

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE



BAY COUNTY *Florida*
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On October 10, 2018, Bay County was devastated by Category 5 Hurricane Michael. As the then third-strongest storm ever to strike the United States, Michael caused billions of dollars in damage and left a lasting impact on our community.

This guide aims to prepare both residents and visitors for the worst, whether it be a natural or man-made emergency. Preparation is essential to safeguarding lives and minimizing

property loss, and this publication offers practical steps and expert advice to help ensure the safety of residents and visitors should a disaster strike.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners, along with the Bay County Emergency Services team, remains committed to providing responsive, effective, and efficient services to support our community.



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ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners is a five-member governing board elected at-large to represent the citizens of Bay County. The board defines the role and guides the actions of the organization in ensuring the future of Bay County. The commission hires a county manager to implement policies established by the board and to manage the operations of the county. The commission annually adopts the millage rate and approves the budget, which determines the revenue and expenditures necessary to operate all county departments. The powers and duties of the county commission are established by Florida Statutes, Chapter 125.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners thanks the Bay County Chamber of Commerce and its 2018-19 Leadership Bay Class for spearheading the development of this guide. Their dedication made this valuable resource possible and helped strengthen our community's preparedness.

THE 5 COUNTY DISTRICTS



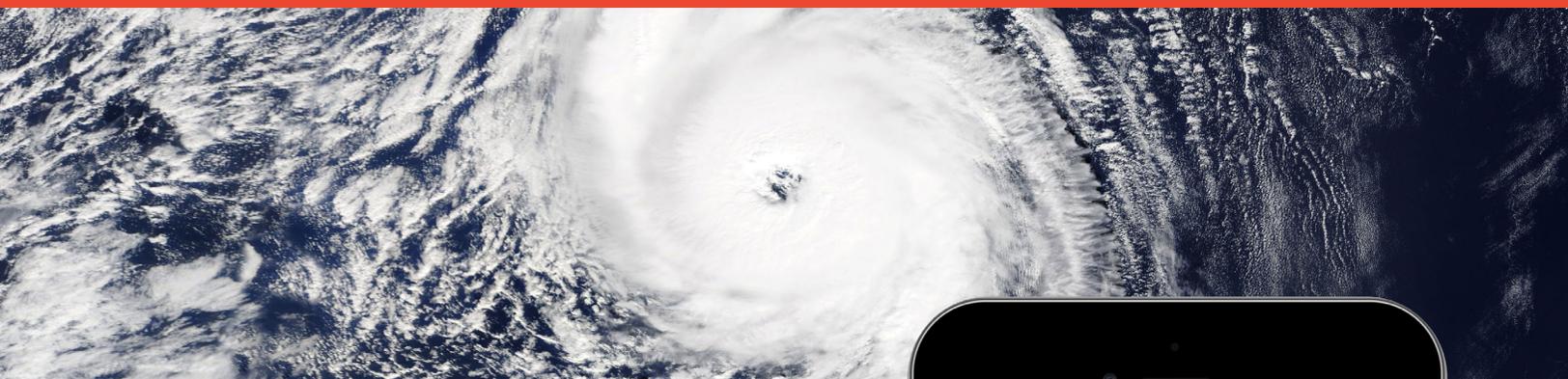
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WHEN DISASTERS STRIKES, HOW WILL YOU AND YOUR FAMILY RECEIVE NOTIFICATIONS?

Protect yourself and your loved ones by signing up for AlertBay emergency notifications.

Stay informed during emergencies and critical events by enrolling in the AlertBay notification system. This reliable service delivers timely alerts about severe weather, unexpected road closures, missing persons, evacuations, and other vital community updates.

Subscribers can choose how they receive alerts, via home or mobile phone, email, text message, and more, ensuring important information is delivered quickly and effectively. AlertBay also allows users to select specific cities of interest, providing targeted updates relevant to their location and minimizing unnecessary notifications.

Powered by Alert Florida, this program serves as the official community notification system for unincorporated Bay County and the following cities:

- › Callaway
- › Lynn Haven
- › Mexico Beach
- › Panama City
- › Panama City Beach
- › Parker
- › Springfield

TO SIGN UP FOR ALERTBAY, VISIT ALERTBAY.ORG.

For additional questions about AlertBay, please email Bay County Emergency Services at bcem@baycountyfl.gov.





A family hurricane plan or outline specifying how a family is going to prepare for a hurricane should be in place before hurricane season begins. To establish a family hurricane plan:

- › Visit Bay County's website at <https://www.baycountyfl.gov/511/Evacuation-Zones> to see if you live in an evacuation zone. Learn your zone, evacuation routes, and nearby shelters now so you are ready to act quickly if needed.
- › Sign up for AlertBay or the Emergency Alert System (EAS). A weather radio also provides emergency alerts.
- › Before a storm hits, decide where your family will go. Will you stay at home, with friends or relatives, at a shelter, or in a hotel? Choose backup options in case your first choice is not available. If you are not in an evacuation zone and plan to shelter in place, notify friends and family of your location.
- › Plan ahead for how you will communicate with family members if you lose power, as phone calls, texts, emails, and social media may become unreliable. During emergencies, phone lines are often overloaded, making it difficult to place calls. Text messaging is usually faster and more reliable in these situations. Establish a communication plan in advance, including a designated contact person outside the affected area and backup methods of staying in touch.
- › If you or a loved one has special needs, make arrangements in advance. Register with the Florida Department of Emergency Management at <https://snr.flhealthresponse.com> to ensure the right support is available during an emergency.
- › Ask your employer about work expectations during a hurricane or other emergency. If you have children, stay in touch with their school for updates on early dismissals or closures.
- › Create a list of essential supplies for your emergency preparedness kit, taking into account each person's specific needs, including prescription medications. Page 13 of this guide includes a disaster supply kit checklist.
- › Store important documents, such as birth certificates, insurance policies, wills, bank records, licenses, and property deeds, in a secure, easily accessible location. Create password-protected digital copies for added protection. Photograph and document your home's contents, and store this evidence with your important documents. Also, identify potential hazards around your home and take steps to secure them before a storm arrives.
- › Regularly go over your emergency plan with all family and household members. Practice it together so everyone knows what to do and where to go when a storm or other emergency strikes.



// PREPARING TO EVACUATE



PREPARE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT FOR YOUR CAR TO INCLUDE:

- › Jumper cables
- › Map
- › Flares or reflective triangle
- › Fire extinguisher
- › Tools
- › Flashlight and spare batteries
- › First aid kit
- › Blanket/sleeping bag
- › NOAA weather radio
- › Food/water
- › Car cell phone charger
- › Games or books to entertain children

BE TECH READY

- › Register for AlertBay notifications at alertbay.org.
- › Download the FEMA App.
- › Be sure to “Like” or “Follow” the social media sites for Bay County, Florida Emergency Services, Bay County Sheriff, Bay District Schools, and local media outlets.
- › Save important documents in password-protected electronic files or on a thumb drive.

PLANNING AHEAD IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT YOU CAN EVACUATE QUICKLY AND SAFELY IF NEEDED.

The National Weather Service (NWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), specifically the National Hurricane Center (NHC), issue hurricane watches and warnings based on the potential threat from a tropical cyclone. A hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds (74 mph or higher). A hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.

