



Alachua County Emergency Management



All-Hazards Preparedness Guide

Contact Information

9-1-1 for Emergencies only

Alachua County Emergency Management Web site:

<http://www.alachuacounty.us/em>

Alachua County Emergency Management:

(352) 264-6500

Alachua County Public Safety:

(352) 384-3101

Alachua County Health Department:

(352) 334-7900

Alachua Sheriff's Office:

(352) 367-4000

Gainesville Fire Rescue:

(352) 334-5065

Gainesville Police Department:

(352) 955-1818

High Springs Fire Rescue:

(386) 454-2056

City of Alachua Police Department:

(386) 462-1396

University of Florida Police Department:

(352) 392-1111

High Springs Police Department:

(386) 454-1415

Waldo Police Department:

(352) 468-1515

American Red Cross:

(352) 376-4669

North Florida Regional Medical Center:

(352) 333-4000

Shands at UF:

(352) 265-8000

Shands AGH:

(352) 733-0111

Malcom Randall V.A. Medical Center:

(352) 331-1408



Alachua County Emergency Management's Mission

"To provide the resources to the community to develop a Culture of Preparedness against natural, human caused and technological hazards through education, training, and partnering programs."

Alachua County uses various methods to communicate with the public.

Visit this Web site for more details:

<http://www.alachuacounty.us/government/depts/fr/em/firststeps/beinformed/>

Twitter

http://www.twitter.com/Alachua_Co_EM

Myspace

<http://www.myspace.com/alachuacoemergencymgt>

Facebook

Search for Alachua County Emergency Management!

This Guide was developed by the Department of Public Safety, Emergency Management Section

Disclaimer: Although the information presented in the guide is believed to be reliable and current, we make no guarantee as to absolute applicability.

Be Prepared!

Let us help you get ready with the Four Pillars of Preparedness. We are committed to protecting the life and property of Alachua County residents.

Create a disaster kit

- Water (one gallon of water per person for at least 5 days)
- Food (at least a 5-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio plus a NOAA weather radio with tone alert
- Flashlight (extra batteries)
- First Aid Kit
- Manual can opener for food (if the kit contains canned food)
- Local and Evacuation maps
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Prescription drugs (two-week supply) and copies of prescriptions
- Store your information, such as passports, driver's licenses, insurance and social security cards, birth and marriage certificates, in water-proof bags.



What's the difference between a weather watch and a weather warning?

The basic difference between a weather watch and a weather warning is the immediacy of weather conditions.

A weather watch is issued to alert people in advance that conditions are favorable for dangerous weather. Since severe weather can develop quickly, watches are issued to prepare people for this possibility so they can take appropriate action.

A weather warning indicates conditions that produce severe storms have been observed in nearby areas and will likely reach your location.

Alachua County was the first StormReady Community in the State of Florida. StormReady helps communities save lives and property both before and during a disaster of any kind.

StormReady communities are prepared for severe weather through improved planning, education, and awareness.



Hurricanes

2009 Hurricane Names

Ana	Henri	Odette
Bill	Ida	Peter
Claudette	Joaquin	Rose
Danny	Kate	Sam
Erika	Larry	Teresa
Fred	Mindy	Victor
Grace	Nicholas	Wanda

2010 Hurricane Names

Alex	Hermine	Otto
Bonnie	Igor	Paula
Colin	Julia	Richard
Danielle	Karl	Shary
Earl	Lisa	Tomas
Fiona	Matthew	Virginie
Gaston	Nicole	Walter

2011 Hurricane Names

Arlene	Harvey	Ophelia
Bret	Irene	Philippe
Cindy	Jose	Rina
Don	Katia	Sean
Emily	Lee	Tammy
Franklin	Maria	Vince
Gert	Nate	Whitney

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale

Category 1: 74-95 mph (Minimal)

Category 2: 96-100 mph (Moderate)

Category 3: 111-130 mph (Extensive)

Category 4: 131-155 mph (Extreme)

Category 5: 155+ mph (Catastrophic)



Chainsaw Safety

A hard hat is recommended, and goggles to protect your eyes from flying splinters and chips. Hearing protection is useful, too. Other suggested protective items include: leather gloves, hard-toe shoes, and timber chaps.

