

Should I evacuate, go to a shelter or stay home for a storm? Here are some tips for each decision:

EVACUATION

Ahead of time, plan your route and what transportation you will use. Fuel up and check your car. Have extra keys. Take photos of your children with you. Give your **children identification information** to carry with them, including his or her name, date of birth, address, phone numbers, etc. If your children are too young or otherwise unable to speak for themselves, consider writing their name, date of birth and parents' names and phone numbers somewhere on his or her body in indelible marker. Give yourself plenty of time to evacuate. Do not wait until the last minute; traffic will most likely be heavy. Have three (3) to five (5) days of emergency supplies ready to travel. Bring cash; ATMs and credit cards may not work. Secure your home; lock up and turn off utilities at the source. **DO NOT turn off natural gas** at the meter unless instructed. A professional serviceman will be required to turn back on. If evacuation is voluntary and trusted neighbors will be staying behind, advise them of your plans and leave spare keys so they can check on your property. If evacuation is mandatory, let family, friends and neighbors know how you can be reached. Stay tuned to news broadcasts for traffic reports, updates and instructions; **listen to local officials**. Secure loose toys or furniture from the lawn. Don't leave your pet behind. The smell of smoke, high winds or lightning may make your pet more fearful and difficult to load into a crate or carrier. Evacuating before conditions become severe will keep everyone safer and make the process less stressful. The location of your evacuation destination may or may not accept pets, so call 2-1-1 or inquire at a shelter information point. Animal shelters will be set up in various parts of the State on an as-needed basis.

SHELTERING

Plan to **leave early** — preferably during daytime and several hours ahead of your desired arrival time, because travel will be slow due to worsening weather and heavy traffic. Be ready to use an alternate route to your shelter destination, in case primary evacuation routes become too congested. **Bring a map**. Pack what you need, and only what you need. Emergency shelters will not have space available to house your family treasures, so limit your packing only to **necessities**. Let family and friends know exactly which shelter you plan to use and where it is located. Make a plan to get in touch and let loved ones know you've arrived safely. Be sure your vehicle is filled with **gas** and in good operating condition. Register at the shelter as soon as you arrive. Follow the shelter guidelines at all times and make sure your children understand the rules as well.

STAYING HOME

Designate alternate locations for children in case adults are unable to make it home. **Secure your home**. If severe weather is approaching, you may want to board windows, bring in outdoor furniture, minimizing what could become flying debris. If a bio-threat, chemical or toxic spill is likely, consider whether you want to cover windows and doors with plastic sheeting. Have your family survival kit ready at all times. Stay tuned to radio and television news broadcasts; **listen for instructions from local officials**. Limit phone use to important calls and emergency communication. Make sure you have food and water and other supplies to last **72 hours**. Use the checklist on pages 5 and 6 to prepare your disaster kit. Prepare for **loss of communications** and **electricity**. Ensure you have blankets and medical supplies on hand. Stay in **high places** in case of flooding; in the case of high winds, stay away from **walls**.

Emergency response may be limited when sustained wind speeds reach 35-45 mph.