PRIOR TO, OR IMMEDIATELY WHEN A HURRICANE WATCH IS ISSUED, YOU SHOULD:

- › Review your evacuation route and possible destinations. During evacuations, traffic will be heavy and travel times may be longer than usual.
- › Withdraw cash from the bank, as ATMs and card systems may be down during power outages, and banks may not reopen immediately after the storm.
- › Fill the gas tank of every vehicle.
- › Gather emergency contacts and inform friends and family of your intended destination if evacuating.
- › Monitor TV, radio, or trusted news sources for weather and local updates.
- › Fill sinks, bathtubs, and washing machines with water for non-drinking uses upon your return such as washing or toilet flushing.
- › Set refrigerator and freezer thermostats to their coldest settings in preparation for possible power outages. Store clean water in sealed containers inside.
- › Cover windows using hurricane shutters or 5/8-inch exterior-grade plywood, pre-cut and ready to install.
- › Park extra vehicles under cover or on higher ground.
- › Bring inside any loose outdoor items that could become projectiles in high winds (e.g., garbage cans, bicycles, lawn furniture). Secure items that must stay outside, such as propane tanks and grills.
- › Gather and take critical documents: prescriptions, medical records, identification, birth certificates, Social Security cards, marriage licenses, insurance policies, tax records, wills, titles, deeds, banking info, passports, credit card details, and proof of residence.
- › Photograph or inventory your belongings room by room, including valuable items like furniture, jewelry, collectibles, electronics, firearms, etc.

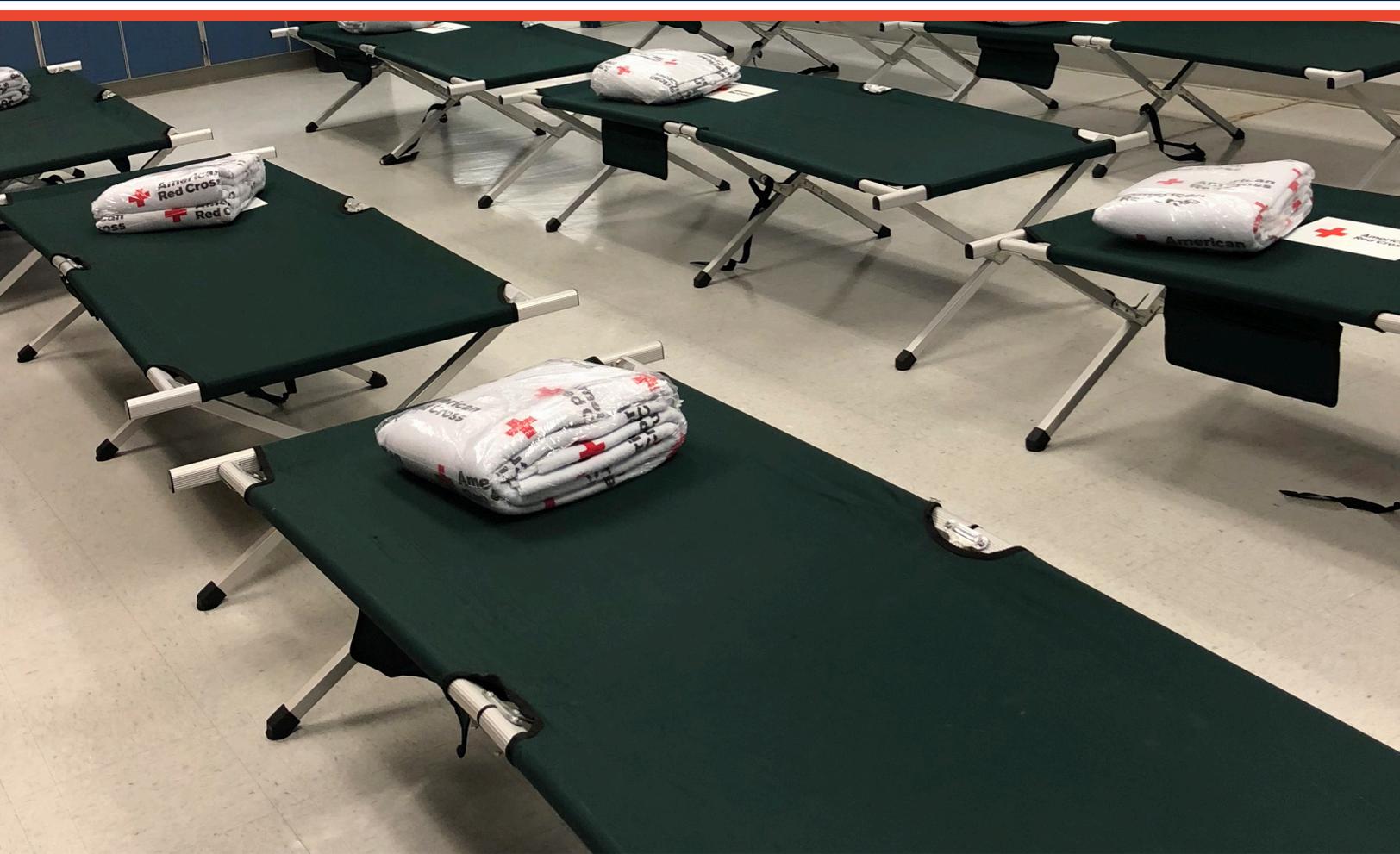


When officials issue an evacuation order, it is important all residents and visitors leave the evacuation area as directed. Evacuations are typically ordered for low-lying areas within the greatest potential path of the storm.

IF YOU DECIDE TO VOLUNTARILY LEAVE OR ARE ORDERED TO EVACUATE THE AREA:

- › Leave as early as possible.
- › Pack your vehicle with necessities: clothing, toiletries, medications, cash, ID, water, and food.
- › Place important documents in the vehicle.
- › Load pets and their supplies. (Note: Not all shelters accept pets; only service animals may be allowed.)
- › If safe, turn off gas, electricity, and water to your home.
- › Unplug appliances and electronics (e.g., radios, computers, televisions) to prevent damage or electrical shock when power is restored.
- › Lock all doors and windows.
- › Load your emergency supply kit into the vehicle (e.g., jumper cables, tools, bottled water, snacks, flashlight, flares, first aid kit, matches, blanket/sleeping bag, rain gear, extra clothes).
- › Tune your radio for emergency updates on evacuation routes and shelter locations.
- › Leave early to avoid being trapped by severe weather.
- › Notify out-of-area family members of your destination.
- › Leave a note at home with details on your departure time and destination.
- › Check on neighbors who may need a ride.
- › Follow official evacuation routes only. Do not take shortcuts, as alternate roads may be blocked. Traffic may be heavy..
- › Never drive around barricades.
- › Never transport gasoline inside your vehicle in any type of container.