- Always remember your footing.
- Do not refuel chainsaw while it is running.
- Read the manual supplied with your saw.
- Do not use while standing in a wet area.
- Be cautious of saw kick-back. To avoid kick-back, do not saw with the tip.

Generator Safety

Generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed; however, they can be dangerous. Hazards that are potential with generators are: carbon monoxide poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire.

- Never use a generator indoors (homes, garages, basements, sheds, etc.) even if the windows and doors are open.
- Do not refuel a generator while it is running.
- Follow the instructions that come with your generator.
- You cannot see or smell carbon monoxide. If you feel dizzy, sick, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air right away.
- Don't connect your generator directly into your home. This electrical system creates backfeed, which is dangerous to utility workers.

Hurricanes

Develop a Hurricane Plan

Hurricane season runs June 1 through November 30, so plan early.

Step 1: Family Meeting

Create a list with the family to encourage ideas about what needs to be done before an upcoming hurricane season. Also, talk about ways of staying safe.

Step 2: Evacuating

Shelters are last resort, since they only provide for basic needs. Ideas of places to go include a family member's or friend's house, or hotel outside the evacuation area. Make sure to determine if you are located in an evacuation zone. If you choose to evacuate, do so well in advance.

Step 3: Protect your assets

Video record or take pictures of items that are valuable. Review your insurance policies and make sure you have adequate coverage. Once a hurricane watch is issued insurers will not grant new or additional coverage.

Step 4: Know if your home is vulnerable

Perform a walk-through of your home and property. Evaluate your roof, windows, garage door, etc. Determine the actions you will take.

Step 5: Protect your vehicles

Decide where you'll store your vehicle, boat or RV. Check your vehicle insurance policy and keep it safe with your homeowner's policy.

Step 6: Secure your home

Decide what actions to take to protect your home and property, such as tree-trimming and putting up shutters.

Step 7: Special Needs

Determine if anyone in your family has special medical needs. If so, take necessary action in advance to accommodate those needs.

Step 8: Protect your pets

Determine your pets' needs and make a plan in case you need to evacuate. Be sure to plan for larger outside animals, too, such as horses, pigs, and cows.

Step 9: Gather supplies

Assemble a hurricane disaster kit according to your family's food, water, and medical needs

Step 10: Notify others about your plan

Let family or friends know about your hurricane plan so they can check on you after the storm. Establish an out-of-town contact.

Traffic Safety

When traffic signals are not working, intersections should be treated as four-way stops. To prevent chaos, please wait your turn.

Special Needs

The Special Needs Program is designed to provide free transportation for those who qualify during evacuations for hurricanes, wildfires or floods.

If you are an individual with a special medical need, Alachua County has a Special Needs Registry which maintains the resident's registry and arranges for transportation and shelter.

To register, please call (352) 264-6500 or visit: <http://www.alachuacounty.us/em>
Make sure to register annually!

Thunderstorms/Lightning

Thunderstorms form when moisture combines with rapidly rising warm air and a force capable of lifting air such as a warm or cold front, or a sea breeze. Due to Florida's geography, sea breezes from both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean converge over the Florida Peninsula to form thunderstorms. The typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of thirty minutes.

Florida has more thunderstorms and lightning strikes each year than anywhere else in the United States. Florida also leads the nation in deaths and injuries from lightning, averaging 10 deaths and 30 injuries each year. Although all thunderstorms are dangerous, produce lightning, and can be lethal, about 10 percent produce dangerous winds or hail that will likely exceed thresholds known to cause bodily harm or significant damage to well-built structures. These are known as severe thunderstorms. Severe thunderstorms produce hail the size of a dime or larger and/or winds of 58 miles per hour or greater.

Lightning is an electrical discharge that results from the buildup of positive and negative charges within a thunderstorm.

