



**A Bi-Weekly Letter For SONOCO Professionals Working in the Gulf**

**August 20, 2020**

“We don’t develop courage by being happy every day. We develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversity.”

- Barbara De Angelis

“Trials and difficult times can help you become better and move forward, or they can cause you to step backward. It’s how you handle those situations that shows who you can become.”

- Taysom Hill

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

- Michael Jordan



Planning for hurricane season and other potential disasters can be stressful, and because the 2020 hurricane season comes during the coronavirus disease 2019 ([COVID-19](#)) pandemic, it may be especially so.

Public health and emergency response professionals have advice to help you safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter for severe storms while protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. Here are some tips to help you and your family stay safe during hurricane season this year.

**Prepare for hurricane season**

Understand that your planning may be different this year because of COVID-19.

Give yourself more time than usual to prepare emergency food, water, and medicine supplies. Home delivery is the safest choice, but that may not be an option. If you must shop in person, protect your and others’ health when running essential errands.

Protect yourself and others when filling prescriptions. Use mail order delivery or call in your prescription

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ahead of time and use drive-up windows or curbside pickup.

Pay attention to local guidance about updated evacuation plans and shelters, including your pets.

When you check on neighbors and friends, follow social distancing and other CDC guidelines to protect yourself and others.

### **Prepare to evacuate**

Prepare a “go kit” with personal items you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19: hand sanitizer, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes (if available) and two masks for each person. Masks should not be used by children under the age of 2.

Know a safe place to shelter and have several ways to receive weather alerts, such as National Weather Service cell phone alerts, NOAA Weather Radio, or (@NWS) Twitter alerts.

Find out if your local public shelter is open, in case you need to evacuate your home and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Stay safe after a hurricane**

If you need to go to a shelter, follow CDC recommendations for

staying safe and healthy in a public disaster shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Follow guidance from your local public health or emergency management officials on when and where to shelter.

Make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pets. Find out if your disaster shelter will accept pets. Typically, when shelters accommodate pets, the pets are housed in a separate area from people.

Follow safety precautions when using transportation to evacuate. If you have to travel away from your community to evacuate, follow safety precautions for travelers to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

If you will be staying with friends or family outside your household to evacuate from the storm:

### **Staying with friends or family**

Talk to the people you plan to stay with about how you can all best protect yourselves from COVID-19.

Consider if either of your households has someone who is at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including older adults or people who have underlying medical conditions. Make sure everyone knows what they can do to keep them safe from COVID-19.

Follow everyday preventive actions: covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Consider taking extra precautions for people living in close quarters.

Know what to do if someone in your family or in the household you are staying with becomes sick with COVID-19. Take steps to keep your pets safe.

In addition to following guidance for staying safe and healthy after a hurricane, remember:

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You should continue to follow preventive actions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, like washing your hands and wearing a mask during cleanup or when returning home.

If you are injured or ill, contact your medical provider for treatment recommendations. Keep wounds clean to prevent infection. Remember, accessing medical care may be more difficult than usual during the pandemic.

Disasters can cause stress and strong emotions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is natural to feel anxiety, grief, and worry. Coping with these feelings and getting help when you need it will help you, your family, and your community recover.

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [external icon](#) page.

After a hurricane, it's not unusual for rats, mice, and other pests to try to get into your building. Be aware that with restaurant and commercial closures due to COVID-19, there are already reports of increased rodent activity as they try to seek other sources of food. Follow recommendations for keeping pests out of your home.



**The storm might be over, but that doesn't mean the danger is. Keep your loved ones safe after the storm by following CDC safety tips.**

### **Stay out of floodwater.**

Always follow warnings about flooded roads.

Don't drive in flooded areas—cars or other vehicles won't protect you from floodwaters. They can be swept away or may stall in moving water.

If you have to be in or near floodwater, wear a life jacket—especially if the water is rising.

Wash your hands with soap and water if you have been in floodwater. If you don't have soap or water, use alcohol-based wipes or sanitizer.

Floodwater can contain many things that may harm health: germs, dangerous chemicals, human and livestock waste, wild or stray animals, downed power lines, and other contaminants that can make you sick.

### **Never use a wet electrical device.**

Turn off the power at the main breaker in your house if the device is still plugged in. Wait for an electrician to check the device before using it.

If you have to use candles, keep them away from anything that can catch fire. Always stay near lit candles.

Keep a fire extinguisher handy, and make sure your family knows how to use it.

## Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Fuel-burning equipment creates carbon monoxide. This can include equipment like generators, grills, and camp stoves. You can't smell or see it, but if it builds up in your home, it can be fatal.

Never use portable gasoline or coal-burning equipment or camp stoves inside your home or garage. Keep it outside and at least 20 feet from any window, door, or vent.

Use a battery-operated or battery backup CO detector any time you use anything that burns fuel.

If you have a CO detector and it starts beeping, leave your home right away and call 911.

## Be careful near damaged buildings.

Do not enter a damaged building until local authorities determine it is safe.

Leave your home or building if you hear shifting or unusual noises. Strange noises could mean the building is about to fall.

## Stay away from power lines.

Watch out for fallen power lines that may be hanging overhead.

Stay clear of fallen power lines. Call the electric company to report them.

## Protect yourself from animals and pests.

Use insect repellent (bug spray) with DEET or picaridin. Wear long sleeves, pants, and socks when you're outside. Learn how to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites.

Stay away from wild or stray animals after a storm. Call 911 or your public health department to report them. Report dead animals to local officials.

## Drink safe water. Eat safe food.

Throw away food that may have come in contact with flood or storm water. Unsafe food can make you sick even if it looks, smells, and tastes normal. Throw away foods that have not been refrigerated properly; also discard foods with an unusual odor, color, or texture. **When in doubt, throw it out.**

Listen to reports from local officials for advice on water precautions in your home. Do not use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to make baby formula, make ice, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, or wash dishes.

Bottled, boiled, or treated water are safe for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene.

## Wash your hands.

Good basic personal hygiene and handwashing are critical to help prevent the spread of illness and disease. Clean, safe running water is essential for proper hygiene and handwashing. Hygiene is especially important after an emergency like a hurricane, but finding clean, safe running water can sometimes be hard.