Have a Plan

Being prepared before, during and after an emergency is critical and may make all the difference when the seconds count. Additionally, your family plan should address the following:

- Develop an emergency plan
- Determine escape routes & central meeting location
- Plan for pets and special needs
- Plan for sheltering in place & evacuation
- Prepare an emergency supply kit

What If Your Family Isn’t Together When Disaster Strikes?

In the event that your family is not together at the moment a disaster strikes, it is important to plan ahead. Your plan should include:

- How you will get to a safe place?
- How you will contact each other?
- How you will get back together?
- What will you do in different disaster situations?

Family Communication Tips:

- Make a plan for every location.
- Identify a contact person who lives out of state for family members to notify they are safe.
- Prepare every member of your family with a cell phone, coins or a pre-paid phone card to call the emergency contact.
- Program the contact person into your cell phone as “ICE” (In Case of Emergency.) Emergency personnel often check for “ICE” listings.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging. Text messages can often work when phone lines don’t.
- Subscribe to alert services. Information on Gloucester County’s CodeRED notification system can be found at www.gloucesterva.info/codered.

More information on Family Disaster Plans can be found at www.redcross.org or www.readyva.gov
Don’t Forget to Prepare Your Pets!

- Get a rescue alert sticker available at www.aspca.org
- Arrange a safe haven:
  - Ask your veterinarian for a list of boarding kennels.
  - Dogs, cats and small caged animals are allowed at Gloucester’s Emergency Shelter provided you are staying with them.
  - Ask friends and relatives if they would be willing to take your pet.
- Keep an emergency supply kit for your pet. Include shot records.

Whatever you do, don’t leave your pets behind. For more information and guidelines for large animals visit www.ready.gov/caring-animals

Plan Appropriately

Planning for People with Special Needs

If you have special needs, find out about special assistance that may be available in your community.

⇒ Identify your resources.
⇒ Work with your support network.
⇒ Make a plan to include medical equipment and medications (with name, dosage, frequency).
⇒ Create an evacuation plan.
⇒ Plan for different types of sheltering.

Consider the Following:

⇒ Do you use communication devices?
⇒ Do you need assistance with personal care?
⇒ Do you depend on a cane, wheel chair or walker?
⇒ Do you rely on equipment that requires electricity?
⇒ Do you have a service animal?

For more information download the Red Cross Preparing for Disasters for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs at www.redcross.org
Businesses need to have an emergency plan to protect all aspects of the workplace. Emergency preparedness can be the difference between losing your business and getting back on your feet.

Business Continuity Plans

A business continuity plan is a plan to continue operations if your business is affected by different levels of disaster. Development of a business continuity plan includes four steps:

⇒ Conduct a business impact analysis to identify time-sensitive or critical business functions and processes as well as the resources that support them.
⇒ Identify, document and implement to recover critical business functions and processes.
⇒ Organize a business continuity team and compile a plan to manage a business disruption.
⇒ Conduct training for the team as well as testing and exercises to evaluate recovery strategies.

For more information on business continuity plans visit www.ready.gov/business.

Business Preparation Checklist:

✓ Create a preparedness program for your business.
✓ Identify critical business systems.
✓ Create an emergency communications plan.
✓ Test your business systems.
✓ Enroll in the Red Cross Rating Program.
✓ Build a disaster preparedness kit.

Gloucester County Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) can be viewed online at www.gloucesterva.info/em under Property Flood Information Search or the FEMA Map Service Center at www.msc.fema.gov. Gloucester County FIRMs are also available for viewing by visiting the Gloucester County Office of Building Inspections at 6489 Main Street, Suite 247. For more information call 693-2744.

Flood Insurance: Do You Need It?

Residents who live or own property in flood hazard areas are urged to purchase flood insurance to protect themselves from losses due to flooding.

Facts About the National Flood Insurance Program:

- Coverage for contents is not automatically included with building coverage.
- Standard home owners insurance policies do not cover losses due to floods.
- There is a 30 day waiting period before coverage goes into effect.
- This insurance is required if purchasing a home through a federally backed mortgage.

Flood Hazard Map Risks

High-Risk Areas (Special Flood Hazard Area or SFHA)

Zone A or V on the Flood Map

In high-risk areas, there is at least a 1 in 4 chance of flooding during a 30-year mortgage. All home and business owners in these areas with mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders are required to buy flood insurance.