Lightning does, in fact, strikes several times in the same place. The Empire State Building and the Sears Tower get hit thousands of times a year, as do mountain tops and radio-television antennas. So, dismiss the myth that lightning never strikes in the same place twice.



Stay Safe

- If outdoors during/before a thunderstorm, get inside.
- Do not take a shower or bath. Avoid swimming, too. Lightning energy can be transmitted through water to you.
- Do not handle any electrical equipment or corded telephones because lightning could follow the wire.
- If you are located inside of a car, stay inside and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain subsides.
- Turn on your weather radio and keep it close at hand to receive further information.

Tornadoes

A tornado is a violent windstorm characterized by a twisting, funnel-shaped cloud. These naturally occurring phenomena can form as spin-offs of a hurricane or accompany a thunderstorm. Many tornadoes never touch ground or do not affect populated areas, although they can cause significant property damage in a short time. In Florida, these storms are normally small, short-lived events that produce minor damage.

The state's deadliest tornadoes usually occur in spring. Florida is among the top 10 states prone to devastation from tornadoes. Although the Midwest has the reputation for the worst tornadoes, Florida is the state which experiences the most number of tornadoes per square mile. Unlike the rest of the nation, strong to violent tornadoes are just as likely to occur in Florida after midnight as they are in the afternoon.

Enhanced Fujita Scale

EFO (Gale): 65-85 mph

EF1 (Weak): 86-110 mph

EF2 (Strong): 111-135 mph

EF3 (Severe): 136-165 mph

EF4 (Devastating): 166-200 mph

EF5 (Incredible): 200+ mph



Be ready

- Pick a **“safe room”** in your home where your family can gather; a **“safe room”** could be a basement, a center hallway, or a bathroom or closet on a lower floor. Be sure it is windowless.
- Be sure to bring your Disaster Kit with you to your **“safe room.”**
- If you reside in a mobile home, you need to seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- If you are outside, seek shelter immediately. If you are unable to find shelter, lie in a ditch or low-lying area.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- If you are in a car, get out immediately and seek shelter or lie in a low-lying area away from the vehicle.

Floods

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters, and they can be extremely dangerous. The effects of floods can be severe: casualties and physical damages to infrastructure including homes and roadways. Secondary effects of flooding include contamination of water, unhygienic conditions and the spread of water-borne diseases, and loss of crops and food supplies.

In Alachua County, variations of flooding occur due to the different effects of severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, and seasonal rain. Certain areas of Alachua County are low-lying and subject to flooding from rising water. Specific areas include those in the extreme southeast portion of the county, along the shores of Newnans, Orange and Lochloosa lakes, portions of Gainesville along Hogtown Creek, the Santa Fe River and close basin areas such as Paynes Prarie and the Kanapha area.

The other flood problem involves storm water runoff that occurs in many locations. This problem has recently become more critical because of development in areas subject to urban flooding. Many homeowners and businesses do not carry flood insurance, which can result in high uninsured losses.



The Flood Warning System

Alachua County has a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) that includes a variety of warning systems, outlined below, to provide citizens with up to the minute information on impending storms or flood threats.

Radio Stations

AM/FM Radio
WRUF 850 AM - 103.7 FM
WOGK 93.7 FM
WBXY 99.5 FM

Television

WCJB TV-20
WUFT TV-5

NOAA Weather Radio

162.475 MHz

Floods

You can protect yourself from flood hazards by taking measures to ensure the safety of life and property before, during, and after a flood.

Flood Safety Measures

- Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of water can knock you off your feet.
- Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Electric current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your Utility Company.

Flood Insurance

For many people, their home and its contents represent their greatest investment. Property losses due to flooding are not covered under most standard homeowners' insurance policies. You can protect your home and its contents with flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The NFIP is a federal program established by Congress in 1968 which enables property owners to buy flood insurance at reasonable rates in participating communities. In return, participating communities carry out flood management measures designed to protect life and property from future flooding.

