

# SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER

FDOH Hillsborough Newsletter



## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Hurricane Season Recap: 2023

Preparing for 2024

Important Phone Numbers & Reminders

Special Needs Shelter Updates

Outreach & Inservice

## HELLO HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Welcome to Issue Two of our Special Needs Shelter Newsletter!

This is an opportunity for the Department of Health in Hillsborough County to share information and updates with our community partners and our clients.

Our newsletter will cover program reminders, updates, and season projections and recaps. We will be sending these out periodically.



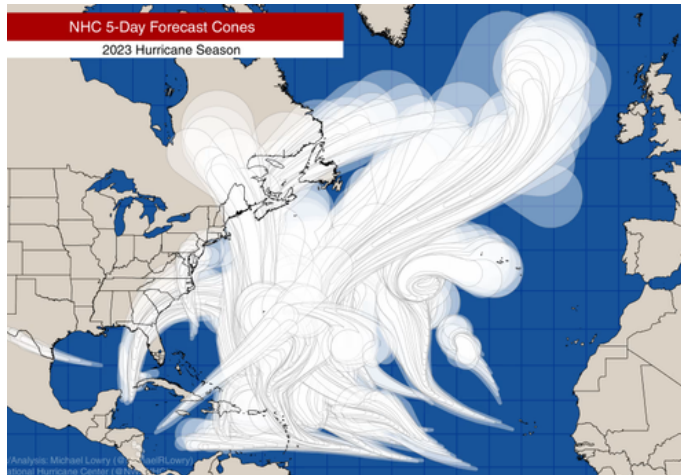
Meghan Pritts  
Special Needs Shelter Coordinator  
Florida Department of Health - Hillsborough County

P: (813) 307-8063

F: (813) 276-8689



# POST 2023 HURRICANE SEASON



Graphic depicting hurricane paths in 2023

Meteorologists had mixed predictions for the 2023 Hurricane Season. The table below reflects what was predicted in 2023, and what actually occurred. Storm frequency and severity cannot be predicted with 100% accuracy, but what you need to know is that *IT ONLY TAKES ONE*.

## SETTING RECORDS

The 2023 hurricane season was predicted to be *and was* an above-average season. According to NOAA, this season was characterized by record-warm Atlantic sea surface temperatures and a strong El Nino. There were 20 named storms in the Atlantic basin, which ranks fourth for most-named storms in a year since 1950! Seven of those storms were hurricanes, and three became major hurricanes. Fortunately, most storms stayed in the Atlantic.



## FLORIDA IMPACTS

### Hurricane Idalia

On August 30th, Hurricane Idalia made landfall on sparsely populated Taylor County in Florida's Big Bend. Storm surge flooding reached 7-12 feet. Idalia is responsible for at least 5 deaths and an estimated \$2.5 billion in damages.

### Hillsborough County Impact

Spared from direct landfall, we still experienced widespread power outages and structural damage leaving many who are still trying to recover.

Hillsborough County opened 1 Special Needs Shelter.



NOAA, 2023

2023	PREDICTED	WHAT WE SAW
Named Storms	18	20
Hurricanes	9	7
Major Hurricanes	4	3

**What was predicted vs. what actually happened**

# PREPPING FOR HURRICANE SEASON 2024

Tips for seniors and individuals with medical needs



Now is a perfect time to begin preparations for next season! Preparation looks different to different people based on their situation. This section will include helpful advice and tools to assist you in developing the best plan for you and your family before Hurricane Season 2024 kicks off on June 1st.

## DEVELOP A SHELTER PLAN

Will you shelter at home, evacuate to a safe area with family/friends, or go to the Special Needs Shelter?

If you evacuate, do you have transportation? If sheltering at the Special Needs Shelter, you can register to receive transportation assistance.

## DEVELOP A MEDICAL PLAN

If you receive care for a chronic condition, such as dialysis, work with your provider on a backup plan, or continuation of care during an evacuation. If you are dependent on electricity for medical equipment or refrigeration for medications, do you have battery backups or a generator at home?

### Medical supplies:

- Health insurance cards, medical history, social security cards, prescriptions
- Medications and pharmacy information
- Oxygen, portable tanks, concentrators
- Nebulizers, CPAP/BiPAP machines, apnea monitors, blood glucose monitors, cardiac monitors

## GATHER SUPPLIES

Your supply list should contain items that are essential for you, your family, and pets (if applicable). Think of going on a 7-day camping trip. What would you need? The basics include water and nonperishable food items. You can find a sample supply list at the end of this newsletter.

