

Pet Shelter Program

- Pets are not allowed in Medical Center buildings. Staff on duty during the storm may leave pets in cars parked in designated parking areas in the parking garage. Owners will be restricted from checking on pets during the storm and not before conditions are determined to be safe after the storm. The Medical Center HICC will determine when the Pet Shelter will open and close.

During the Storm

- The Medical Center hurricane plan and HICC will be activated by the Director. The HICC will be in contact with the VISN EOC, other VISN VA Medical Centers, other community hospitals and the Palm Beach County Emergency Operations Center.
- Supervisors will advise staff on storm conditions and Medical Center operations.
- Staff on duty should closely monitor patients, and watch for window damage or water entering around doors or windows.
- Patients will be relocated or moved into corridors or interior rooms as needed.
- Staff should call the HICC at **561-422-5448** to report facility damages, water intrusion, or movement of any patients.

After the Storm

- Employee Report To Work Hotline: **561-422-8200, 1-800-972-8262 ext. 8200**
- Staff unable to report for duty must contact their supervisor.
- In case the Medical Center telephone system is out of service, call **1-877-741-3400**.
- If staff on duty during the storm is unable to return home due to road conditions or lack of public transportation, the HICC will provide information regarding sleeping arrangements. Any other issues should be discussed with your supervisor.
- The HICC may activate the Family Assistance Center after the storm to accommodate children while schools are closed.
- The HICC will step down from emergency plan activation when operations can be managed normally. Normal duty hours and conditions will be resumed as soon as possible.



Resources

Mental Health and Behavioral Science

- The Employee Assistance Program is coordinated by EAP Consultants, LLC. This confidential program is open to any full or part-time VA employee and is free of cost. Consultation, evaluation, and referral services are available at www.eapconsultants.com. 1-800-869-0276.

Occupational Safety and Health

- Training/information on hurricane preparation and storm safety are available from Occupational Safety and Health, ext. 6715.

Additional Resources

- <http://vaww.westpalmbeach.va.gov>
- <http://vaww.westpalmbeach.va.gov/includes/EmployeeEmergencyGuide.asp>

Community Phone Numbers

- **Palm Beach County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)** 561-712-6400
- **Broward (EMA)** 954-831-3900
- **Martin County (EMA)** 772-287-1652
- **St. Lucie County (EMA)** 772-462-8100
- **Okeechobee County (EMA)** 863-763-3212
- **FEMA** 1-800-621-3362
- **Red Cross Headquarters** 561-833-7711

Remember any phone system can fail. Check information provided by local TV and radio.

M E D I C A L M E D I A J O B # 4 0 4 5 7



Department of
Veterans Affairs

2015 Hurricane Information for Employees



VA MEDICAL CENTER, WEST PALM BEACH

7305 N. Military Trail
West Palm Beach, Florida 33410-6400

www.myhealth.va.gov
www.westpalmbeach.va.gov

Prior to Hurricane Season

December through May

- This is the most economical time to purchase hurricane shutters, plywood, tarp and replacement screening materials for your home.
- Check your roof, develop a plan for sealing windows, remove debris or unnecessary items from around your house, and keep tree limbs trimmed away from the house or electrical lines.
- Consider purchasing a home generator. Be sure you understand installation requirements and operation procedures. Confirm its capacity is sufficient for your needs.
- Consider purchasing battery operated fans, a small gas stove, and a small refrigerator.
- Evaluate capacity to store water. Remember, a large trash can will hold water for bathing and flushing toilets.
- Plan for your pets.
- Determine safe evacuation routes inland.
- Learn location of official shelters.
- Buy food that will keep and store drinking water.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Trim trees and shrubbery.
- Decide where to move your boat in an emergency.
- Review your insurance policy.

TERMS TO KNOW

Hurricane Watch: Hurricane conditions are possible within the specified coastal area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm-force, the hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical storm-force winds.

Hurricane Warning: Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the warning. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm-force, the hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical storm-force winds.

Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings: Take these alerts seriously. Although tropical storms have lower wind speeds than hurricanes, they often bring life-threatening flooding and dangerous winds. Take precautions!

Start of Hurricane Season

June 1st

- Begin to purchase and have readily available batteries, food, water, dried goods, flashlights and candles. Fill the generator gas tank and reserve fuel tanks. Plan and purchase 10-14 days of food and water.
- Check your pet records. Pets placed in vet centers and shelters must have current shots/vaccines, identification tags, crates, crate cleaning equipment, bowls, food and water for 3-5 days.
- Make an inventory of valuable items. Insurance companies will accept photos or videos as evidence. Store photos or videos in zip lock bags in a safe place and consider mailing a copy to a friend or family member in another part of the country.
- Review insurance policies. Make a copy and mail to a close friend or family member in another part of the country. Seal other important documents in zip lock bags. Store in a safe location or carry them with you if you leave.
- If unable to safeguard your home, or living in a mobile home or other structure that may not withstand a hurricane, contact the county emergency management agency for local shelter information. Get the rules and regulations; ask about pets and medical care. Test drive to that location. If dependent on public transportation, plan alternate travel arrangements.
- Develop a communications plan for your friends and family. Identify one person in another part of the country that you will call after the storm. Tell your friends and family members how to contact that person for updates. This system will keep friends and family up to date, lessen the call volume in Florida, and improve the efficiency of local, emergency communications.

When a Hurricane Watch is Declared

- Buy last minute groceries.
- Check storm supplies, first aid supplies, prescriptions, and your list of emergency phone numbers.
- Get cash - small bills and coins.
- Top off your gas tank. Consider buying extra gas to store in an approved container.
- If predictions show the storm is coming in your direction, install your hurricane shutters and make arrangements to move to your shelter location approximately 48 hours before landfall.



When a Hurricane Warning is Declared

- A warning is announced when the hurricane is predicted to strike within 36 hours. **By this time, all personal preparations should be completed.**
- Staff scheduled to work during the storm should be ready to report to work and have all home and family preparations completed.
- The VISN Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Medical Center Hospital Incident Command Center (HICC) will determine the times for departure and arrival of staff before the storm. Staffs working through the storm are required to stay on duty until released by the supervisor.
- If scheduled to work during the storm, time will be designated for you to secure your home and prepare your family.
- Medical Center preparations will begin several days prior to anticipated landfall.
- The mix and number of staff to be on duty during the storm will be dependent on the number and medical needs of patients remaining in the Medical Center and the skills needed to manage the building and its systems during and after the storm. Staffing could be different for each storm. Your supervisor will communicate the staffing plan to you as soon as possible. Remember, each storm will be different and flexibility will be needed as storm predictions and conditions change.

Family Support Program

- Family members **MUST** be registered in the Family Support Program in VISTA. Ask your supervisor about this program.
- Family members **MUST** bring 3-5 days of food and water with them. Food must not require refrigeration or cooking. Family members must bring bedding, diapers, medications, etc. Family members who require special types of assistance should register with county special needs/care shelters. The Medical Center will determine when the Family Support Program will open and close.