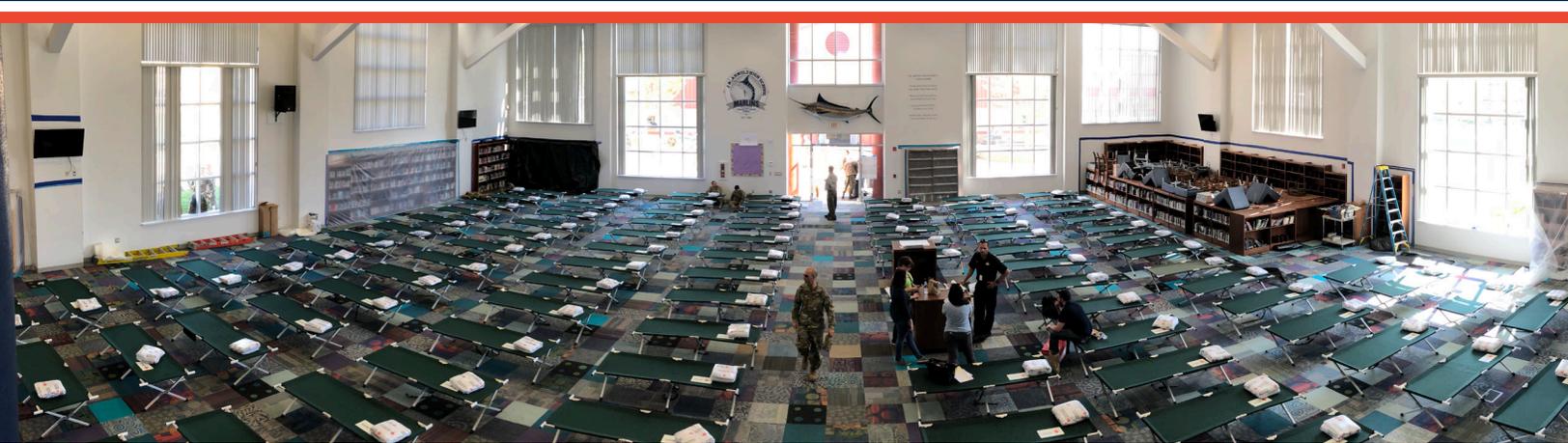
// IF ORDERED TO SHELTER IN PLACE



THOSE DIRECTLY THREATENED MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN EVACUATING OR SHELTERING IN PLACE.

If you find that you do not have enough time to evacuate, staying in place may be the best option. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), sheltering in place is generally recommended when immediate protection in your home is necessary.

- › Seek shelter in a safe room. Stay in the most interior room of a building, away from windows and flying debris, such as a closet or bathroom. Many injuries during hurricanes are caused by flying glass or debris.
- › Do not go outside during the eye of the storm. Listen to NOAA weather radio or local media and wait for authorities to confirm it is safe. After the storm, avoid walking or driving through standing water, as it may contain hazards like power lines or debris.
- › Ensure there is a clear path to exit in case of fire.
- › If you rely on an elevator, have a backup plan to exit, such as stairs, windows, or ramps, in case the power goes out.
- › Ensure you have enough supplies to last at least seven days per household member. Page 13 of this guide includes a disaster supply kit checklist.
- › Be sure to have cash, as ATMs may not work without power.
- › Test your generator before the storm hits. Ensure you have enough gasoline to run it until power is restored. Only use the generator outdoors and to power essential items.
- › For those with special needs, make sure you have backup medical equipment that does not rely on electricity, as power outages are likely.
- › Keep a fire extinguisher nearby, and use hand-cranked, solar-powered, or battery-operated lamps and flashlights.
- › Maintain a list of contacts who can assist with evacuation if necessary.



BAY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS A SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER.

Bay County residents with medical, physical, or cognitive conditions that may require extra assistance during emergencies are encouraged to register in advance at <https://snr.flhealthresponse.com>. This voluntary registry helps local emergency responders plan for and support individuals with special needs in the event of disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, disease outbreaks, or extended power outages. Registration ensures appropriate resources and shelter assignments can be considered during an emergency response. The Florida Department of Health will determine if a registrant qualifies for a special needs or general population shelter.

People who may qualify for a special needs shelter include individuals who are elderly and live alone, are

unable to walk or move without assistance, use oxygen or life-sustaining medical devices, are visually or hearing impaired, or require medications and caregiving support. For instance, during a hurricane-related power outage, individuals reliant on electricity-dependent medical devices could face life-threatening circumstances if not identified in advance. While special needs shelters offer critical support, conditions may be crowded and basic.

Those with physical and mental health needs may be eligible for special needs shelters; however, each evacuee must be accompanied by a caregiver and must bring their own medical supplies, medications, and necessary equipment. Shelters do not supply caregivers or specialized equipment. Registrants must also provide a list of emergency contacts. Individuals living in assisted living facilities are not eligible for the registry, as the responsibility for their emergency planning lies with the facility.

STATE OF FLORIDA RULE 64-3.020 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTERS.

- (1)** A person may qualify for a special needs shelter if:
 - (a)** They have a special medical need;
 - (b)** Their care requirements go beyond what general shelters provide; and
 - (c)** Their condition:
 1. Is medically stable; and
 2. Does not exceed the shelter's ability to support their needs.
- (2)** Special needs shelters may accept individuals beyond these criteria at their discretion.
- (3)** Eligibility and shelter capacity are determined by local emergency management and the county health department or their designees.

Authority: 381.0303(6)(a), Florida Statutes. Rule Effective 11-21-07.