Moderate-to-Low Risk Areas (Non-special Flood Hazard Area or NSFA)

Zone X on the Flood Map

In moderate-to-low risk areas, the risk of being flooded is reduced but not completely removed. These areas submit over 20% of NFIP claims and receive on-third of disaster assistance for flooding. Flood insurance isn’t federally required in these areas, but it is recommended for all property owners and renters. Ask your insurance agent about a Preferred Risk Policy.

Emergency Preparedness Tip:

Inventory and photograph your home’s contents and put important papers and insurance policies in a safe place that is easy to take with you if you need to evacuate.
Build Responsibly

Always check with the Gloucester County Building Inspection Office before you build on, clear, grade or fill your property. All floodplain development requires a permit from Gloucester County. For more information, call 693-2744 or visit www.gloucesterva.info/buildinginspection.

Measures to Protect Your Home:
There are ways to permanently retrofit a building. Retrofitting means making changes to an existing building to protect it from flooding.
Six ways to retrofit are discussed in the FEMA publication 312 “A Homeowners Guide to Retrofitting” available on www.FEMA.gov:
1. Elevation - Raising your house so the lowest floor is 2 feet above flood level.
2. Wet Flood Proofing - Making uninhabited parts of your home resistant to flood damage.
3. Relocation - Moving your house to higher ground.
4. Dry Flood Proofing - Sealing your house to prevent flood waters from entering.
5. Levee and Floodwall - Constructing barriers to prevent flood from entering.
6. Demolition - Demolishing home and rebuild meeting flood requirements of moving elsewhere.

Requirements for Substantial Improvement/Damage
- If your home is located within a flood zone and you plan to make substantial improvements, The Gloucester County Floodplain Management Ordinance requires the lowest floor to be elevated to 2 feet above base flood elevation (BFE).
- Substantial improvement/damage means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvement to a structure, the total cost of which equals or exceeds fifty (50) percent of the market value of the structure before the start of construction of the improvement.
- For more information, contact the Gloucester County Building Inspection Office at 693-2744.

Flood Protection Assistance
The Gloucester County Building Inspections Office provides flood protection assistance in the following ways:
- Provides information on how to select a qualified contractor and who to contact if dissatisfied with a contractor’s performance.
- Conducts site visits to review flooding, drainage or sewer problems.
- Provides one-on-one advice to property owners on flood proofing and retrofitting techniques, as well as improvement and damage requirements.
- Helps locate your property on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS) available at Gloucester County Building Inspections Office.
- Provides map information on LiMWA, BFE such as AE -8 and 500 yr.
- Also information on Resource Protection Areas (RPA) at (804) 693-1217

Please call 693-2744 for more information.
Protect the Floodplain

Gloucester County contains valuable natural resources including:

- Wetlands
- Beaches
- Forests
- Rivers
- Streams
- Plants and animals that inhabit them

To help preserve and protect these valuable resource areas, Gloucester County has adopted the following locally administered programs:

- Mitigation Open Space Plan
- Chesapeake Bay Preservation
- Erosion and Sediment Control
- Wetlands Protection
- Floodplain Management Plan

These programs and how well they are administered, have a direct effect on water quality (WQ) in the community.

Always check with the Gloucester County Building Inspection Office (693-2744) before you build on, clear, grade or fill your property. All floodplain development requires a permit. For questions about Resource Protection Areas (RPA), Please call 804-693-1217.

Maintain Your Drainage:

- Check ditches and remove debris or obstructions.
- Remove loose objects and debris from the roof.
- Check for long-term standing water in gutters and correct any blockages.
- Keep trees trimmed and away from the roof.
- Ensure downspouts funnel water away from the building and do not allow water to accumulate near the perimeter.

