

**PREPARE NOW**

**HURRICANE**



**DON'T PANIC LATER**

**GUIDE**

**MYOKALOOSA.COM**

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
HURRICANE OPAL 1995 - US HIGHWAY 98

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Emergency  
Management





DISTRICT 1

Paul Mixon



DISTRICT 2

Carolyn Ketchel

# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



DISTRICT 3

Sherri Cox



DISTRICT 4

Trey Goodwin



DISTRICT 5

Drew Palmer



The Okaloosa County Hurricane Guide is a comprehensive source for keeping your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers safe in the event of a severe weather event. Tropical weather is one of the most serious natural threats our County may face.

The content in this hurricane guide has been curated from content found at [AlertOkaloosa.com](http://AlertOkaloosa.com) and [MyOkaloosa.com](http://MyOkaloosa.com), specifically from the Emergency Management Division of Okaloosa County Public Safety.

We trust you find this guide helpful for preparing your household long before a storm threatens.

While we always hope for the ideal situation of no tropical weather, we prepare, plan and practice emergency operations plans regularly. We hope you find our tips and resources helpful in providing peace of mind before, during and after the storm. Prepare, don't panic.

In years past, Florida's Governor has declared a tax-free holiday on hurricane preparedness supplies. Take advantage of the tax-free holiday and create an inventory by planning an annual disaster supply trip to your local hardware, grocery or home goods retailer. With a little advance planning, this guide will help you remain cognizant and confident in guiding your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers through the storm.

In the aftermath of any storm, the Okaloosa County Emergency Response Team will be out clearing the streets, helping to restore affected services and checking on you. There are heroes amongst us, shouldering the storm together as a community of one. They will be wearing Sheriff's green, Okaloosa hardhats, steel-toe boots and fluorescent vests. We're in this together.

For feedback or suggestions to improve this guide, please email our Public Information Office at [OCPIO@myokaloosa.com](mailto:OCPIO@myokaloosa.com). My team will be happy to consider feedback for future publications. Thank you again for taking an active role in protecting life and property in the event of a storm.

- John Hofstad  
Okaloosa County Administrator

Sign up for local  
weather alerts



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP



Patrick Maddox  
Director of  
Public Safety



Ryan Prince  
Emergency  
Management Chief



Owen Betts  
Emergency  
Management  
Coordinator



Destiny Nunez  
Emergency  
Management  
Planner

Okaloosa County Emergency Management is a division of the Department of Public Safety under the authority and supervision of the Board of County Commissioners.

The division ensures the County is ready to respond to all man made or natural disasters. Staff work year-round, participating in training exercises, emergency response simulations and continuing education.

Emergency Management will activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the event of an emergency, such as an approaching hurricane or storm. The EOC is located on the campus of Northwest Florida State College in Niceville and serves as a operations hub for public safety personnel. The EOC and adjacent arena can withstand hurricane-force winds associated with a category-5 storm.

SHERIFF LARRY GILBERT  
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Emergency  
Management



# STAY INFORMED

Text "OKALOOSAFL" to 888777 to anonymously sign up for Emergency Notifications.

Official information during a storm is shared by the County Public Information Officer (PIO) and is disseminated to the media as well as on the County website [myokaloosa.com](http://myokaloosa.com). The PIO will also share the information on County social media platforms such as the Facebook page at [facebook.com/OkaloosaCounty](https://facebook.com/OkaloosaCounty).

Make sure you have multiple ways to get the latest information. This can include social media, an NOAA weather radio, television programming, news websites and even word of mouth by talking with your neighbors.

# IMPORTANT NUMBERS/WEBSITES

CITIZENS INFORMATION LINE  
850-609-7000 or 311

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
850-245-2118

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
850-651-7515

FLORIDA DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
850-981-3000

BUILDING INSPECTION/CODE  
850-651-7180

FLORIDA DEPT. OF HEALTH  
850-833-9240

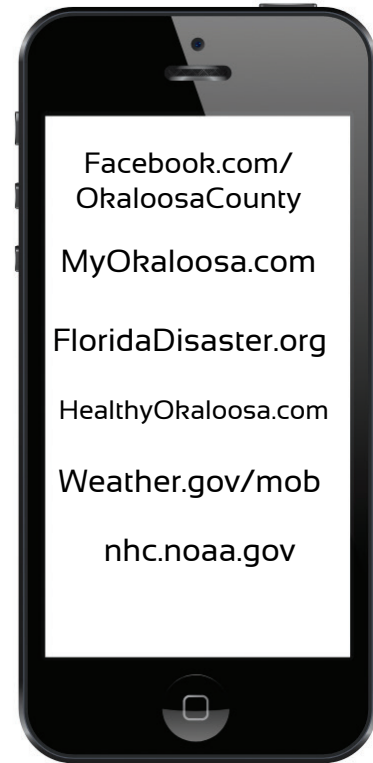
DEPT. OF CHILDREN/FAMILIES  
850-595-8200

