

Year after year, we've prepared and helped our clients prepare for hurricane season. Each time, we learn more no matter what the season brings.

If you have loved ones in the Tampa Bay area, our team can help assess needs, discuss the dangers, and do all the necessary preparations (including when and how to evacuate the area).

How to Properly Plan for Hurricane Season

Understand the baseline situation to get a realistic picture of what life will be like for you before, during and after the hurricane.

When we assess a client to build a hurricane plan, we need to know their current situation and needs. What services are they reliant on? Do they need oxygen or medical equipment? And, how long can they go without/what alternatives are available? How frail are they? Do they have cognitive impairments? This is only a partial list to give you an idea, but the assessment needs to fully evaluate functioning.

Next in the assessment process is understanding logistics. What evacuation zone are they in? How well is the home secured? And, what help would they need to get the home ready when a storm comes, such as putting up hurricane shutters? We dig into their support network to see what resources and options are available. Most importantly, we help everyone understand the realities of what that network may or may not be able to do.

Even in minor storms, the situation can become really unpleasant really fast. And, for frail elders, it can quickly turn deadly. We highly recommend leaving the area if at all possible. Many young, healthy people fall ill and get injured even after minor storms. It is just not a situation you want your elderly loved ones to face. If you're having trouble convincing them or figuring out logistics, we're here to help.

Plan early and move fast.

During Hurricane Irma, those who didn't move fast and plan well in advance found themselves stuck with few options. In Pinellas County, the average home went without power for a full week. Day 1 and 2 aren't so bad, but by day 5 things start to deteriorate even for the strongest among us. We saw a three-hour line for Taco Bell, the only food spot that was open.

After people's experiences, they'll likely step up their planning with earlier preparations. This means if you're not making decisions in advance, you'll struggle even more. Gas will run out, motels will book up early, food will be gone from store shelves. Hurricane predictions come early, so there's no need (or time) to wait until three days before. You won't find flights out by then. You'll be stuck in horrible traffic. The decision will be made for you, because there won't be any choices.

We were contacted by one family as Hurricane Irma approached to help at the last minute. With our connections and a great deal of work, we were finally able to get him a spot in an ALF. It was a stressful situation for all involved. But, without that move he might not be here today. And, we wouldn't count on that space being available like that in the future.

Overplan for supplies and lack of services.

Now is the time to get [those supplies](#) in order. Buy a battery-operated fan. Get new coolers. Purchase more flashlights/battery-powered lights and batteries. Buy battery backups and/or hand-crank chargers for your phone. Communication can be especially problematic. It's terrifying not to be able to reach your elder loved ones after the storm. Be prepared with enough cash. Many people who had a couple hundred dollars ran out fast. Credit card machines and ATMs may be out for a week or more.

Be realistic and overcautious about your food and water supply. Buy food you will actually eat. Think about what tastes good cold and won't smell when trash piles up. Canned tuna is great for protein but the odor might get to you if you don't have a way to dispose of it. For anyone with health issues, they'll likely be exacerbated

by the heat and stress. You will need more water than during normal times, so double the recommendations you hear. The situation gets desperate fast when you're running out of water or food.

Many basic services won't be available. This is why step one is so essential in creating a proper plan. You need to evaluate your ability to survive (to say nothing of comfort) without electricity, running water, and other municipal services. At some point, even emergency services stop during the height of a storm. And, of course, your usual service providers who help with day-to-day life (and health) may have service interruptions that go into the weeks.

As you probably know, we receive the majority of customers through word of mouth referrals and positive reviews. It would mean the world to me if you wrote a positive review ([you can click here](#)) or referred someone we can help.

Thank you for reading,

Alex Chamberlain, CEO

Most Interesting Reads From Our Blog

[Summer Tips for Seniors: Staying Cool, Staying Safe](#)

[Hurricane Aftermath Safety](#)

[Disaster Management for People with Alzheimer's and Their Caregivers](#)