Be Safe in a Flood

Flood Safety Tips:

- Do not walk through flowing water. Currents can be deceptive and can knock you off your feet. If you must walk, carry a stick or pole to test the ground.
- Do not drive through flooded areas. If you come to a flooded road, turn around. You don’t know the depth of the water or condition of the road underneath.
- Evacuate the flood hazard area. Don’t delay in evacuating once you get word to leave. Stick to designated evacuation routes.
The Gloucester County Emergency Operations Plan was developed to prepare the county for a variety of disasters, including flooding. If a flood should occur, warning and emergency communications will be coordinated through the Department of Emergency Management and the Gloucester County Sheriff’s Office. When activated during a storm event, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at which time an Emergency Phone Help Line will be activated. Information is spread through the following:

**Stay Informed**

**Radio Stations**
- WXGM (FM 99.1)
- WKEZ (FM 94)
- WQSF (FM 96)
- WWDE (FM 102)

**Television Stations:**
- WTKR - Channel 3
- WAVY - Channel 10
- WVEC - Channel 13

**Newspapers:**
- The Daily Press
- The Gloucester-Mathews Gazette Journal
- The Glo-Quips

**CodeRED Rapid Notification System**
CodeRed is a high-speed emergency notification system used to alert the public to impending disasters on their landline or registered cell phones.

To receive notifications on your cell phone by text or in your email, visit [www.gloucesterva.info/codered](http://www.gloucesterva.info/codered)

**Hurricane Watches and Warnings:**
Check frequently on the storm’s progress until all Watches and Warnings from the National Weather Service are cancelled for your area.

**HURRICANE WATCH:** Hurricane may threaten within 36 hours
- Be prepared to take action if a warning is issued.
- Keep informed of the storm’s progress.

**HURRICANE WARNING:** Hurricane expected to strike within 24 hours
- Leave beachfront and low-lying areas.
- Leave mobile homes for more substantial shelter.
- Stay in your home if it is sturdy on high ground and not near the beach. If you are asked to evacuate by authorities, GO!
- Stay tuned to radio, NOAA Weather Radio, or television for hurricane advisories and safety information.

**THESAFFIR-SIMPSON SCALE**
The scale rates hurricanes in order of their damage potential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Wind (MPH)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>111 to 130</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>131 to 155</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Above 155</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Evacuate

Almost every year, people along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts evacuate in the face of approaching hurricanes. For more information on preparing to evacuate visit www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/additional-resources and click on “Hurricane Evacuation Guide.”

Things to Keep in Mind:

⇒ Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely in case gas stations are closed. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.
⇒ Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.
⇒ Gather your family, get your disaster supply kit and go immediately if you are instructed to evacuate.
⇒ Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by traffic or severe weather.
⇒ Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.
⇒ Do not drive into flooded areas.
⇒ Stay away from downed power lines.

Before You Leave:

○ Wear and take appropriate clothing.
○ Take important documents with you.
○ Secure your home.
  ✔ Close and lock doors and windows.
  ✔ Unplug electrical equipment such as radios and televisions, as well as small appliances. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.
○ Let others know where you are going.

Determine Home Escape Routes

✔ Draw a floor plan of your home with a separate page for each floor.
✔ Mark two escape routes from each room.
✔ Make sure children understand the drawings.
✔ Post a copy of the drawings at eye level in each child’s room.
✔ Plan one place to meet near the home and one place outside the area such as a grocery store or parking lot.
✔ Practice your plan with all family members.

Know Your Evacuation Route:

All Middle Peninsula residents including Gloucester County citizens will evacuate using Route 17 George Washington Memorial Highway North towards Fredericksburg.
Sheltering in place means taking immediate shelter where you are - at home, work, school or in between. It may also mean “seal the room.” In other words, take steps to prevent outside air from coming in. It is important to listen to TV or radio to understand whether the authorities wish you to remain indoors or take additional steps to protect yourself and your family. For more information about sheltering in place, please visit www.ready.gov/shelter.

How Do I Know I Need to Shelter in Place?

You will be notified to shelter in place by one of the following:

- A CodeRED notification, sometimes called an “All Call” or “Reverse 911.” Sign up for Gloucester County’s CodeRED notification system by visiting www.gloucesterva.info/codedred
- Emergency Alert System broadcasts on radio or television.
- News media sources such as radio and television.
- NOAA Weather Radio alerts.
- Residential route messages announced to neighborhoods from vehicles equipped with public address systems.