ANIMAL CONTROL  
850-243-1525

LAW ENFORCEMENT (NON EMERGENCY)  
850-651-7400

ATTORNEY GENERAL (FRAUD/GOUGING)  
866-966-7226

OKALOOSA PUBLIC SAFETY  
850-651-7150



## Storm Names

Since 1953, Atlantic tropical storms had been named from lists originated by the National Hurricane Center. They are now maintained and updated through a strict procedure by an international committee of the World Meteorological Organization. The lists below are used in rotation and recycled every six years. The only time that there is a change in the list is if a storm is so deadly or costly that the future use of its name for a different storm would be inappropriate for reasons of sensitivity.

2026		2027		2028		2029	
Arthur	Kyle	Ana	Larry	Alex	Lisa	Arlene	Lee
Bertha	Leah	Bill	Mindy	Bonnie	Martin	Bret	Margot
Cristobal	Marco	Claudette	Nicholas	Colin	Nicole	Cindy	Nigel
Dolly	Nana	Danny	Odette	Danielle	Owen	Don	Ophelia
Edouard	Omar	Elsa	Peter	Earl	Paula	Emily	Philippe
Fay	Paulette	Fred	Rose	Farrah	Richard	Franklin	Rina
Gonzalo	Rene	Grace	Sam	Gaston	Shary	Gert	Sean
Hanna	Sally	Henri	Teresa	Hermine	Tobias	Harold	Tammy
Isaias	Teddy	Imani	Victor	Idris	Virginie	Idalia	Vince
Jose- phine	Vicky	Julian	Wanda	Julia	Walter	Jose	Whitney
	Wilfred	Kate		Karl		Katia	

# WIND BY THE NUMBERS



## Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale

Very dangerous	CATEGORY 1 74-95 MPH
Extremely dangerous	CATEGORY 2 96-110 MPH
Devastating damage will occur.	CATEGORY 3 111-129 MPH
Catastrophic damage will occur.	CATEGORY 4 130-156 MPH
Area will be uninhabitable.	CATEGORY 5 157+ MPH

### Tropical Depression:

A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 38 mph (33 knots) or less.

### Tropical Storm:

A tropical cyclone with maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph (34 to 63 knots).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