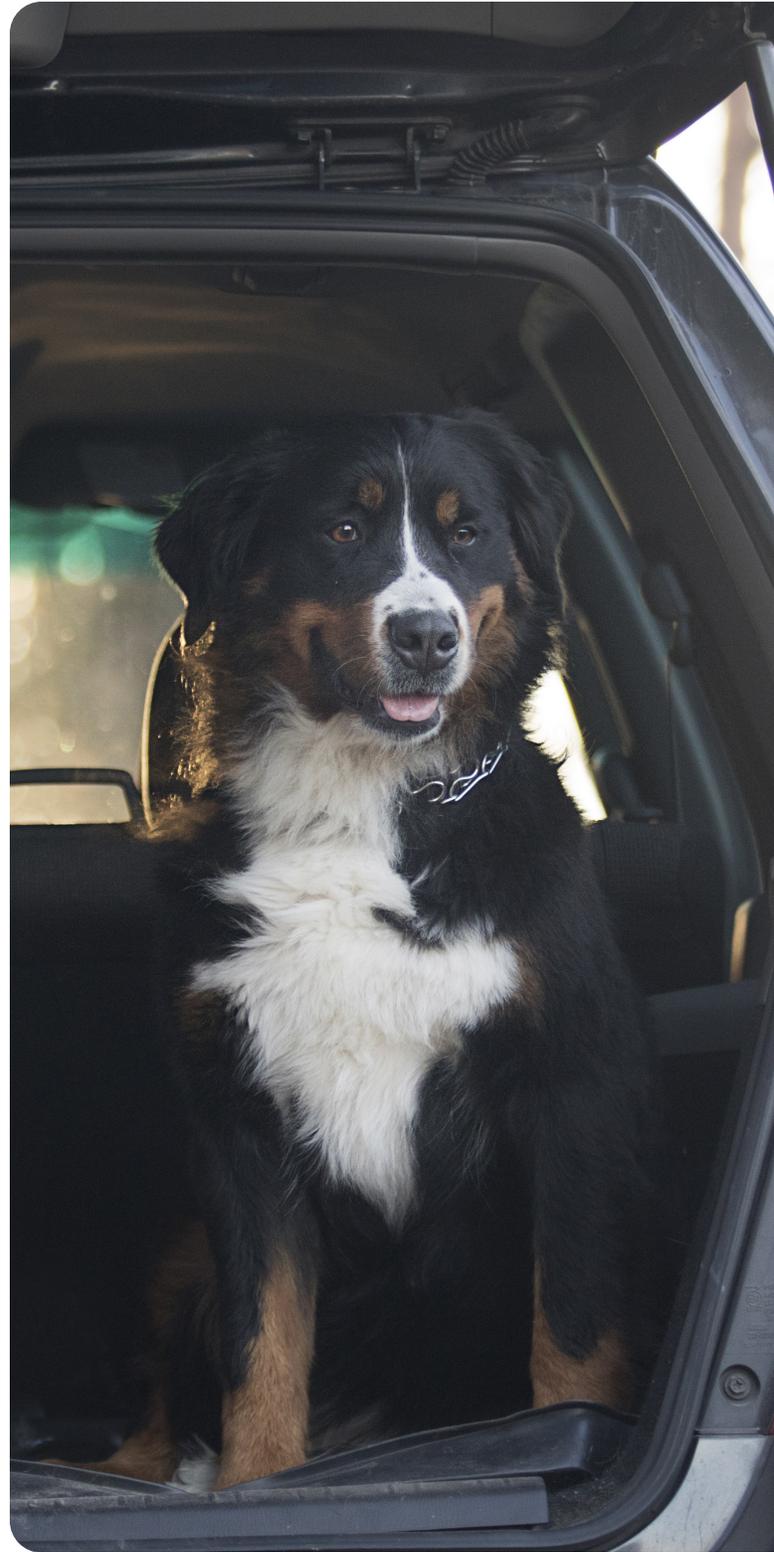


DO YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR PETS IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY?

Pets are family, too. Without a plan, you risk their safety and yours. Include pets in your emergency preparations to keep everyone protected.

A few simple steps can help keep you and your pet safe in an emergency:

- Keep identification on all pets, even those that stay indoors. A collar with an ID tag and a microchip are essential for helping reunite you with your pet. Include your cell phone number on the ID tag, and keep your microchip registration up to date.
- Identify potential shelters for your pet. Contact Bay County Emergency Services for the most current information about pet-friendly shelters. Also, make a list of hotels outside of Bay County that accept pets. While not all hotels allow animals, some may make exceptions during evacuations.
- Keep your pet's vaccinations current and have records readily available. Shelters and hotels may require proof of vaccinations.
- Purchase a pet carrier suitable for safely transporting your pet.
- Prepare an emergency/travel kit for each pet. Your kit should include:
 - A recent photo of your pet in case you become separated
 - Medications, medical records, and microchip registration
 - A leash and an extra collar
 - Food and water bowls
 - Bottled water and a seven-day supply of food
 - Waste disposal supplies
 - Emergency contact information
 - Pet first aid supplies
 - Favorite toys and treats
- Always evacuate with your pet. If it's not safe for you to stay, it's not safe for them either.
- Bring pets inside at the first sign of a storm or disaster. Animals can sense danger and may become disoriented, increasing the risk of them running away. Keep them in sight as much as possible to reassure them.
- After a disaster, help your pet adjust. Walk them on a leash to reorient them, especially if familiar landmarks or smells have changed.



IN AN EMERGENCY, PETS WILL NEED YOU MORE THAN EVER. PLAN AHEAD AND KEEP THEM SAFE.

TAKE SAFETY STEPS DURING CLEANUP AFTER A HURRICANE, FLOOD, OR OTHER NATURAL DISASTER. FOLLOW THESE CLEANUP TIPS AND MONITOR THE INTERNET, RADIO, OR TELEVISION FOR UP-TO-DATE EMERGENCY INFORMATION.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

- › Get rest when needed. Always work in teams of at least two people when lifting or moving heavy or bulky objects.
- › Reach out for support from family, friends, counselors, or therapists as needed.

TAKE PRECAUTIONS WHEN USING A CHAINSAW:

- › Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a chainsaw. Wear appropriate protective gear, and make sure bystanders stay at a safe distance.
- › Avoid power lines. Use extra caution when cutting trees or branches that are bent, twisted, or pinned under other objects.
- › If using an electric chainsaw, be extremely careful to avoid electrical shock.

PREVENT MOLD GROWTH:

- › Begin cleanup and drying as soon as possible, ideally within 24 to 48 hours after flooding ends.
- › Open doors and windows to air out your home. Use fans to help dry wet areas, and position fans to blow air outside.
- › Throw away anything you can't clean or dry quickly, such as mattresses, carpeting and padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, stuffed animals,

baby toys, pillows, foam items, cosmetics, books, and paper products.

- › Remove and discard drywall and insulation that came into contact with sewage or floodwater.
- › Thoroughly clean all wet surfaces and items with hot water and laundry or dish detergent. This includes flooring, walls, concrete, molding, furniture, countertops, appliances, and plumbing fixtures.
- › Clean mold with a bleach solution: mix 1 cup of household bleach with 1 gallon of water. Never use bleach in an enclosed space. Always ventilate by opening windows and doors.
- › Wear personal protective equipment, including goggles, an N-95 respirator, and protective gloves, to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin.
- › Clean or discard all items with mold.

OTHER PRECAUTIONS:

- › Floodwaters can contain harmful bacteria from sewage and waste. Avoid ingesting anything that may have come into contact with floodwater. If you have open cuts or sores, wash them thoroughly with soap and water and apply antibiotic ointment to help prevent infection.
- › Avoid entering damaged buildings until a building inspector or other authority has declared them safe. Return during daylight for better visibility, especially if power is out.
- › If you smell gas or suspect a leak, evacuate immediately and contact emergency services. Do not use lights, matches, or any device that could cause a spark. Wait for official clearance before returning.
- › Never use generators or fuel-

GET THE RIGHT SAFETY GEAR:

- › Hard hats
- › Goggles
- › N95 masks
- › Heavy work gloves
- › Waterproof boots with steel toes and insoles (not just steel shanks)
- › Earplugs or protective headphones
- › At least two fire extinguishers
- › If sewage is involved, make sure to wear rubber boots, gloves, and goggles

burning devices (gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal) inside your home, garage, basement, camper, or near open doors or windows. Carbon monoxide is odorless and deadly—it can build up quickly and poison people and pets.

- › If electrical systems or equipment are wet or submerged, turn off the power at the main breaker or fuse box. If you need to enter standing water to do so, call a licensed electrician instead.
- › Do not operate electric tools or appliances while standing in water.
- › Do not connect a generator directly to your home's electrical system unless it has an approved automatic transfer switch. Backfeeding can pose serious fire hazards and endanger utility workers.

// FINDING THE BEST CONTRACTORS

BEFORE CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUILDING DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE IF:

- › The contractor is bonded and has a current and valid license, liability insurance and workers' compensation, required documents, and schedule of inspections
- › Any complaints have been filed against the contractor
- › Any other requirements or legal notices pertain to the job



To find the best local contractor, start by seeking recommendations from credible sources such as friends, neighbors, or reputable online review sites. Once you have gathered at least three potential candidates, compare their experience, services, and reputations to determine the best fit for your project.

Ensure each contractor has the appropriate licenses and certifications to perform the work safely and legally. Ask to see examples of completed projects to assess the quality of their work.