Public Disaster Sheltering

⇒ If you can, seek shelter with friends or relatives. Public shelter space is very limited.
⇒ Contact local hotels and motels outside the immediate disaster area. Ask about restrictions on pets and keep a list of pet friendly places handy.
⇒ Evacuation shelters provide basic food and water. Bring clothing, bedding, bathing and sanitary supplies, special food and pre-filled prescriptions, medications and entertainment items.
⇒ Alcoholic beverages, firearms and illegal substances are not allowed in emergency shelters.
⇒ Take your Disaster Supply Kit with you to the shelter.
⇒ Cooperate with shelter managers and other people in order to make a difficult situation less stressful.
⇒ Let others know where you are going.
⇒ Remember, shelter sites change based on the emergency so stay tuned to the local news for opening announcements.
A disaster supply kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Try to assemble your kit well in advance. You may have to evacuate at a moment’s notice and take essentials with you. Surviving on your own after a disaster means having your own food, water and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours. Local relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster but they cannot reach everyone immediately.

**Basic Emergency Supply Kit:**
- Water: one gallon per person per day for at least three days.
- Food: at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert. Extra batteries for both.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Dust mask for filtering contaminants.
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Can opener (if needed).
- Local maps.

**Additional Items:**
- Prescription/other medications.
- Infant formula and diapers.
- Pet food and extra water for your pet.
- Important documents (insurance policies, identification, bank information).
- Cash or travelers’ checks and change.
- Sleeping bag or warm blankets.
- Change of clothing including long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes.
- Household bleach and medicine dropper.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Personal hygiene items.
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, plastic utensils, and paper towels.
- Paper and pencil/pen.
- Books, games, puzzles and other activities.
The road to recovery may have many turns. The first step is to take stock of the situation to determine how best to proceed. Where confusion and chaos reign, a clear head will prevail. These steps will help to lay the groundwork for this transition:

- Focus on the job ahead.
- Register for assistance.
- Find assistance following a disaster.
- Prepare to return home.

Immediately After the Disaster

- Remain calm and assist family members or neighbors who may be vulnerable.
- Locate a flashlight with batteries to use until power comes back on. Do not use candles — this may cause a fire.
- Turn off sensitive electrical equipment such as computers, VCRs and televisions to prevent damage when electricity is restored.
- Turn off major electrical and gas appliances that were on when the power went off to prevent power surges.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep in cold and save food.
- Do not use the stove to heat your home — this may cause a fire or fatal gas leak.
- Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign — come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed.
- Do not call 911 to ask about a power outage. In case of a power outage, use battery-operated equipment to listen to news and radio stations for updates.

For more recovery information, visit www.ready.gov/recovering-disaster
FEMA National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System

The NEFRLS system will enable displaced individuals to enter personal information into a website database so that they can be located by others during a disaster.

To register visit [www.fema.gov/individual-assistance-program-tools](http://www.fema.gov/individual-assistance-program-tools)

8 Steps to Recovery

**Step 1: Take Care of Your Family and Yourself First**

- Get enough rest and eat properly.
- Talk to others who are dealing with similar problems for support.
- Focus on what needs to be done to recover from the disaster.
- Make a list of jobs and tackle them one at a time.

**Step 2: Assess the Damage**

**Before Entering Your Home:**

1. Walk around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, broken or leaking water pipes, foundation cracks and other damage.
2. Do not enter if you smell gas. Turn off the gas main if it’s located on the outside.
3. Proceed carefully. Take photographs or video of the damage for your insurance.
4. Call your insurance agent and report losses.

**Plan Your Recovery**

- Make sure it is safe to work in your home.
- Decide what you can and can't do to repair your home.
- Decide if you need financial assistance.
- Use your credit cards carefully.
- Keep receipts of all expenses related to the recovery. You may be able to get reimbursement from your insurance.
8 Steps to Recovery

Step 3: Give Your House Some First Aid

- Make sure the power is turned off at the main breaker or fuse box.
- Use generators outdoors only.
- Avoid using extension cords with generators. If you must use them, check them often to make sure they have not become hot.
- Connect appliances one at a time to the generator.
- Never hook a generator directly to your household wiring yourself. Only a qualified electrician should do this.
- Turn off the gas from the outside if possible. If you suspect a leak or smell gas, call the gas company and leave your house. Air out your house completely before re-entering.
- Drain your basement slowly to prevent collapse and cracking.