# WIND CONTINUED...

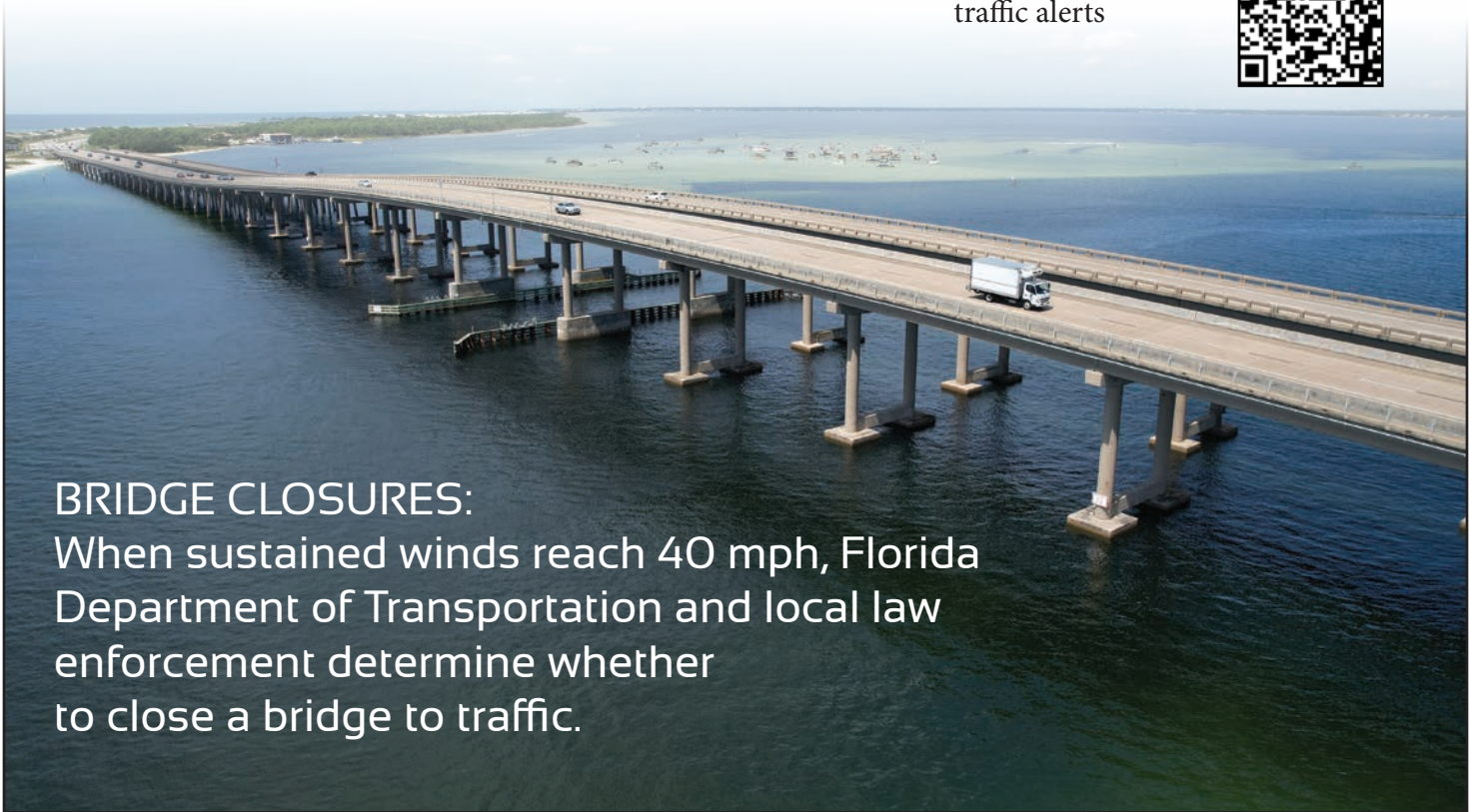
Sign up for local  
traffic alerts



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## BRIDGE CLOSURES:

When sustained winds reach 40 mph, Florida Department of Transportation and local law enforcement determine whether to close a bridge to traffic.



# WATCHES & WARNINGS

## WATCH

An announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are POSSIBLE within the specified coastal area. The watch is issued 48 HOURS in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical force winds because hurricane preparedness actions become very difficult once winds reach tropical force.

## WARNING

An announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are EXPECTED within the specified coastal area. The watch is issued 36 HOURS in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical force winds because hurricane preparedness actions become very difficult once winds reach tropical force.

## PLANNING/CHECKLISTS

### PREPARE, DON'T PANIC

Hurricanes don't only affect people living along the coast. They can cause damage hundreds of miles from shore.

Make a plan that includes preparing your home, anticipating evacuations and creating a disaster supply kit.

The following pages will have some tips and checklists to help you prepare for a hurricane or tropical storm landfall.



# DISASTER SUPPLY CHECKLIST

## General

- Two week minimum supply of medication, regularly used medical supplies, and a list of allergies
- A list of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices
- Batteries
- Flashlights  
*Do not use candles*
- NOAA Weather Radio  
*Battery operated or hand cranked*
- Cash  
*Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm*
- Cell phone chargers
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

## Food and Water

- Food  
*Nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, baby food, and any special dietary items to last at least 7 days*
- Water  
*1 gallon per person per day*
- Non-electric can opener
- Paper plates
- Napkins
- Plastic cups
- Utensils

## Vehicle

- Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline

## Pet Care Items

- Pet food and water to last at least 7 days
- Proper identification
- Medical records/microchip information
- A carrier or cage
- Muzzle and leash
- Water and food bowls
- Medications
- Supplies for your service animal

## Clothing

- Rain gear such as jackets, hats, umbrellas and rain boots
- Sturdy shoes or boots and work gloves

## Important Documents

- Insurance cards
- Medical records
- Banking information
- Credit card numbers
- Copies of social security cards
- Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
- Other personal documents
- Set of car, house, and office keys
- Service animal I.D., veterinary records, and proof of ownership
- Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug, and dosage
- Copy of Will

*\*Items should be kept in a water proof container*



## PLANNING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Infants, elderly and people with special needs may need additional support.

- Have at least a three-day supply of medical supplies. (oxygen, medication, etc.).
- For medical equipment that relies on electricity, obtain a backup power source like an extra battery (with charger) or generator.
- Keep a copy of your medical records in your hurricane kit.
- Join the State of Florida Special Needs Registry at <https://snr.flhealthresponse.com>.