REQUESTING BIDS

Start by soliciting detailed, written bids from the contractors on your shortlist. Ensure each bid outlines the full scope of work, materials, estimated timelines, and itemized costs. This will make comparisons easier and help prevent misunderstandings later.

Once you've selected a contractor, require a written contract, regardless of the project size. The contract should clearly include:

- › Contractor's full name, business name, business address, and phone number
- › Contractor's license type and license number
- › Proof of current insurance (liability and workers' compensation)
- › A detailed payment and inspection schedule
- › Complete job plans and specifications
- › Specific types, brands, and grades of materials with an itemized breakdown of total costs
- › Warranties on materials and workmanship
- › Agreed start and completion dates
- › A statement confirming the contractor will obtain all necessary permits

TIP: Make sure the contract specifies milestone payments tied to progress and deadlines. Include every detail, down to the exact materials and finishes, to avoid surprises.

DURING THE PROJECT

- › Confirm the contractor has secured all required permits before work begins.
- › Do not pay more than 10 percent up front, and tie all further payments to project milestones.
- › Avoid committing your full budget in the contract, reserve an extra 10-15 percent for unexpected costs or changes.
- › Verify both your homeowner's insurance and the contractor's coverage. Keep a copy of the contractor's insurance on file.

FINAL PAYMENT

Only issue the final payment when:

- › The job is 100-percent complete
- › Thorough walkthrough is completed
- › Full satisfaction of the results is achieved

Many contractors may consider a job done before addressing finishing touches. Be diligent and detailed in the final inspection.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- › Never pay in cash
- › Require the contractor pull permits

These practices can expose you to financial risk and legal liability.

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornado intensities are classified on the Fujita Scale with ratings between F0 (weakest) to F5 (strongest). They are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees, and hurling objects through the air. Although severe tornadoes are more common in the plains states, tornadoes have been reported in every state.

PREPARING BEFORE A TORNADO

BUILD AN EMERGENCY KIT AND MAKE A FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN:

In the event your family is not together when a tornado strikes, it is important to have a plan for contacting each other. Compile contact information for relevant family members and keep it handy in a wallet or purse. Do not rely on reaching each other by cell phone, because service may be intermittent or unavailable.

DESIGNATE A FIRST FLOOR "SAFE ROOM" IN YOUR HOME:

Since few Florida homes have basements, select an interior room without windows, such as a bathroom or walk-in closet. If possible, have a mattress readily available in your safe room to serve as a barrier against flying debris and wind in case your roof develops a hole or blows off completely. Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes.

BE READY TO ACT QUICKLY:

- If a tornado watch is issued, tune in to a NOAA weather radio or a local news station for information and updates.
- Pay attention to changing weather conditions and be on the lookout for the following warning signs:
 - A dark, greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud that is rotating
 - A loud roar, similar to a freight train

RECOVERING AFTER A TORNADO

- Continue listening to local news or a NOAA weather radio for updated information and instructions.
- If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Use battery-powered or solar charged flashlights when examining buildings. Do NOT use candles.
- If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out of the building quickly and call the gas company or fire department.

 EF SCALE / TORNADO STRENGTH		
EF RATING	WIND SPEED	EXPECTED DAMAGE
EF-0	65-85 mph	LIGHT DAMAGE Peels surface off some roofs; some damage to gutters or siding; branches broken off trees; shallow-rooted trees pushed over. Confirmed tornadoes with no reported damage (i.e., those that remain in open fields) are always rated EF0.
EF-1	86-110 mph	MODERATE DAMAGE Roofs severely stripped; mobile homes overturned or badly damaged; loss of exterior doors; windows and other glass broken.
EF-2	111-135 mph	CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE Roofs torn off from well-constructed houses; foundations of frame homes shifted; mobile homes completely destroyed; large trees snapped or uprooted; light-object missiles generated; cars lifted off ground.
EF-3	136-165 mph	SEVERE DAMAGE Entire stories of well-constructed houses destroyed; severe damage to large buildings such as shopping malls; trains overturned; trees debarked; heavy cars lifted off the ground and thrown; structures with weak foundations are badly damaged.
EF-4	166-200 mph	DEVASTATING DAMAGE Well-constructed and whole frame houses completely leveled; some frame homes may be swept away; cars and other large objects thrown and small missiles generated.
EF-5	>200 mph	INCREDIBLE DAMAGE Strong-framed, well-built houses leveled off foundations and swept away; steel-reinforced concrete structures are critically damaged; tall buildings collapse or have severe structural deformations; cars, trucks, and trains can be thrown approximately 1 mile (1.6 km).

FACT:

Everyone lives in a flood zone! Floods can happen anytime and anywhere, making flooding the nation's most common and costly natural disaster. Hurricanes and tropical storms pose the most dangerous flood threats to our coastal areas, but these storms are not the only risk. In Bay County, flooding typically results from frequent and often intense large-scale weather systems. Bay County averages about 80 thunderstorms annually, giving us an average rainfall of 61 inches.

FACT:

Bay County residents living on or near our numerous bay systems, lakes, coastal, and bay areas in high-risk flood zones are not the only ones at peril. In fact, more than 20 percent of flood claims come from properties outside of the high-risk flood zone. It is imperative to know your flood zone to better prepare and protect yourself, your home, and your business.

FACT:

Only flood insurance protects you from damages due to flood waters. Traditional homeowner's and renter's insurance policies do not cover damages or losses due to flooding. FEMA estimates that just one inch of water can cause \$25,000 of damage to a home. Flood insurance can be the difference between recovering and being financially devastated. Flood insurance coverage for homeowners in moderate- to low-risk zones can be as low as \$325 per year. Flood policies may have a 30-day waiting period to take effect. To purchase flood insurance, contact your insurance agent. For additional assistance, call the National Flood Insurance Program Help Center at 1-800-427-4661 or visit online at www.floodsmart.gov.

FACT:

You can help reduce the risk of flooding. Do not place any debris, lawn, trash or otherwise in stormwater inlets, ditches, and other waterways. Not only does it violate county code, but dumping into the drainage system can easily create blockages preventing rain from properly draining which could create otherwise preventable flooding.





Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. According to the National Weather Service, more people die from lightning strikes in Florida every year than in any other state. Thunderstorms are dangerous because they can strike at any time of year and often develop rapidly. In addition to producing deadly lightning, they can trigger flash floods and even spawn tornadoes.

When preparing for thunderstorms, it is important to take proactive steps to protect personal property. Trim or remove trees and branches that could fall and cause damage. Stay informed by closely monitoring weather reports and warnings. Most importantly, have an emergency plan in place to respond quickly and safely if severe weather strikes.

IMPORTANT FACTS TO REMEMBER REGARDING THUNDERSTORMS AND LIGHTNING:

- › If thunder is audible, lightning is close enough to strike. Take immediate precautions.
- › If in a body of water, get out immediately and seek shelter.
- › A sturdy building is the safest place during a thunderstorm. Otherwise, a fully enclosed vehicle is the next best option. If neither is available, find a low-lying area, crouch down, and become as small as possible. Do not lie flat. Touch the ground as little as possible.
- › If outdoors, do not take shelter under isolated trees.
- › Avoid open fields, hilltops, beaches, tall structures, and objects that conduct electricity, such as metal fences and power lines.
- › If indoors, stay away from windows and doors. Avoid using running water, landline phones, televisions, and other plugged-in electronics, as they can conduct electricity. Do not lean against or lie on concrete floors or walls. Use only cell phones or other battery-powered equipment if necessary.

