm drains. Instead, put leaves in yard debris bags and place them on the curb for pickup.

Pet waste – picking up after your pet will help reduce bacterial and nutrient pollution during rain events. These items can pollute the water, clog storm drains and lead to flooding, especially during the heavy rains associated with hurricanes.

Eliminating items other than stormwater from the storm drain systems also reduces operating and maintenance costs. Keeping these items out of the storm drains and ditches will improve our water quality and ensure floodwaters subside efficiently.

Remember, only rain down the drain.



POWERLINE SAFETY

Hurricanes can often knock down power lines. Please stay away from downed power lines, and treat them all as if they are active. If a power line is down near you, stand still, warn others to stay back. Call Florida Power and Light immediately.

You could be in danger of something known as “step potential.”

Electricity entering the ground from a downed power line disperses from the point of contact, moving from areas of high voltage to areas of lower voltage. If your feet are far enough apart and the voltage difference between them is large enough, the electricity could pass through your body instead of the ground, potentially resulting in electrocution or serious injury.

If you find yourself near a downed power line, take small, shuffling steps and maintain contact with the ground at all times as you move away from the downed line.

Also, do not connect portable generators to your household electrical system. By back-feeding power through your house and on to the electrical grid, you endanger power crews working to restore electrical service to your neighborhood.