### First Aid

- First Aid Manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
- Sterile gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sewing needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Disinfectant wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Thermometer
- Tube of petroleum jelly
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or other pain reliever
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Antacid
- Laxative
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips



# PREPARE YOUR HOME

- Clear your yard. Make sure there's nothing that could blow around during the storm and damage your home. Move bikes, lawn furniture, grills, propane tanks, and building material inside or under shelter.
- Cover up windows and doors. Use storm shutters or nail pieces of plywood to the outside window frames to protect your windows. This can help keep you safe from pieces of shattered glass.
- Be ready to turn off your power. If you see flooding, downed power lines, or you have to leave your home, switch your power off.
- Fill clean water containers with drinking water. You'll want to do this in case you lose your water supply during the storm. You can also fill up your sinks and bathtubs with water for washing.
- Check your carbon monoxide (CO) detector's battery to prevent CO poisoning.

## HOMEOWNERS

Homeowners should make sure they have insurance before hurricane season (begins June 1). Flood insurance is usually purchased separately from the regular policy. Check your documents before the season begins. Take photos or video of the inside of your home and place the image/video files on an appropriate storage device to be placed in your hurricane disaster kit along with your insurance documents.

DO YOU  
HAVE  
INSURANCE?

FLOOD ZONE/EVACUATION  
INFO



## RENTERS

Renters can purchase renter's insurance to protect their belongings inside the unit. Talk with your landlord about what their plans are to protect the property. Acquire contact information for the landlord and a neighbor in the event you evacuate. Know if you are in a flood zone or not.

FLOOD ZONE INFORMATION: <http://webgis.myokaloosa.com/webgis/>

## POOL TIPS

Here are some tips to protect your pool when a storm is approaching.



- Do not lower the level of the water in the pool or drain it. Allow the pool to overflow. This keeps it from being forced out of the ground due to a high-water table.
- Turn off any electricity to the pool. If your pump is exposed, remove the motor and store it in a safe, dry place.
- You can add extra chlorine to the pool to prevent contamination. This can be used to clean clothes or flush toilets in an emergency. **DO NOT DRINK POOL WATER.**

## GENERATOR TIPS

Generators can be a useful tool after a storm. To use it safely, make sure you follow these tips.



- Do not operate a generator indoors
- Keep a carbon monoxide detector on hand
- Keep extra gas stored in a safe place
- Before filling a generator, turn it off
- Use an outdoor-rated extension cord



Wind can be a dangerous aspect of storms. Make sure you inspect your trees each year and learn about the species and if there is a possibility of it becoming a hazard to you and your home in the event of a hurricane or tropical storm. Sand and live oak trees, as well as sabal palms and southern magnolia trees are resistant to wind that may accompany a storm. You should learn about possible vulnerabilities to your home. Your roof, garage door and entry ways can all be reinforced or protected from wind damage.



Do you own a boat or other watercraft?

If possible, remove the boat from the water prior to a storm's arrival. If your boat is too large or you are not able to remove it from the water, move it to a protected harbor before the storm arrives. Double up on mooring lines and secure hatches and portals on the vessel. Take down masts from sailboats and remove all loose items from the deck.

# SHOULD I EVACUATE?

“ It’s important to know your flood and evacuation zone. The zones can change from year to year. ”

- Patrick Maddox | Okaloosa County Director of Public Safety

FLOOD ZONE/  
EVACUATION  
INFO



# HAVE A PLAN

- Know if you are in an evacuation zone. (Link in QR Code or [webgis.myokaloosa.com](http://webgis.myokaloosa.com)).
- Make your plan before hurricane season begins.
- When you leave, do not go too far away. Stay as close as you can without being in danger of storm impact.
- Make sure you keep at least a half a tank of gas in your car during summer months and bring a car charger for your phone. Electric Vehicle (EV) owners should keep the battery at a full charge and know the vehicle's range.
- Alert friends and family of where you are going.

FLOOD ZONE/  
EVACUATION  
INFO



## MANDATORY EVACUATIONS

A mandatory evacuation means residents in a specific zone must evacuate the area of danger. It is unwise to stay at home during a mandatory evacuation. Access to areas under this order may be restricted for a period of time after the storm passes. Shelters will open during a mandatory evacuation and traffic control measures will be put into place.

## RECOMMENDED EVACUATION

Residents and visitors are encouraged to seek refuge with family or friends who do not live inside the evacuation zone.