The important part is to not feel overwhelmed! You may already have several of these items. Keep supplies in an area where you can easily find them should the need arise. Stock up little by little, shop sales / BOGOs and tax-free disaster events.

## SHELTER SUPPLIES

If you choose to evacuate to a special needs shelter, plan to bring the following items:

- Medical supplies (see left side of page)
  - portable oxygen tanks & concentrators
- Mobility device (wheelchair, scooter, cane, walker)
- Comfort items (blanket, pillow)
- Food if you have special dietary needs
- Warm, comfortable clothing (& extra)
- Close toed shoes
- Phones & chargers
- Entertainment items

NOTE: Shelter space is limited. Try to only bring one bag, not including your medical equipment.

## DEVELOPING A DISASTER PLAN

EASY Disaster Planning Template is attached to the end of this newsletter! [See page 7.](#)



If you already have a disaster plan, make sure it is updated and review your plan with family, friends, neighbors, caregivers, etc.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS!

- We will stop evaluating new forms, and we will shut down our special needs shelter registration line between 48-72 hours before the storm arrives, and we will not review forms until after the storm.

This is because our operations change from disaster planning to response, meaning we transition to opening and prepping our shelters and other storm-related activities. If you are not registered, and you have a medical need that you believe would require a Special Needs Shelter, you may go to the nearest open shelter to be evaluated by our medical staff.

- All communications will be sent out through our Everbridge notification system. It will be an automated message. There will be several messages to keep you informed of evacuation orders and shelter openings, as well as polls to ask if you need evacuation assistance. If you receive an automated message from the Florida Department of Health prior to a storm, it is VERY important to listen and respond to the message as instructed.

If you are not receiving messages, please make sure you have an updated phone number on file with us. Also, some of our calls may read as spam messages, so be aware.

You will not receive messages from us if you have not been registered in our database prior to the storm, which is why it is so important to register in advance!

- Hospitals are NOT storm shelters. Please do not plan to go to a hospital during an evacuation unless it has been pre-coordinated with your doctor or you have contacted the Department of Health with your medical need.
- If your zone has been evacuated, or you live in a mobile home or are dependent on electricity for medical equipment, do NOT wait to make the decision to evacuate. Once wind speeds reach 45 miles an hour sustained, rescue vehicles will not be on the road and will not be able to assist you. Make a plan and do not hesitate to use it.
- Please make sure you recertify each year. We need to make sure our registry is current, and we have your updated contact and medical information. If we do not hear from you for TWO consecutive years, your registration will be removed.

### Did You Know?

Under Florida law, you can pick up a 30-day refill of your prescription medications if you live in a county that:

- is under a hurricane warning issued by the National Weather Service
- Is under a state of emergency executive order declared by the Governor
- Has activated its emergency operations center/emergency management plan

### Sign up for emergency notifications

- ✓ Hillsborough County Alert  
[hcflgov.net/staysafe](http://hcflgov.net/staysafe)
- ✓ Alert Tampa  
[tampagov.net](http://tampagov.net)

If you are experiencing an emergency that would require  
**FIRE RESCUE, POLICE, or AMBULANCE**  
**DIAL 911**

## 2024 HURRICANE SEASON PROJECTIONS

2024	PREDICTED	AVERAGE
Named Storms	23	14
Hurricanes	11	7
Major Hurricanes	5	3

Forecasters are expecting an above average hurricane season in 2024.

This season will be characterized by more favorable conditions for storms and hurricanes to form.

## SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER UPDATES

### REGISTRY

The Special Needs Registry in Hillsborough County has been moved to a new State-wide, web-based system on May 1st, 2024. This system is compliant with all State and Federal privacy requirements for health-related information.

### How to Register

To register for the Special Needs Shelter Program, you will need to create an account on the Florida Special Needs Registry.

Visit: [snr.flhealthresponse.com](https://snr.flhealthresponse.com) or scan the QR code below.



You will be able to submit your registration form for evaluation, and manage your information directly online.

We encourage residents to register before hurricane season (June 1 - November 30).

### Recertification

You will still be required to update your information annually. Once registered, you will receive a notice via mail and/or email to go online and update your information prior to the upcoming hurricane season.