To find out more about flood insurance for your property and its contents, contact your insurance agent. There is usually a 30 day waiting period before a flood insurance policy takes effect, so don't wait until a storm threatens before you secure the flood insurance you need.



Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

Any development in the floodplain requires a building permit according to the Unified Land Development Code Ch. 342. If you need a flood zone determination, contact Alachua County Public Works at (352) 337-6140 or the City of Gainesville Public Works at (352) 334-5069.

If you need a FEMA elevation certification or suspect that illegal floodplain development is occurring, call the Alachua County Building and Zoning Department at (352) 334-6050.

Extreme Temperatures

Droughts are slow-building disasters. Although we do know that droughts can occur, there are no distinct starting or ending points. It is uncertain when or where they will occur or for how long they will last. Droughts occur when long periods pass without substantial rainfall. We start to see effects of drought, such as withering crops, plummeting water levels, and parched fields.

Alachua County has suffered periods of extended drought. Sectors most vulnerable to drought include agricultural and fishing/recreation industries. Drought increases the wildland fire danger and chance of sinkholes for the entire county. Long-term concerns include reduced potable water for domestic use through lowering of the water table in the area's aquifers. In Florida, groundwater is the source of drinking water for 90 percent of the population, and the state has been impacted by drought on a repeated basis over the last century.

During droughts, you should consider conserving water and reusing it. Lowering the amount of water you use will help in conserving.

During summer months, May through September, Alachua County can experience conditions of extreme heat and high humidity. Heat kills by pushing the human body beyond its limits. There are three different types of heat emergencies: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat cramps are caused by a loss of salt through heavy sweating, heat exhaustion is caused by dehydration, which can progress to heat stroke, the most severe of the three. Heat stroke can cause shock, brain damage, organ failure and even death.



Before going out into the heat, take these precautions

- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.
- Rest frequently, and find shade when possible.
- Avoid exercise during hot or humid weather.
- Drink plenty of water every day. Drink more fluids before, during, and after physical activity.
- Be especially careful if you are overweight or elderly, or if you are taking any prescription drugs that impair heat regulation.



Wildland Fires

There are three types of wildland fires. Surface fires are the most common and burn along the forest floor. Ground fires are usually ignited by lightning and burn along or below the forest floor. Crown fires spread by wind, and move along the tops of trees. Wildland fires are usually signaled by dense smoke that fills the area for miles around.

Fires can be ignited by various phenomena, such as lightning, burning without a permit, and arson.

Florida's typical fire season lasts January through May. The most at risk portions of the county are the urban interface and rural areas. Fires can also cause significant losses and destruction for timber interests in Alachua County (from 2004 to 2008, 6,380 acres were demolished by a total of 358 wildfires).



Wildland fire safety recommendations

- Remain calm in a case of a fire. Drop to the floor and crawl. Most fatalities are due to breathing fumes and smoke.
- Feel doors before opening. If they are hot, do not open.
- Never go back into a burning building.
- Never try to fight the fire.
- If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll. Keep rolling; running from the fire only makes it worse.
- Make sure your home has working smoke detectors in several areas. Test them monthly, and replace the batteries once a year.
- Check for fire hazards around home. Trim trees and shrubs that surround the house and be sure the yard is free of dead moss and wood.
- Never overload circuits or extension cords.
- Immediately turn off appliances that overheat, sputter, spark, or emit an unusual smell.
- Teach your children about the dangers of fire.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are chemical substances that, if released or misused, can pose a threat to environment or health. They come in various forms, such as explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive materials.

These forms of hazardous materials are most commonly released by transportation accidents or chemical accidents in plants; however, many products containing hazardous chemicals are used and stored in homes routinely.

Hazardous materials are common in Alachua County because industry, business, government and private citizens use them on a daily basis. If a material, either alone or in combination with other substances, has the potential to damage humans, then it can be considered hazardous. Virtually the county's entire population is at risk to a hazardous materials incident. Accidents at fixed facilities could threaten the health and safety of workers and the population and property of the surrounding community.

In Alachua County, hazardous materials can be found in fixed facilities as well as being transported on the highway, through the gas pipeline, and by railroad.