The **"30-30" rule** is a simple way to stay safe during thunderstorms. Count the seconds between seeing lightning and hearing thunder. If the time is 30 seconds or less, lightning is close enough to pose a danger. Seek shelter immediately. Remember, if thunder is audible, lightning is in range. Shelter until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last clap of thunder.

After a thunderstorm has passed, stay alert and avoid flooded roads, fallen trees, and downed power lines. Report any hazardous conditions to local authorities to help ensure the safety of others.



Bay County is not typically associated with cold weather; however, overnight temperatures in January average 46.5 degrees. Because Florida residents are not accustomed to colder temperatures, many homes are built with minimal heating and insulation.

COMMON COLD WEATHER TERMS

FREEZE – When the surface air temperature is below freezing (32 degrees) over a widespread area for a significant amount of time. A freeze is a term used for the conditions when these low air temperatures injure vegetation.

FREEZE WARNING – The National Weather Service issues freeze warnings to make agricultural interests in the public aware of anticipated freeze conditions over a large area.

FROST – A covering of ice crystals produced by moisture in the air directly on a surface at or below freezing.

HARD FREEZE WARNING – The National Weather Service issues a hard freeze warning to alert the public and agricultural interests of expected widespread freezes below 28°F lasting four hours or more.

HYPOTHERMIA – This condition occurs when the body reaches a point of 95 degrees. The signs include shivering, exhaustion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, and drowsiness. For suspected hypothermia, get to a warm room and wrap with blankets. Warm the center of the body first, chest, neck, head, and groin.

WIND CHILL – The temperature that it feels like when the wind blows.

HOW CAN YOU BE PREPARED? REMEMBER THE 5 “Ps”

PEOPLE – Stay indoors whenever possible. Outside, wear several layers of loose-fitting, warm clothing. Include a windproof coat, hat, mittens, scarf, and waterproof boots. Children and older adults are especially vulnerable in cold weather.

PETS – Provide shelter, ideally indoors. Always check under a car’s hood. Animals may seek warmth there. Use plastic bowls for food and water to prevent injury from frozen metal.

PLANTS – Bring potted plants indoors. For outdoor plants, cover them with burlap or sheets to protect against frost and freezing temperatures.

PIPES/PUMPS – Allow faucets served by exposed pipes to drip slowly. Disconnect and store hoses indoors. Insulate any exposed pipes, such as backflow preventers, to prevent freezing.

PRACTICING FIRE SAFETY – Check that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly. Have fireplaces and chimneys inspected and cleaned. Use space heaters and open flames with caution to prevent fires.

// HEAT-RELATED DANGERS

Each year in Florida, thousands of individuals experience heat-related illnesses. Those at highest risk include older adults, young children, and individuals with chronic medical conditions or mental health challenges. However, even young, healthy, and physically active people can be affected, especially when engaging in vigorous activities during hot weather.

The good news: **heat-related illnesses are preventable.**

Heat-related illnesses occur when the body is unable to cool itself effectively. This can lead to elevated internal temperatures, which may damage the brain and other vital organs. While heat stroke and heat exhaustion are the most serious forms, other conditions, such as heat cramps, sunburn, and heat rash, also pose risks and should be monitored carefully.

HEAT STROKE

Heat stroke is the most severe heat-related condition. It occurs when the body's temperature rises rapidly, often to 104°F (40°C) or higher, and it loses the ability to regulate heat through sweating. This can happen within minutes, typically following prolonged exposure to or intense physical exertion in high temperatures.

Warning signs of heat stroke may include:

- › High body temperature (104°F or higher)
- › Hot, dry skin (lack of sweating)
- › Confusion or disorientation
- › Rapid pulse
- › Seizures or loss of consciousness

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. If not treated promptly, it can cause lasting damage to the brain, heart, kidneys, and muscles. Delayed treatment significantly increases the risk of serious complications or death.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat exhaustion is a less severe, but still serious, heat-related illness. It typically results from extended exposure to high temperatures combined with insufficient or unbalanced fluid intake. Dehydration often accompanies heat exhaustion and worsens symptoms.

Common symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- › Heavy sweating
- › Weakness or fatigue
- › Dizziness or fainting
- › Nausea or vomiting
- › Muscle cramps
- › Cool, clammy skin

Although heat exhaustion is considered milder than heat stroke, it requires attention. Without prompt treatment, it can progress to heat stroke.

PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

- › Drink cool beverages that are non-alcoholic and caffeine-free to stay hydrated.
- › Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored clothing.
- › Avoid strenuous activities, especially during peak heat hours.
- › Take regular breaks if outdoors for extended periods.
- › Stay indoors during the hottest parts of the day, typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- › Spend time in air-conditioned environments whenever possible.
- › Cool off with a shower or bath to help lower body temperature.

WHAT TO DO FOR HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

If someone is suffering from severe heat stress, call 9-1-1 immediately and move the person out of direct sunlight into a shaded or cooler environment. Begin cooling the individual by placing cool, damp towels on areas such as the neck and armpits, where blood vessels are close to the surface. Continue to monitor the person's condition closely, aiming to reduce their body temperature to 101 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. If emergency responders are delayed, stay on the line with the 9-1-1 operator and follow any additional instructions to provide care until help arrives. Quick action is critical to prevent serious health complications.





STAYING SAFE IN A TOXIC INCIDENT

In the event of a hazardous materials incident, emergency services will provide instructions to help ensure safety. The following guidelines are designed to help reduce risk and protect residents and visitors.

CAUGHT OUTSIDE: STAY UPSTREAM, UPHILL, AND UPWIND.

DISTANCE: While wind direction and distance can greatly impact safety, a good general rule is to move at least 10 city blocks (approximately half a mile) away from the affected area. In many cases, it may be necessary to evacuate even farther, depending on the severity of the incident.

EVACUATION: If instructed to evacuate because of a hazardous materials emergency, do so immediately. Tune in to local media for specific directions. If possible, close all windows and vents to reduce contamination. If time permits, place a sign on the door indicating all occupants have evacuated.

IN-PLACE SHELTERING: In some circumstances, it is safer to stay indoors. Follow all instructions from local authorities and take the following precautions:

- › Close all windows and doors. Seal gaps and drafty areas with wet towels, blankets, or duct tape.
- › Turn off all ventilation systems, including furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans.

- › If hazardous vapors begin to enter the building, breathe shallowly through a cloth or towel to reduce exposure.

