

Hurricane Evacuation Checklist

WHAT TO DO, IN ORDER, BEFORE YOU HIT THE ROAD

Print this out and keep it with your go-bag. Full detail on zones, timing, traffic, and firearms/security guidance is in the companion article: domuncula.com/hurricane-evacuation-florida-when-to-leave/

Know before you go

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- 1**
- Confirm your evacuation zone**
Look up your zone by street address on the state's Know Your Zone map (floridadisaster.org). Zones get redrawn periodically, don't rely on where you were a few years ago, or a neighbor's zone.
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- 2**
- Watch for your county's evacuation order**
Zones A through F are ranked by storm-surge risk, not wind. Not every zone evacuates for every storm, local officials decide based on the specific storm's track and strength. Leave when your zone is called, not after traffic is already backed up.
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- 3**
- Fill your gas tank early**
Do this before an evacuation order is issued, not after you're already on the road with everyone else who forgot.
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Secure the house before you go

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- Close hurricane shutters**
If you have them, close them. Taping windows does not protect glass from shattering, it's a myth worth actively unlearning.
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- 5**
- Bring loose items inside**
Patio furniture, bikes, trash cans, anything wind can turn into a projectile. A garage or shed works if indoor space is tight. Grills and propane tanks need to stay outside but secured, away from the house itself.
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- Leave utilities running, unless told otherwise**
Keep refrigerators and freezers on. Only shut off water, gas, or electricity if local officials specifically instruct you to.
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- Document every room**
Photograph or video your home and anything of value before you leave, this is the single most useful thing you can do for a homeowners insurance claim. Back the images up somewhere besides your phone.
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- 8**
- Lock every door and window**
Including the ones you don't normally bother with.
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**9****Secure firearms, or move them off-site**

Store any firearms left behind in a locked, secured safe with ammunition kept separately. For valuables or documents you can't bring and won't be back for quickly, a guarded storage facility (not a standard self-storage unit) and a bank safe deposit box are both worth lining up before hurricane season starts.

**10****Unplug non-essential electronics**

Protects against power-surge damage during outages and when power is restored.

What to bring with you

**11****Medications and prescriptions**

Original bottles, plus a written list of what you take and the dosage, in case you need a refill somewhere unfamiliar.

**12****Copies of key documents**

ID, insurance declarations page, and property deed, physical copies, since power and connectivity may be unreliable where you land.

**13****Cash**

Card readers and ATMs may be down after the storm, at your destination and back home.

**14****Phone charger and a full tank of gas**

A car charger or power bank matters as much as the cable itself.

**15****A battery or hand-crank AM/FM radio**

Cell networks and streaming go down before broadcast radio does. A radio that picks up AM stations keeps you connected to NOAA Weather Radio and local emergency broadcasts when data and cell service can't.

**16****Your route and destination, shared with someone you trust directly**

A family member, a neighbor who evacuated elsewhere, anyone who would actually notice if they didn't hear from you, by text, call, or email. Skip the public post, a status update on Facebook or X isn't the same as someone watching for you, and it also broadcasts to strangers that your house is sitting empty.

This checklist is general informational purposes only and isn't legal, medical, insurance, or emergency-management advice. Always follow official guidance from local and state emergency officials, who may adjust timing and instructions for your specific storm and location, over any general checklist, including this one.