



## **HIGHLANDS COUNTY**

### **DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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### **SHELTERING IN PLACE**

It may become necessary for residents to shelter in their homes in response to different kinds of disasters. Here are some instructions on how to protect yourself if you're asked to shelter in place.

#### **Brush Fires**

If residents are asked to shelter in place for a local fire, they should follow these steps.

- Close all doors and windows.
- Turn ON air conditioning or air filtration systems if possible.
- Keep a damp cloth for everyone in the house standing by in case of heavy smoke. Breath through the cloth.
- Pull together your disaster supplies kit and valuable papers in case you have to leave quickly.
- Monitor local radio or TV reports! Fires can change direction quickly and may threaten your home.

#### **Hurricanes / Tornadoes**

Emergency Management officials throughout Florida all recommend that if you have to evacuate, do so, and make that decision as early as possible. If your home is not in an evacuation area and you have prepared your residence, here are things you should do that may increase your survival:

- Seek shelter in an interior "Safe Room" in the center of your residence it should be a room without windows such as hall closet.
- Place a mattress or other padding near by and keep your disaster supplies kit with you in the room.
- Do not leave the safety of the safe room. Flying debris has been known to penetrate walls, tree trunks and even shutters. Also do not venture outside as the eye of the storm passes over. Winds and driving rain can begin suddenly.
- Leave a clear path and accessible exit in case of fire.
- Be sure to take extra caution with light sources. Do not use open candles or gas lanterns. Use flashlights or battery operated lanterns.
- Set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings, and put some of your bottled water in the freezer. This will allow you to keep perishable food cold for one to two days.

- Set aside water for bathing and sanitary purposes by storing it in the bathtub and other bottles and jugs. Prior to filling the bathtub, scrub the tub, wash it down with bleach, then rinse. The water in your water heater can be used for this as well.

## **Chemical**

- Close and lock all windows and doors (locking creates a tighter seal).
- Turn OFF all air ventilation systems, i.e. window and attic fans, air conditioners, etc.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Go to an aboveground interior room (not the basement) or the room with the fewest windows and doors.
- Take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit with you.
- Using duct tape, tape around the door, closing off the crack between the door and door jam. If flooring material or size of space makes duct tape ineffective under the door, wet some towels and jam them in the crack.
- Use heavy plastic (heavy garbage bags are okay) and duct tape to cover windows, outlets, heat registers and exhaust fans or vents.
- Listen for and follow all further instructions issued by the local officials.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains. To avoid injury, stay away from the windows.
- Stay in the room and listen to your radio until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.

## **Radiation**

- Close and lock all doors and windows, locking provides a tighter seal.
- Turn OFF all fans that bring in air from the outside, i.e. window and attic fans.
- Turn OFF the air conditioning, unless otherwise instructed by local officials.
- Close the fireplace damper
- Go to the basement, if possible, or to an interior room with no windows. Otherwise go to the room with the fewest windows and doors.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting to cover and seal off any doors, windows, or vents.
- Make sure you have your Family Disaster Supplies Kit with you.
- Listen for and follow all further instructions issued by the local officials.
- Stay in the room and listen to your radio until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.