**Get detailed instructions on how to register [here](#).**

**Available in English and Spanish.**

# REQUEST FOR SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Community outreach services provided:

- In-service training for staff of home health and other patient-focused organization
- Presentations for agencies and organizations

Topics covered include:

- Special Needs Shelters
- How to fill out forms
- Transportation assistance

To set up an in-service, please contact us with the following information:

- Agency Name
- Address
- Point of contact name, phone number, and email address
- Number of attendees (estimated)
- Preferred date and time
- Preferred in-person or virtual

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Meghan.Pritts@flhealth.gov

Phone: (813) 307-8063

Fax: (813) 276-8689

Hillsborough County Health Department  
PO Box 5135  
Tampa, FL 33675-5135



# DISASTER PLAN

Identify a Personal Support Network - two or more people

- Nearby family
- Friends
- Caregivers
- Neighbors
- Coworkers

Know your risk

- Hurricane Evacuation Zone (A,B,C,D,E) \_\_\_\_\_
- Special Needs
- \_\_\_\_\_

Evacuation/Shelter Plan

Where will you go?

---

---

---

Sign up for Emergency Notifications

- Hillsborough County Alert - [hcflgov.net/staysafe](http://hcflgov.net/staysafe)
- Alert Tampa - [tampagov.net](http://tampagov.net)



Update your Contact Information

Save all your contacts in your phone.

**Emergency Contacts:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# YOUR EMERGENCY KIT

## Important Documents

- Your emergency preparedness plan and notebook of resources
- Insurance documents (medical, Medicare/Medicaid, home, vehicle, etc.)
- Identification (driver's license, social security card, passport, birth certificate, etc.)
- Medical records
- Bank account numbers
- Do Not Resuscitate Order\* (DNRO)

## Written Instructions Regarding Care and Medication

- List of all medications and their dosages
- List of all pharmacies you use
- List of all doctors
- List of all the styles and serial numbers of medical devices you use
- List of your medical device/equipment and supply vendors

## Medication

- Prescription and non-prescription medication in their prescribed containers. Enough for at least two weeks
- Refill prescriptions once a storm threatens

## Extra Set of Keys

- Home
- Vehicle

## Money

- Cash (small bills)
- Credit cards (keep in mind banks and ATMs may not be available)

## Additional Items

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



# YOUR EMERGENCY KIT, CONT.

- 3-7 day supply of water per person (& pets!)**

General recommendation is one gallon per person, per day

- Food, per person**

Special dietary considerations?

- Flashlights**

- Battery operated radio**

- Extra batteries for all electronics (if applicable)**

- Cash**

- Manual can opener**

- Lighter/matches**

- Cell phone & chargers**

- Sleeping bag, bedding, pillows**

- Change of clothing**

- Whistle or other help signal**

- Personal hygiene items: toothbrush/paste, deoderant, soaps, etc**

- Supplies for pets, children (if applicable)**

- Recreational items: magazines, books, games, etc**

- Glasses, hearing aids**

- Walker, wheelchair, electric scooter (charged)**

- Incontinence supplies (adult diapers & other sanitary supplies)**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**LIST OF ALL MEDICATIONS AND THEIR DOSAGES**

Medication Name	Dosage	Time Taken	Taken Since Year

**LIST OF ALL PHARMACIES YOU USE**

<b>Pharmacy:</b>		
<b>Phone:</b>		

**LIST OF ALL DOCTORS**

Name	Phone	Name	Phone

**SERIAL NUMBERS & MEDICAL DEVICES YOU USE**

Device Name	Serial #	Supplier Name	Phone

# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

If you are experiencing an emergency that would require  
FIRE RESCUE, POLICE, or AMBULANCE  
DIAL 911

American Red Cross  
813-348-4820

Pet Resources  
813-744-5660

Business Disaster Hotline  
813-301-7458

Salvation Army  
813-226-0055

Catholic Charities  
813-631-4370

Solid Waste  
813-272-5680

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay  
211

Special Needs Shelter Registration  
813-307-8063

Customer Service Call Center  
813-272-5900 or 711

TECO  
813-223-0880 or 877-588-1010

Development Services  
813-272-5600

Transportation Information  
813-272-5900

Emergency Management  
813-272-5900

Other...

---

---

---

---

---

---