**\*\*\*If you live in a mobile home or manufactured home, you should ALWAYS evacuate.\*\*\***

# SHELTERS

## SHELTER LOCATIONS

- Antioch Elementary School  
4700 Whitehurst Ln, Crestview, FL 32536
- Baker School  
1369 14th St, Baker, FL 32531
- Davidson Middle School  
6261 Old Bethel Rd, Crestview, FL 32536
- Kenwood Elementary School  
15 Eagle St NE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547
- Raider Arena (Northwest Florida State College)  
100 E College Blvd, Niceville, FL 32578
- Riverside Elementary School  
3400 E Redstone Ave, Crestview, FL 32539
- Shoal River Middle School  
3200 E Redstone Ave, Crestview, FL 32539

Note: Shelter openings vary. Check local information sources to determine which ones are open or call 850.609.7000.

If evacuations are necessary, shelters will open to accommodate the population of evacuated. It is recommended that other arrangements be made with a friend or a relative who lives in a well-constructed home, out of the evacuation area and properly protected to withstand hurricane-force winds. You will be more comfortable and feel less crowded among friends.





### WHAT TO BRING TO A SHELTER

- Clothes
- Rain gear
- Toiletries
- Sleeping Bag
- Identification
- Prescriptions
- Entertainment (with chargers)
- Special dietary needs
- Insurance cards

### DO NOT BRING:

- Weapons
- Alcohol/Illegal drugs

NEED A RIDE? -If you need a ride to the shelter you may schedule a time before the storm by calling EC RIDER at 850-833-9168



# PETS



Make sure you have a plan for your pets when you evacuate. Take them with you and **DO NOT** leave them behind. Pet abandonment is illegal and if they are left on their own they could die of starvation, eat contaminated food or water or could be eaten by predators.

Okaloosa County has pet-friendly shelters, but that does not mean you will be able to keep your pet with you while you are at the shelter. The Panhandle Animal Welfare Society will check your pet in and take it to the pet shelter area until you check out. Exotic pets are not allowed.

After the storm, please keep your pet on a leash and avoid downed power lines. Your pet may be disoriented if landmarks or streets have been altered by storm damage.

## A FINAL CHECK

- Fill containers and tubs with water
- Secure papers, valuables
- Get a full tank of gas
- Get cash
- Refill all medications
- Prepare your “go bag” for shelters
- Double check your hurricane supply box
- Secure your home for possible evacuation
- Take photos of items in your home (for insurance purposes)
- Shut off any necessary utilities



## SAND BAGS

If flooding is imminent, Okaloosa County will make sandbags available to north and south County residents.

- North: Public Works yard at 1759 S. Ferdon Blvd. Crestview, FL.
- South: 714 Essex Rd Fort Walton Beach, FL.

## BEACH SAFETY

Our Beach Safety Division will assess water conditions for rip currents and take necessary action to keep swimmers out of the water to maintain their safety. When double red flags are flying, that means the water is closed to swimmers.



# AFTER THE STORM

After the storm, wait until the area is declared safe before going outdoors. Stay off area roads unless absolutely necessary. Avoid downed powerlines and flooded roads. Emergency Management crews will work to clear roads but some may be closed for your protection.

If you evacuated, wait until authorities indicate that it is safe to go home. When you arrive back at home, check on any neighbors that stayed behind. Then assess any damage to your home and take photos of the damage to send to your insurance company.

Remember, when traffic signals are out, intersections should be treated as four-way stops.

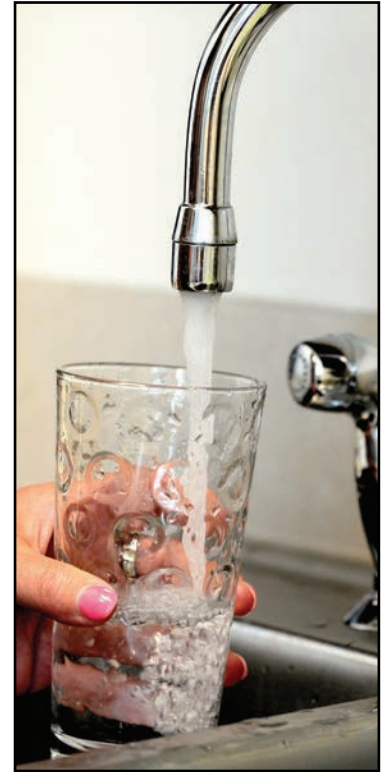
Be cautious as you enter your home. Do not light a flame and check local media for any boil water notices.



## WATER PURIFICATION

Water may become unsafe to drink from your tap after the storm. If water is contaminated or a boil water notice is issued, you will need to treat the water to make it safe for drinking.

