

# Storm Savvy, 2020



*Storm Savvy is a publication of the City of Tarpon Springs  
Building Development Department*

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## Preparing for the Storms

The City of Tarpon Springs is a coastal community. Because it is located on the Gulf of Mexico, the City is subject to periodic flooding. This newsletter will provide you with information that is helpful in preparing for and understanding storm activity.

Flooding is the result primarily from tidal activity (and associated wave action) from the Gulf of Mexico. This is caused by severe weather conditions, including tropical storms and hurricanes. However, not all storms produce high tides.

Flooding has occurred during storms along the coastline including Riverside Drive, Dodecanese Boulevard, Athens Street, Pinellas Avenue and other low lying areas throughout the City.

Recent floods include storms of the 2004 hurricane season as well as Hurricane Katrina (2005), Wilma (2005), Ike (Texas (2008), Hermine (2016) and recently, Irma (2017).

### Flood Warning System

The Pinellas County Emergency Management Department issues flood warnings for Hurricanes and severe weather. Pinellas County's website is: <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency>

Tarpon Springs website is: [http://www.tspd.us/reverse\\_911.html](http://www.tspd.us/reverse_911.html)

This information is available on Local News Channels as well as the Weather Channel and the Pinellas County Government Channel. Check your local TV Guide for channel information. You can also tune in to the City's Local Radio Station AM 1610.

### Before, During and After the Storm

Nobody can stop a flood. But if you are faced with one, there are actions you can take to protect your family and keep your property losses to a minimum.

#### Before a Flood:

- Know your evacuation zone
- Review your family disaster plan
- Get your survival kit ready
- Fill your vehicle(s) gas tank
- Get cash, secure papers and valuables
- Make sure if you take prescription drugs that you have at least a two week supply available
- Gather special supplies for infants, children, seniors and pets
- Fill containers and tubs with water, even if you plan to evacuate you may need the water when you return
- Secure your yard equipment and furniture

- Shutter your windows
- If you live in an evacuation zone, know where you will go and how you will get there.
- If you have special needs, be sure you are registered for a special needs shelter.

#### When the Flood Arrives:

- Do not drive through a flooded area. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else.
- Do not walk through flooded areas. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires.
- Electrocutation is another major source of deaths in floods.
- Electric current passes easily through water.
- Look out for animals- especially snakes. Animals lose their homes in floods, too. They may seek shelter in yours.

#### After the Flood:

- Before entering a building, check for structural damage. Don't go in if there is any chance of the building collapsing.
- Upon entering the building, do not use matches,

cigarette lighters or any other open flames, since gas may be trapped inside. Instead, use a flashlight to light your way.

- Keep power off until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Flood waters pick up sewage and chemicals. If your home has been flooded, protect your family's health by cleaning up your home right away.
- Throw out foods and medicines that may have come into contact with flood water.
- Until local authorities proclaim your water supply to be safe, boil water for drinking and food preparation vigorously for five minutes before using.
- Take steps to reduce your risk of future floods. Make sure to follow local building codes and ordinances when rebuilding.
- Use flood-resistant materials and techniques to protect yourself and your property from future flood damage. Call the City's Building Development Department for questions at 727-942-5617

## Property Protection

- Mark your fuse or breaker box to show the circuits located in floodable areas.
- Consider elevating your house above flood levels.
- Check your building for water entry points. These can be windows, doors and dryer vents.
- These can be protected with low walls or temporary shields.
- Install a floor drain plug, stand-pipe, overhead sewer or sewer backup valve to prevent sewer backup flooding.

More information can be found in *Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2014)*

Copies are available at:

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/480>

NOTE: Some flood protection measures may require a building permit and some measures may not be safe for your building, be sure to call the Building Development Department at (727) 942-5617.

## Sources of Financial Assistance

<https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4294-4297/updates/fact-sheet-what-femas-individual-assistance-program>

Pinellas County Community Development:

727-464-8210

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/>

Florida Department of Community Affairs:

2555 Shumard Oak Blvd

Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100

850-413-9960

## Flood Insurance

One of the most important things you can do to protect your home and family before a flood is to purchase a flood insurance policy.

You can obtain one through your insurance company or agent. Flood insurance is guaranteed through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Your homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage. Don't wait until a flood is coming to purchase your policy. It normally takes 30 days after purchase for a flood insurance policy to go into effect. For more information about the

NFIP and flood insurance,

Contact your insurance company or agent, or call the NFIP at 1-888-

CALL-FLOOD or 1-888-379-9531 or visit:

<https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>

for more information.

Manufacture / Mobile Home Residents

Here are a few **SAFETY TIPS** and contacts.

- Check for loose straps
- Make sure straps are properly aligned and not on an angle
- Check to be sure the proper number of tie-downs have been installed properly
- Be sure support piers are in contact with the frame
- Replace straps or ground anchors that show signs of corrosion or damage
- For additional protection, you may want to consider installing a longitudinal tie-down system which is located at the front and rear of your home

For detailed information about manufactured/mobile homes, contact the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles at 850-617-3004 or visit: <https://www.flhsmv.gov/>

## Important Information

**HURRICANE SEASON IS APPROACHING; CONTACT THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT AT 324 E PINE STREET, OR PHONE 727-942-5604 FOR FLOOD-ZONE INFORMATION. SITE VISITS AND FINANCIAL ADVICE APPOINTMENTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES.**

THE PUBLIC SERVICES, WATER DIVISION IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH ANY FLOODING PROBLEMS AND TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE, CALL (727) 942-5606.

DUMPING IN STREAMS AND WATERWAYS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. THE HOUSE YOU FLOOD MAY BE YOUR OWN. REPORT DUMPING TO CODE ENFORCEMENT AT 727-937-0017

THE CITY IS IN THE PROCESS OF CONDUCTING A REPETITIVE LOSS AREA ANALYSIS (RLAA). THIS IS PART OF THE CITY'S ON-GOING EFFORT TO IDENTIFY AND ANALYZE AREAS THAT HAVE DRAINAGE ISSUES SO THAT FUTURE PROJECTS CAN CORRECT THESE AREAS. IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH FLOODING IN YOUR AREA PLEASE VISIT: <http://www.ctsfl.us/flood%20questionnaire.htm> TO FILL OUT OUR FLOOD PREVENTION PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE. COPIES OF THIS FORM ARE LOCATED IN CITY HALL, LIBRARY AND ONLINE