Step 4: Dry Out Your Home

- Air out the house to lower the humidity.
  - Open doors, windows, closets and cabinets to increase ventilation.
  - Use fans and run dehumidifiers. Drain & dry the ceilings and walls.
- Use products like kitty litter, chemical dehumidifier packs and calcium chloride pellets to remove moisture.
- Sort contents and discard debris. Because of the risk of mold and mildew, throw out:
  - soaked mattresses
  - pillows
  - foam rubber
  - large carpets
  - carpet padding
  - upholstered couches and chairs
  - books
  - paper products
- Heirlooms and valuable books and papers may require special treatment.
- Throw out water-soaked food, cosmetics, medicines and medical supplies, stuffed animals and baby toys.
- Call a contractor for estimates of work that you can't do on your own.

Step 5: Restore the Utilities

If your furnace, water heater, stove or other gas or oil appliances were flooded to the level of the burners, turn off the valve on the pipe to the appliance. Don't operate them until they have been checked and cleaned professionally.
8 Steps to Recovery

Step 6: Clean Up the Mess

✓ Make sure your work area is well ventilated.
✓ Use one bucket for your cleaning solution, one for your rinse water. Replace the rinse water frequently.
✓ Use cleaning products with caution. Bleach should not be mixed with other household products, especially ammonia, because a poisonous gas will form.
✓ Wash exposed skin frequently and wear rubber gloves to protect your hands.
✓ Wash with chlorine bleach or a disinfectant. Add one tablespoon of liquid chlorine bleach to one gallon of water.

Cleaning Supply Checklist:
- Brooms, mops, brushes, sponges
- Buckets, hose
- Rubber gloves
- Face mask
- Rags
- Cleaning products
- Disinfectants
- Trash bags
- Hairdryer

Step 7: Rebuild and "Disasterproof" Your House

⇒ Relocate your home and family to a safe location outside of a flood hazard area.
⇒ Elevate your home above flood level.
⇒ Build floodwalls or berms to protect your home against the floodwaters.
⇒ Seal the building to keep floodwaters out.
⇒ Modify the building so floodwaters

Step 8: Prepare for Next Time

✓ Develop an emergency plan.
✓ Determine escape routes & central meeting location.
✓ Plan for pets and special needs.
✓ Prepare an emergency supply kit.

Visit www.ready.gov for more information.
Prevention Tips to Avoid Fraud During Recovery

⇒ Be alert to phone calls and door-to-door solicitors that offer quick repairs or promise to speed up insurance claims.
⇒ Honest companies and employees will have proper identification and insignias on their vehicles or uniforms.
⇒ There should be no high pressure sale tactics such as "The offer is at a special price only if you act now."
⇒ Get a written estimate and insist on a written contract with written guarantees.
⇒ Check references. A reliable contractor will provide names of previous customers.
⇒ Never pay for a service in advance.
⇒ Residents should not pay anyone who claims to represent FEMA for any services or assessments. FEMA does not charge a fee for home damage assessments. Residents are advised to be aware of this possible scam. If you have been contacted by someone who you feel is acting as a FEMA agent, you should call 911 immediately.

Coping with Trauma
Disaster Distress Hotline: 800-985-5990.

Emotional effects may include:
⇒ Anger
⇒ Fear or wanting revenge
⇒ Restless sleep or nightmares
⇒ Lack of emotion
⇒ Loss of appetite
⇒ Weight loss or gain
⇒ Headaches or mood swings

It may be helpful to:
- Talk with family, friends, priest, minister, spiritual advisor or other counselor about what happened.
- Share your feelings with your children.

Helping Children Cope

- Encourage children to talk.
- Reassure them with love.
- Keep them informed about what is happening.
- Emphasize that they are not responsible for what happened.
- Hold and hug them frequently.
- Encourage them to get back to normalcy.

Get Involved
⇒ Join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) by calling 693-1390.
⇒ Make a donation to a reputable charity.
⇒ Volunteer for the Medical Reserve Corps.
⇒ Give blood.
⇒ Help your neighbors clean up.
⇒ Join a local organization to help with clean up efforts.

This publication was produced by the Department of Community Education in cooperation with the Department of Emergency Management and the Building Officials Office. For more information on any of the topics covered in this guide, please visit www.gloucesterva.info/em