- **BOILING:** Strain water through coffee filter or cheese cloth to remove particles. Bring water to a rolling boil for at least three minutes, then cool and place into a clean container.
- **BLEACH:** If no other treatments are available, you can use bleach to treat contaminated water. Again, strain dirty water through a coffee filter or cheese cloth. Then pour 1/8 teaspoon or 16 drops of pure, unscented bleach into a gallon size container filled with water. Shake the container and let it stand for at least 30 minutes. **DO NOT** put too much bleach in the water. Too much bleach can be hazardous to your health. After 30 minutes the water should be safe to drink. If it is still cloudy, add another dose of bleach. When you are ready to drink the water, flip the container upside down and gently unscrew the cap so as to allow a little of the treated water to flow over the threads of the container. This will ensure that contaminants that may have existed from the opening are not consumed.



AFTER THE STORM



## PODS

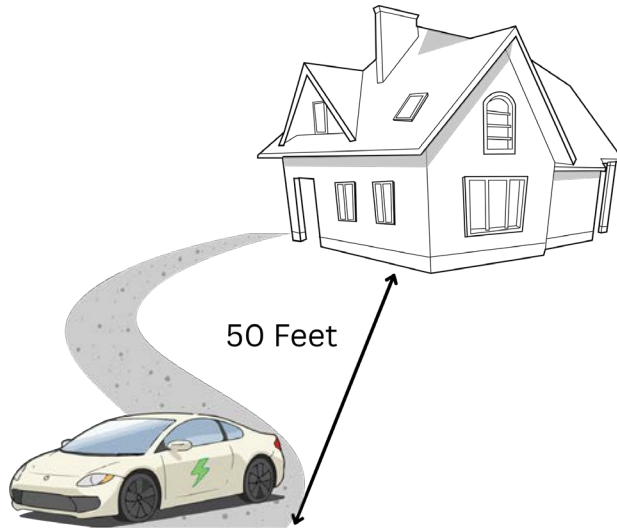
Local, state or federal agencies may initiate Points of Distribution (PODS). They will be strategically placed in locations affected by the storm to pass out water, food or other items to help people begin the recovery following the passage of the storm. Information on POD locations will be given to local media and the Okaloosa County Public Information Office.



## Electric Vehicles (EVs)

### Never Drive Through Flood Water

Water infiltration into the high-voltage battery of an electric vehicle can lead to damage, heightening the risk of battery fire. Such fires may erupt instantaneously or manifest days, weeks, or even months after exposure to saltwater.



### Leaving Electric Vehicles Behind

NEVER park EVs inside a garage in flood-prone areas.  
DO NOT leave electric vehicles plugged into charger.  
ALWAYS ensure they are parked 50 feet away from any structure or vehicles. When leaving an EV behind, maintain the battery at less than 30%.  
NEVER attempt to drive or charge an EV that has been submerged in floodwaters.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Preparation is the most important part of surviving a tropical disturbance. It means preparing long before the storm arrives, making common-sense decisions, obeying lawful orders and knowing the dangers associated with storms.

The well-being of Okaloosa County citizens is a critical priority for County staff and Emergency Management first responders. If you have any question or concerns or are just unsure about what to expect, give our office a call at 850-651-7150 or visit [myokaloosa.com/emergency-management](https://myokaloosa.com/emergency-management)

