

STORM SURGE PLANNING ZONES OVERVIEW

The Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is rolling out new Storm Surge Planning Zones for the 2013 hurricane season based upon updated information and data received from the State of Florida's Regional Evacuation Study. There is a significant change in the areas of the County that are at risk for storm surge, when compared to what we have been using to for the last 10 years. These expanded areas within the county prompted a change to our traditional A, B, & C evacuation zones. The new data and information is based upon two main criteria:

- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data which more accurately maps out land elevations across the county.
- Larger hurricane simulations, in terms of the breadth of the wind fields, which better represent the diameter and intensity of storms that have been generated in recent Atlantic Hurricane seasons.

Based on the information provided from the Regional Evacuation Study and discussions with the National Hurricane Center and the South Florida Water Management District; OEM has formulated new Storm Surge Planning Zones. The Planning Zones are A through E, and incorporate all areas of the County where there is a risk of storm surge. The Storm Surge Planning Zones were designed to educate county residents of their potential risk so they may plan accordingly. Miami-Dade residents who live within one of the five Storm Surge Planning Zones should develop plans now to evacuate when prompted by public officials. Others outside the evacuation areas need to be prepared to shelter-in-place.

When Miami-Dade County is threatened by a hurricane, OEM will utilize advisories issued in advance of a storm from the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service to determine which of the Planning Zones are at risk for storm surge from that particular storm. Messages to the public regarding evacuation and sheltering in place will be tailored to the latest advisories.

Residents can find out more information about the Storm Surge Planning Zones by going to [miamidade.gov Services Near You](http://gisims2.miamidade.gov/Cservices/CSReport.asp), see the link below, where they can look up their individual address or link to the Office of Emergency Management's website for more information, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Call takers at Miami-Dade 311 are also available to answer questions that residents may have regarding these changes.

<http://gisims2.miamidade.gov/Cservices/CSReport.asp>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I use to live in an evacuation zone and now I am in a storm surge planning zone, what is the difference?

A Storm Surge Planning Zone is an area within Miami-Dade County that could potentially be impacted with storm surge of 1.5 feet or higher for a hurricane. The Storm Surge Planning Zones identify the residents who may have to evacuate or shelter-in-place (like others in the County) and should develop contingency plans for either scenario. An Evacuation Zone is an area that will be required to move under an evacuation order for an impending storm and will be a portion, if not all of, the defined Storm Surge Planning Zones.

For example, if a Category 2 Hurricane is forecasted to make landfall in Miami-Dade County residents in Storm Surge Planning Zones A and B will be advised to make preparations for evacuation. As the storm gets closer and better information becomes available for where the hurricane may make landfall the County may order all of Zone A and all or portions of Zone B to evacuate. Always follow the County's evacuation order.

How Do Flood Zones and Storm Surge Planning Zones Differ?

Storm Surge Planning Zones are quite different from the FEMA 100-Year Flood Insurance Maps. 100-year flood maps are extremely conservative in comparison to hurricane tidal surge maps. If you are vulnerable to hurricane tidal surge flooding and/or 100-year flood events, you should consider purchasing flood insurance. You do not have to be within the 100-year flood plain to be impacted by hurricane tidal surge flooding!

Flood zones are areas mapped by FEMA for use in the National Flood Insurance Program. Each flood zone designation, represented by a letter or letters, tells homeowners exactly what the risk is for flooding at their property over a period of years, regardless of the cause. By law, all homes in high-risk zones carrying a mortgage must be covered by flood insurance. For more information on flood zones visit:

<http://www.floodsmart.gov>

Storm Surge Planning Zones, on the other hand, are based on hurricane storm surge determined by the National Hurricane Center using ground elevation and the area's vulnerability to water from lakes/oceans being pushed over land by a hurricane. The storm surge planning zones are marked from A through E.

The flood zones and the Storm Surge Planning Zones are determined by different methods and have different purposes. A home may not be located in a storm surge planning zone, yet still be located in a flood zone based on a property's base flood elevation. Residents must check both zones.

An important thing to remember is that flood losses are not covered by homeowners' insurance policies. The National Flood Insurance Program makes federally backed flood insurance available to residents and business owners. Any flooding damage covered under the policy – whether or not a federal disaster declaration is made – will be reimbursed per the policy limits, which can include structural damage or the loss of contents.

Will this affect my flood insurance ratings?

No, how Miami-Dade County designates storm surge planning zones has no bearing on insurance rates. The change to your storm surge planning zones has NO impact on flood zones or flood insurance, which are determined and managed through FEMA and the National Flood Insurance program.

How do I find out my Storm Surge Planning Zone?

1. www.miamidade.gov (Services Near You) – Storm Surge Planning Zones
2. Call 3-1-1
3. Hurricane Guide (available at your commission office, municipal City Halls and County Libraries.
4. Call Miami-Dade Emergency Management 305-468-5400

My property is fairly elevated and couldn't possibly be touched by storm surge. Why do I have to evacuate?

Emergency Management officials work to prevent putting residents in situations where they would become isolated by water - creating an island. Therefore, some parcels with higher elevations are assigned the evacuation level of surrounding parcels.

I have lived in Miami-Dade County my whole life and I have never had to evacuate before. Why now?