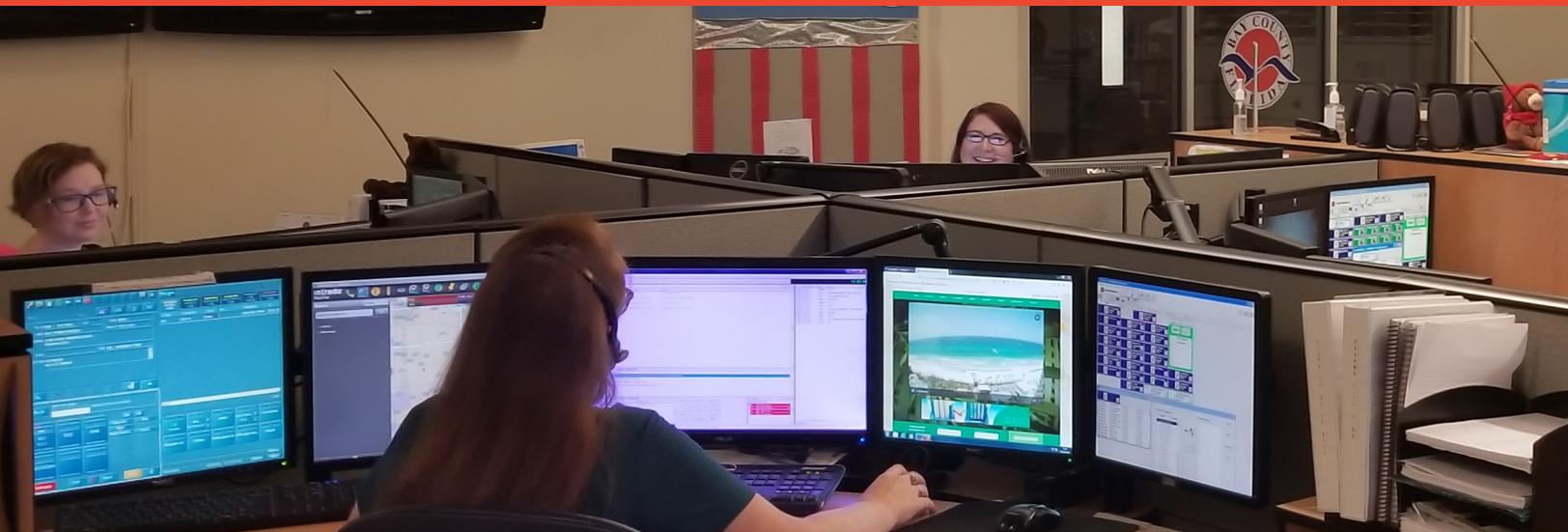
CONTAMINATED: If contamination is suspected and medical assistance is not immediately available, remove all clothing carefully to avoid spreading the substance, shower thoroughly with soap and water, and put on clean, loose-fitting, warm clothing. Seek medical attention as soon as possible. Notify anyone that exposure to a hazardous substance may have occurred so appropriate precautions can be taken. To prevent further contamination, place exposed clothing in a sealed, non-permeable container, ensuring it does not come into contact with other materials, and arrange for proper disposal.

REPORTING A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

In the event of a hazardous materials accident, spill, or leak, call 9-1-1 or the numbers listed below, and provide as much information as possible:

- › Florida State Warning Point: 1 (800) 320-0519
- › National Response Center: 1 (800) 424-8802

// WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT 9-1-1



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN DIALING 9-1-1?

What happens when calling 9-1-1 depends on two main factors:

- › Where you are calling from
- › Whether you are using a landline or a cell phone

The most important thing to remember is that you are speaking with a trained professional ready to help you through your emergency.

HOW IT WORKS IN BAY COUNTY

LANDLINE CALLS:

- › Bay County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) is the Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for all calls made from within the county.
- › Panama City is the designated PSAP for calls made from landlines within Panama City limits.

CELLULAR CALLS:

- › Regardless of your location within Bay County, all cell phone calls to 9-1-1 are routed to BCSO.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE CALL

- › Clearly state the nature of the emergency and your location.
- › Remain calm and be patient. You may need to repeat information to ensure accuracy.
- › Location is key: Providing your address or identifying nearby landmarks quickly helps route the call to the correct responding agency.
- › Answering questions does NOT delay response: It helps first responders be better prepared before they arrive on scene.

- › Once the nature of the emergency is identified (Law Enforcement or Fire/Rescue), your call will be transferred to the appropriate agency. You may have to repeat some information because these agencies may be located in different buildings.

IF YOU DIAL 9-1-1 BY MISTAKE, DO NOT HANG UP.

Stay on the line and let the operator know it was an accident. If you hang up, emergency services may be dispatched to ensure someone wasn't unable to complete a call for help.

REMEMBER THESE TIPS WHEN CALLING 9-1-1:

- › Stay calm and identify:
 - Your name
 - The emergency
 - Your location (physical address preferred)
- › Know your local 9-1-1 procedures.
- › Be ready to explain:
 - What is happening
 - Who is involved (names, vehicle descriptions, license plates)
 - Whether the emergency is still in progress
- › Only hang up if:
 - You are told to by the operator
 - Staying on the line would put your safety or someone else's in danger

Bay County is home to the “World’s Most Beautiful Beaches”, offering a perfect escape from everyday stress. However, like any natural environment, the beach has its hazards. This section highlights three common beach dangers and provides essential tips to stay safe.

DROWNING

Drowning can happen to anyone and often occurs when people exceed their physical limits. Follow these key guidelines to help ensure a safe return from the water:

- › Observe the Warning Flag System. Never enter the water when double red flags are displayed. It means the water is closed to the public. When red flags are flying, knee deep is too deep.
- › Supervise children at all times. Kids may venture farther than they should.
- › Swim with caution. The swim back is often more difficult than the swim out. A good rule of thumb: allow twice the effort for the return trip.
- › Use flotation devices. In deeper water, bring a life jacket, float, or raft. These save lives.
- › Know personal limits. Do not exceed your comfort zone. Staying in shallow water is smart, not shameful.

RIP CURRENTS

WHAT IS A RIP CURRENT?

Most of the gulf beaches have two sandbars that run parallel to the shore. As water gets pushed over these bars by wave or tidal actions it hits the shore and must find a way to escape back to the open gulf. This constant outflow of water moves the sand to create “breaks” in the sandbars which become swift moving channels for escaping water. Between the shore and these sandbars, the water may carry you along the shore to one of these breaks and then quickly pull swimmers out into the gulf.

HOW TO AVOID RIP CURRENTS

- › Rip currents are more dangerous during days with strong waves and large tidal shifts. Always check the beach warning flags before entering the water.
- › Even in shallow areas, currents can be strong. Stay within a depth where it’s easy to stand and remain in control.

If pulled sideways or outward, calmly turn back and remain in an area closer to shore.

IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- › Do not fight the current. Swim parallel to the shore to escape the narrow current channel.
- › Once free, head diagonally back toward the shore.

If unable to escape, stay calm, float, and signal for help.

DANGEROUS MARINE LIFE

- › **SHARKS:** Shark sightings are rare, and attacks are even rarer. Most sharks stay in the “trough” between the first and second sandbars, a popular swimming area. Most incidents are accidental. Stay calm and avoid swimming during dawn, dusk, or when waters are murky.
- › **STINGRAYS:** Stingrays can be present in shallow waters. Shuffle feet while walking to avoid stepping directly on stingrays.
- › **JELLYFISH:** Some jellyfish stings can cause pain or allergic reactions. Avoid touching jellyfish, even if they appear dead.
- › **SEA URCHINS:** Often found in rocky or reef areas, stepping on a sea urchin can cause injury. Wear water shoes for protection.

THE BEACH WARNING FLAG SYSTEM

Bay County’s public beach access points along the Gulf are equipped with a flagpole displaying one of four colored flags, green, yellow, red, or double red, indicating the current water safety conditions. These flags are updated daily to reflect changing conditions. Additionally, a purple flag may be flown to warn beachgoers of increased marine life activity, such as jellyfish or sea urchins. Double red flags signify that the water is closed to the public.



