



## **Pinellas County declares state of local emergency**

*Mandatory evacuation orders start at 6 a.m. Friday; shelters to open at noon*

- Mandatory evacuations of all of Level A
- All mobile home parks (countywide) included
- Level A special needs transportation begins at noon
- Additional evacuations up to Level C may be ordered to start on Saturday. Levels B and C may leave at residents' choice prior to the order.

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners has declared a state of local emergency and authorized county officials to begin mandatory evacuations at 6 a.m. Friday for Level A and residents with special needs. Level A includes coastal residents and those in low-lying areas, as well as all mobile homes in every part of the county.

Residents in these areas will have from 6 a.m., Friday, through 8 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10, to evacuate their homes.

Emergency shelters will open at noon on Friday. Open shelter locations will be as follows:

- Tarpon Springs Middle School (501 N. Florida Ave., Tarpon Springs)
- Palm Harbor University High School (1900 Omaha St., Palm Harbor)
- Dunedin Highland Middle School (70 Patricia Ave., Dunedin)\*
- Oak Grove Middle School (1370 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater)\*
- Largo High School (410 Missouri Ave., Largo)
- Gibbs High School (850 34<sup>th</sup> St. South, St. Petersburg)
- John Hopkins Middle School (701 16<sup>th</sup> St. South, St. Petersburg)\*

\*Special Needs/Pet-Friendly Shelter

Evacuation notifications will be announced via Alert Pinellas, Ready Pinellas, the county website ([www.pinellascounty.org](http://www.pinellascounty.org)), social media and through local media. Emergency shelter openings will also be announced through these channels.

As county officials continue to monitor Hurricane Irma, additional evacuations may be announced for Saturday up to Level C, if necessary.

A decision will be made Friday evening based on the 5 p.m. weather advisory. Additional information will be made available to the local media and the public.

The National Weather Service is forecasting Hurricane Irma to make landfall in Florida by Sunday. While the storm's exact path and potential impact on Pinellas County is not yet certain, evacuations are planned to ensure citizens have adequate time to leave those areas that could be threatened.

**Ways to find your evacuation zone:**

- Visit [www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone](http://www.pinellascounty.org/knowyourzone)
- Download the Ready Pinellas app, or the Pinellas County Doing Things mobile app.
- Call (727) 453-3150 and enter your 10-digit home phone number (must be from a landline)

Residents can also call the Citizen Information Center at (727) 464-4333 to get preparedness information including how to look up their evacuation zone. Spanish-speaking call-takers are available. The CIC will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. today.

**Shelter options:**

Residents ordered to evacuate should consider the following shelter options:

- Stay with family members or at a hotel in a non-evacuation zone
- Stay at an emergency shelter; information will be provided at [www.pinellascounty.org](http://www.pinellascounty.org)
- If you have special needs, be sure your caregiver begins to implement your plan. If you have no other options, register for special needs transportation by calling (727) 464-4333 or by contacting the local fire department. You may also travel to a special needs shelter on your own.
- If you have a pet and will need to stay at a pet-friendly shelter, you must register ahead of time. Visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/petpreparedness.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/petpreparedness.htm)

When planning to evacuate, residents are advised to consider evacuating a short distance (tens of miles, not hundreds of miles) to avoid the impacts of potential storm surge, significant rainfall flooding, and unsafe structures (mobile homes). Consider staying in safer structures that have window and door protection for hurricanes.

If your plans are to evacuate out of the area, please be aware of the uncertainty of the track of Hurricane Irma and that all of Florida is presently in the threat area. When evacuating, people should safely use real time traffic apps on their smart phones, such as Florida 511, to find the best route if roads become congested.

Barrier island residents who have registered for Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Emergency Access Permit are reminded to bring the permit with them when evacuating.

Stay tuned for weather updates through weather alert radios, local media outlets, the county website ([www.pinellascounty.org](http://www.pinellascounty.org)) and county social media accounts; search hashtag #PinellasIrma.

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