Emergency Management officials have recently completed a study utilizing new technology to determine with more accuracy the potential impact of storm surge. The result of the study showed more areas of Miami-Dade County at risk for storm surge. We have redefined areas in the County that should plan for evacuation and property protection. It is very important to note that the exact areas to be evacuated for an approaching hurricane will depend on the strength of the storm, where it is coming from, and the forward speed. Each storm is different and the zones under an evacuation order may be adjusted. There is no single storm that would threaten entire areas; but each area in the Storm Surge Planning Zones is at risk from at least 1 possible storm scenario.

The reason we evacuate certain areas is to get people away from places where storm surge flooding will occur. There also may be a need to evacuate flood prone or low lying areas on or near canals or other bodies of water.

I live in a mobile home, but we're in a non-evacuation zone. Do we have to evacuate?

Yes, all mobile home residents are required to evacuate when any evacuation order is issued, regardless of their storm surge planning zone. This has not changed from past years. Mobile homes are considered unsafe to weather even during high-level Tropical Storms.

So just how accurate are these maps?

The maps are as correct and as accurate as current technology can make them. As the storm surge model data is updated and refined in the future, the County incorporates those changes to continue to improve the process of determining Storm Surge Planning Zones.

What should I do to prepare for a hurricane?

Finalize your family's hurricane preparedness plan now. Know your planning zone and be prepared to leave if an evacuation is required.

Who will order an evacuation?

The Miami-Dade County Mayor will order an evacuation based on expected conditions and recommendations from public safety personnel.

If my planning zone is being evacuated, how and when will I be notified?

We plan on using the complete spectrum of media and notification means. For example, radio and TV stations will broadcast emergency information. You can register for emergency notifications via the County's emergency notification system (Miami-Dade Alerts).

I have a disability and do not drive. How will I evacuate if I am told to evacuate? Will the County provide transportation for me?

Yes, the Miami-Dade County Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program (EEAP) provides evacuation assistance to those residents who live in an evacuation zone and that may require specialized transportation assistance or who's medical needs prevent them from evacuating on their own.

Will the County provide me with transportation to evacuate?

Yes, Miami-Dade Transit will provide evacuation assistance utilizing designated existing bus stops. Evacuation pick-up points can be identified by the posted evacuation signs.



Does Miami-Dade County have shelters if we have to evacuate or relocate?

Yes, the Office of Emergency Management partners with Miami-Dade Public Schools and the American Red Cross to operate Hurricane Evacuation Centers. These Hurricane Evacuation Centers provide a refuge of last resort for those individuals who need to evacuate and are unable to make their own evacuation arrangements. A list of potential evacuation centers can be found at:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/fire/evacuations.asp>.

Not every site will open for every evacuation! Please monitor the local radio or television, or dial 3-1-1 (TDD (305) 468-5402) to find out which centers are open when an evacuation order is announced.

If an evacuation is ordered, what do I do with my pet?

You may evacuate with your pet to one of the designated Pet-Friendly Hurricane Evacuation Centers located within the County. The opening of Pet-Friendly Hurricane Evacuation Centers will be determined at the time an evacuation is ordered. More information about Pet-Friendly Hurricane Evacuation Centers can be found at:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/animals/disaster-preparedness.asp>.

Are evacuation routes identified with signs?

No, since it is impossible to determine which route would be a safe evacuation route prior to an incident, permanent signs are not in place. Information as to safe routes to use would be given along with the evacuation order from the Mayor.

EVACUATION PLANNING TIPS

- ❶ Always be prepared to evacuate, have a to-go kit for each member of your family within easy reach should you need to evacuate without advance notice.
- ❷ The dangers of storm surge are the standards upon which Miami-Dade County's evacuation plan for hurricanes is built.
- ❸ Hurricanes provide advance notice so find out now if you are in a storm surge evacuation zone.
- ❹ Once you determine which, if any planning zone you are in, ensure that evacuations are included in your personal/family disaster plan; know where you will go and at least two routes to get there.
- ❺ It is best to evacuate in-county; arrange to stay with family or friends or a local hotel out of the evacuated area. Make sure you can bring your pets are; they need to be part of your disaster plan.
- ❻ Stay informed. When a hurricane is imminent, make sure to monitor the local media outlets. The media will be providing vital information such as, an evacuation order has been issued, what planning zones are included in the order, and what hurricane evacuation centers are opened for those with no other place to go.
- ❼ If an evacuation is ordered for your planning zone, it is because the residents within that area are at risk.
- ❽ Many considerations factor into the decision to evacuate any one area, including storm intensity, forward speed, direction, tides, etc.
- ❾ Once a storm seems imminent, keep your gas tank full. You do not want to run out of gas before reaching your destination.
- ❿ Leave early, driving conditions may be hazardous with the advance winds and rains from the outer bands and there may be heavily congested roadways.
- ⓫ If you must go to a Hurricane Evacuation Center, your space may be very limited so pack carefully. Bring only what you can carry and include any prescription medications, extra clothing, food and water, personal hygiene products, and entertainment.
- ⓬ Residents living outside the storm surge planning zones that live in low-lying areas prone to flooding, buildings with substandard construction or structural damage, or that do not have window and door protection should consider evacuating as well.

STORM SURGE PLANNING ZONES MAP