Hazardous materials can even be found within your own home. Items include nail polish remover, paint, ammonia from cleaning products, and insecticide products.



Hazardous Materials Safety

- Read labels and keep hazardous materials away from children.
- Never mix chemicals.
- Stay indoors when chemicals are released, lock all windows and doors. Turn off ventilation systems. Go to your "safe room."
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape. If gas or vapors enter, take shallow breaths through a cloth or towel.

If it's serious or if the victim is having trouble breathing, call 9-1-1!

If someone has been exposed to a chemical, call your local physician or the Florida Poison Information Network at: (800) 222-1222.

Pandemic/Seasonal Flu

Three tips to help prevent flu

1. Get a flu vaccination
2. Take everyday preventive actions
 - Wash your hands
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
3. Take antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them

Antiviral drugs are medicines (pills, liquid, or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body.

Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water as well as cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues.

More information can be found at
<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdalachua/>

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness. It can cause mild to severe illness, and can even lead to death.

Symptoms may include

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children)



A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges to which people have little to no immunity and for which there is no vaccine.

Avian (bird) flu - H5N1 - caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds.

Swine (pig) flu - H1N1 - is a new influenza virus. H1N1 was given the name "swine flu" due to the fact that many of the genes were similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America; however, upon further study, it has been revealed that H1N1 is very different - it has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia and avian genes and human genes.

Plan for a pandemic

- Store a two-week supply of water and food.
- Have a two-week supply of prescription drugs.
- To be sure to stock up on non-prescription drugs, such as cough and cold medicines and vitamins.
- For water, boil for one minute, or add bleach as directed on label; if unknown, use 10 drops per quart).

Terrorism

Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States for purposes of intimidation, coercion or ransom.

Acts of terrorism include threats of terrorism; assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, bomb scares, bombings, and cyber attacks (computer-based); and the use of chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons.

Domestic and International

Domestic terrorism includes groups or individuals living in the U.S. whose terrorist activities are directed at elements of their own government or population without foreign direction.

International terrorism is foreign-based and/or directed by countries or groups outside the U.S.

Terrorist acts are intended to

- Cause mass casualties and panic
- Produce a loss of critical resources
- Disrupt vital services and the economy

What are the likely targets of a terrorist attack?

- Public assembly arenas
- Public and government buildings
- Mass transit
- Places of high economic impact
- Telecommunications facilities
- Historic or symbolic places
- Amusement parks
- Special events
- Large structures and bridges

Don't avoid these places; however, be more aware of your surroundings when you visit them.



What can I do to stay safe?

Alert local authorities about anything that appears suspicious or out of the ordinary. Most Law Enforcement, Public Safety and Public Health officials have plans and procedures for responding to all types of hazardous situations.

Prepare your family for possible terrorist attacks by creating a Disaster Kit as well as picking a safe room in your home with as few doors and windows as possible.

If an explosion occurs in a building, leave as soon as possible! Use fire escapes and help others with physical disabilities out of the building. Do not take the elevator!

If you travel alone or with family to a foreign country, check out: <http://travel.state.gov/> for any travel advisories or procedure changes. Keep identification papers secure at all times, and report anything suspicious to the proper authorities.

Volunteer

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a program that “educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.” Using the education and skills taught during each session, CERT members can provide assistance in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.



Join CERT

Students will attend 7 weekly sessions given by Alachua Department of Public Safety instructors. These sessions will be taught on weeknights (typically Tuesday) from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. for seven consecutive weeks.

CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference. Through training, citizens can manage and assist their neighbors during a disaster. CERT is about readiness, people helping people.

Each weekly class lasts for two and a half hours and reading assignments are given at the end of class. Upon successful completion, each team member will receive a FEMA/EMI Training Certificate.



Training includes

- Disaster Preparedness
- Disaster Fire Suppression
- Disaster Medical Operations
- Light Search and Rescue
- Disaster Psychology
- Team Organization
- CERT
- Terrorism