Follow us on social media



# HURRICANE TRACKING MAP



45°N

40°N

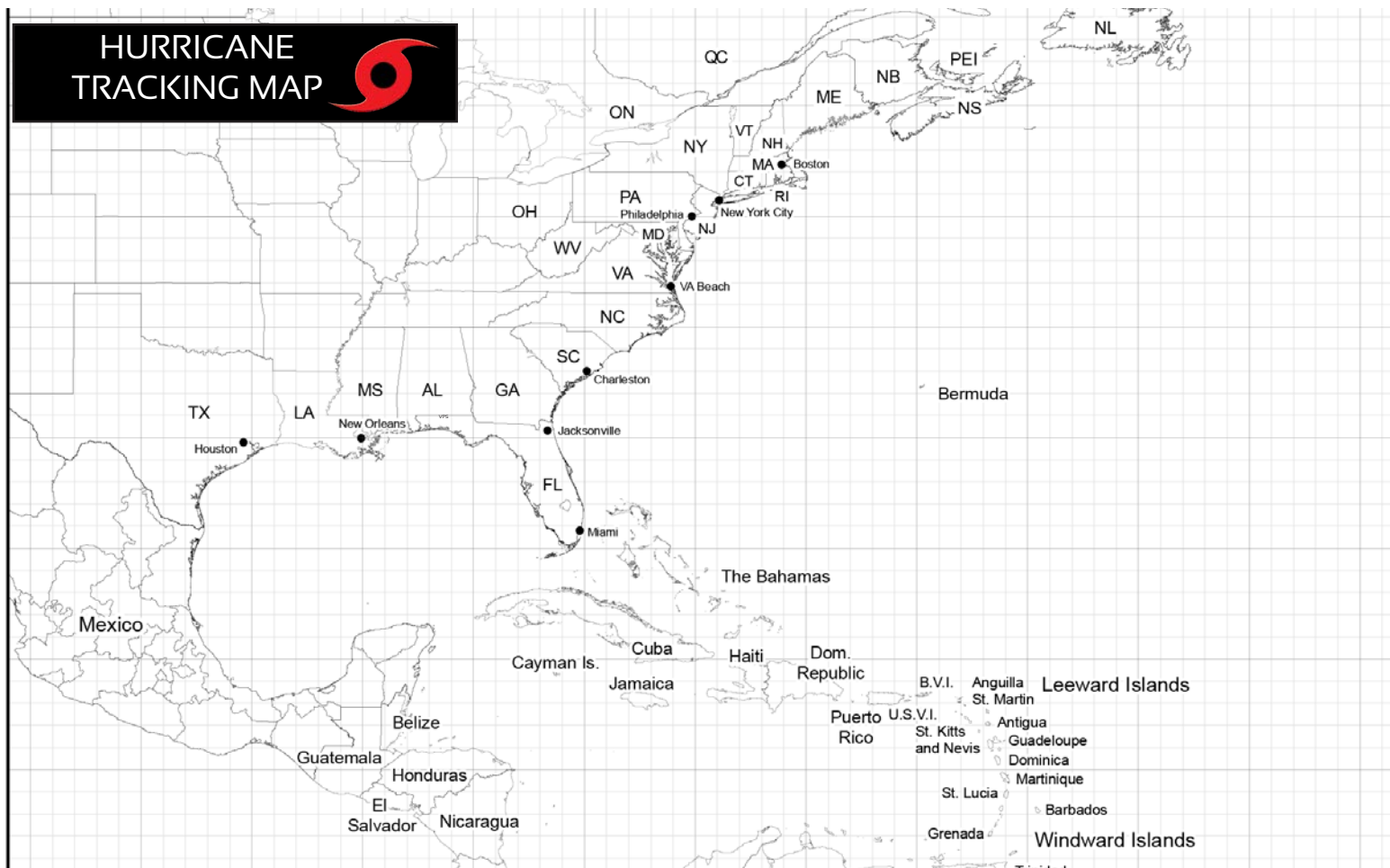
35°N

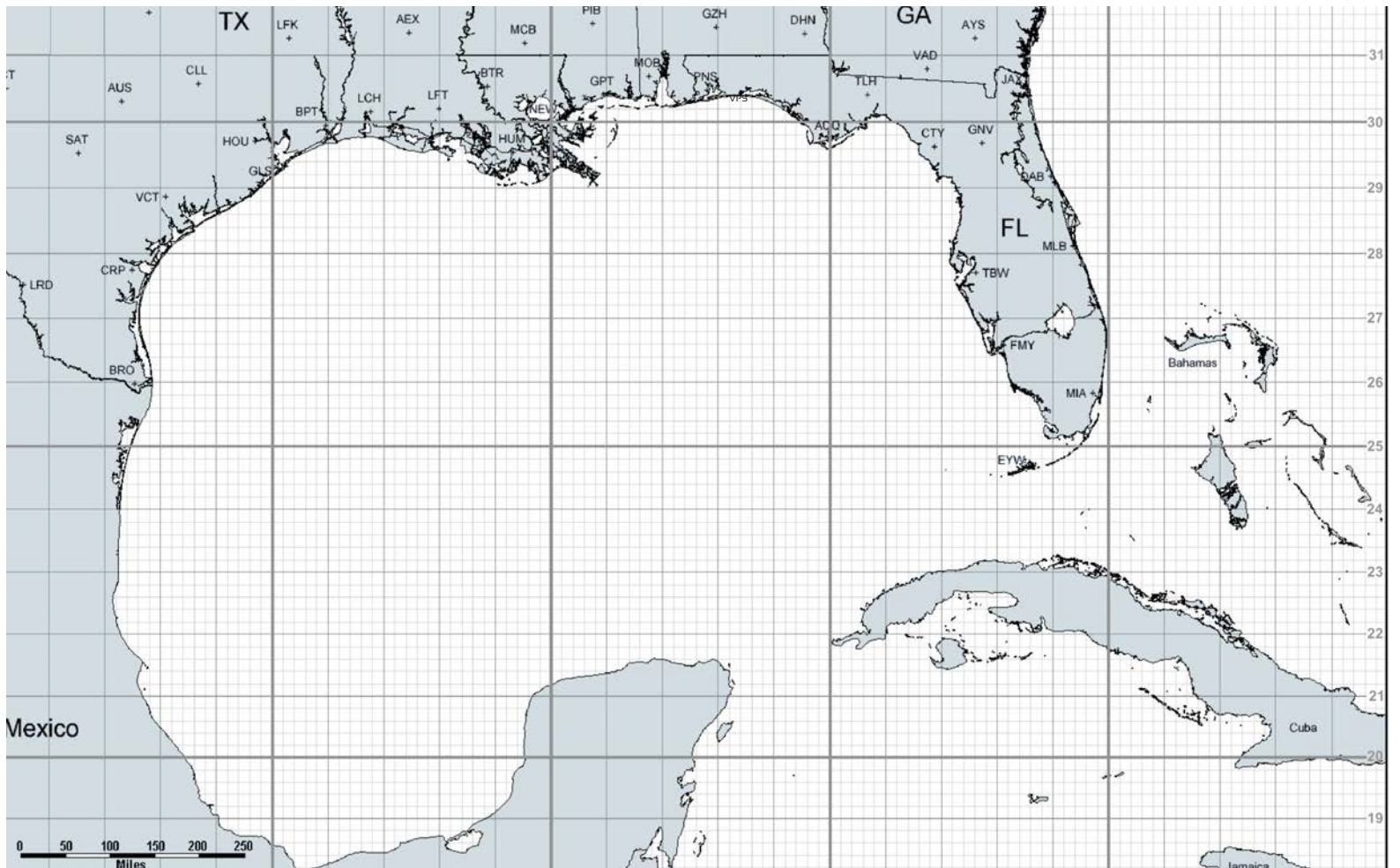
30°N

25°N

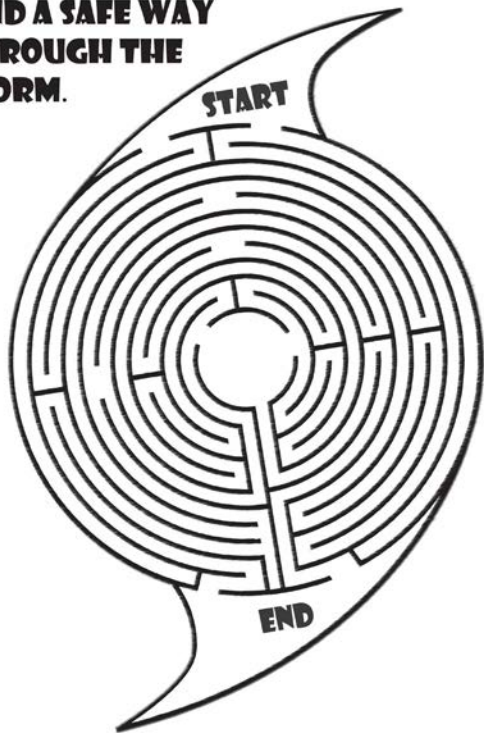
20°N

15°N

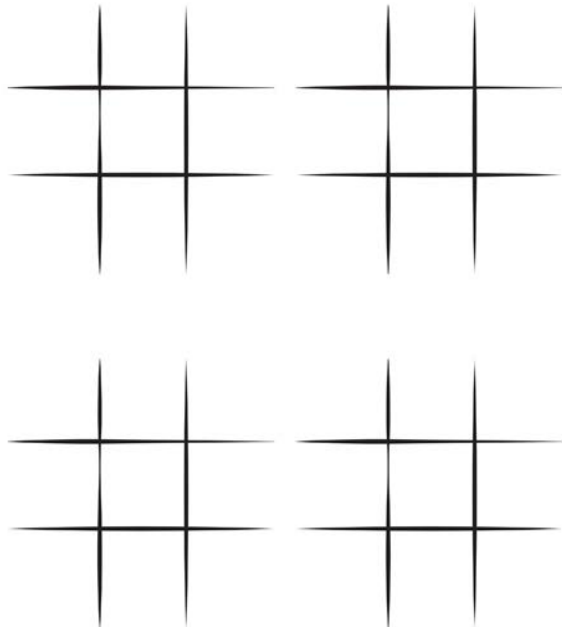




**FIND A SAFE WAY  
THROUGH THE  
STORM.**



**TIC-TAC-TOE**









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