WATER CLOSED TO PUBLIC

Agua Cerrada al Público



HIGH HAZARD

High Surf and/or Strong Currents

Peligro Alto, Resaca Alta y/o Corrientes Fuertes



MEDIUM HAZARD

Moderate Surf and/or Currents

Peligro Medio, Resaca Moderada y/o Corrientes Fuertes



LOW HAZARD

Calm Conditions, Exercise Caution

Peligro Bajo, Condiciones Calmas, Tenga Cuidado



DANGEROUS MARINE LIFE

Vida Marina Peligrosa

For text alerts when the flags change, text “PCBFLAGS” to 888777.



A backyard pool can be a fun way to relax; however, it is important to know what to do to reduce the risk of injury and illness.

TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT DROWNING

Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death in young children 1-4 years old, but there are things that can prevent pool drownings:

- › Make sure everyone has basic swim skills and water safety awareness.
- › Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets as directed.
- › Provide continuous and close supervision to swimmers.
- › Know how to recognize and respond to a swimmer in distress and how to perform CPR.
- › Prevent access to the water when the pool is not in use.
- › Install and maintain barriers such as four-sided fencing.
- › Use locks/alarms for windows and doors.
- › For maximum visibility and safety in the water, choose bright, contrasting swimsuit colors like neon yellow, green, orange, or pink.

HANDLE POOL CHEMICALS SAFELY

Pool chemicals such as chlorine are needed to protect swimmers' health. However, mishandling pool chemicals can cause serious injuries. Pool chemical injuries lead to about 4,500 U.S. emergency department visits each year, and more than one-third of these preventable injuries are in children or teens.

If pool chemicals are stored at home, take the following steps to prevent pool chemical injuries:

- › Read and follow all directions on product labels.
- › Wear safety equipment such as masks, gloves and goggles when handling chemicals.
- › Keep chemicals secure and away from children and pets.
- › Order pool chemical safety posters for free.

KILL GERMS IN THE POOL

Disinfection with chlorine or bromine and pH are the first defense against germs that cause recreational water illnesses.

At the recommended levels, chlorine or bromine can kill most germs in the water within minutes.

Backyard pool owners should check the disinfectant level and pH of the pool at least once per day to make sure they are correct:

- › 1-10 parts per million (ppm) free chlorine or 3-8 ppm bromine
- › pH 7.2-7.8

A pH that is too high or low can cause problems, including decreasing the chemicals' ability to kill germs. It can also cause skin and eye irritation in swimmers and damage pool pipes and other equipment.

DIARRHEA AND SWIMMING DON'T MIX

Do not swim or let others swim if sick with diarrhea. Just one diarrheal incident in the water can release millions of diarrhea-causing germs like *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, norovirus, and *E. coli*. These germs can make other swimmers sick if they swallow just a mouthful of contaminated water. Although most germs are killed within minutes by chlorine or bromine at the recommended levels, *Cryptosporidium* is a germ that can survive in properly treated water for more than seven days.

Stay safe by following a few simple but effective steps:

BEFORE GETTING IN

Shower for at least one minute before you get into the water to remove dirt or anything else on your body. Chlorine mixed with dirt, sweat, urine, and feces creates chemicals that make swimmers eyes red and sting and provides less chlorine to kill germs.

ONCE YOU ARE IN

- › Do not swallow the water.
- › Take kids on bathroom breaks and check diapers every hour.
- › Change diapers away from the poolside to keep germs from getting in the water.
- › Dry ears thoroughly with a towel after swimming.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



COMMON BOATING SAFETY ITEMS INCLUDE:

- › Life jackets for everyone on board
- › A noise producing device (i.e., horn, whistle, etc.)
- › Type IV throwable device
- › Fire extinguisher
- › A visual distress signal (i.e., flares)
- › Anyone born after Jan. 1, 1988 and operating a vessel must have a Florida Boating Safety ID Card.
- › Anyone 13 years old or younger is not permitted to operate a personal watercraft.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REMINDERS:

- › Each person operating, riding on, or being towed behind a personal watercraft must wear an approved non-inflatable Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device. Inflatable personal flotation devices are prohibited.
- › The operator of a personal watercraft must attach the engine cutoff switch lanyard (if equipped by the manufacturer) to his/her person, clothing, or personal flotation device.
- › Personal watercraft may not be operated from one half-hour after sunset to one half-hour before sunrise.
- › Maneuvering a personal watercraft by weaving through congested vessel traffic, jumping the wake of another vessel unreasonably close or when visibility around the vessel is obstructed, or swerving at the last possible moment to avoid collision is classified as reckless operation of a vessel (a first-degree misdemeanor).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

Source: www.floridamarineguide.com/pwc_rules.html

FUELING AND MAINTENANCE

- › Re-fuel on land to reduce the risk of spills.
- › Fill tanks slowly, don't overfill, and use absorbent pads to catch spills.
- › Clean and check the engine away from shorelines. Oil can harm aquatic micro-organisms and the animals that feed on them.

- › Wash the boat after use to prevent spreading invasive species that threaten native plants and wildlife.

WATER DEPTH AND HABITAT

- › Stay in main channels and limit riding in shallow areas.
- › If riding in shallow water, keep to idle speed to reduce turbidity.
- › Be mindful of low tide. Shallow waters may expose sensitive areas like seagrass beds and fish nurseries.
- › Avoid anchoring near coral and be careful diving to prevent damage.
- › Don't dock or beach where reeds, grasses, or mangroves are present. These plants control erosion and shelter small animals and fish.

WILDLIFE AWARENESS

- › Check for turtles, birds, or alligators before docking or beaching.
- › Avoid grass marshes. Nesting birds, frogs, turtles, or alligators may be hidden in the vegetation.
- › Do not disturb birds feeding in shallow areas or along the shoreline.
- › Know which endangered species may be in your area (see U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listings).
- › If an animal is injured by a boat, note the location and report it to wildlife authorities.

RESPONSIBLE BOATING BEHAVIOR

- › Observe posted no-wake zones to help prevent shoreline erosion and protect habitat.
- › Ride at controlled speeds and avoid areas with high animal populations.
- › Be a courteous operator. Boat noise and motion can disturb homeowners, birds, marine mammals, and other wildlife.



A wildfire is an unplanned fire that occurs in natural areas such as forests, grasslands, or prairies. These fires are often caused by humans or lightning and can quickly spread, especially during dry, windy conditions. Wildfires can disrupt communications, transportation, utilities, and may lead to flooding.

Be informed, stay alert, and follow local authorities if a wildfire threatens your area. In Bay County, know your evacuation routes and monitor updates from Bay County Emergency Services, Florida Forest Service, and local media. Follow all evacuation orders immediately.

BE PREPARED IF A WILDFIRE THREATENS YOUR HOME:

- › Store important documents in a fireproof location. Create password-protected digital backups, and bring them with you if you evacuate.
- › Review your insurance policy to ensure it covers full property replacement.
- › Clear a 35-foot fire-resistant zone around your home, free of leaves, debris, and flammable materials.
- › Identify an outdoor water source and connect a hose that reaches all areas of your property.
- › Prepare an emergency supply kit, including N95 respirator masks, and bring it with you if you evacuate.
- › Back your vehicle into the garage or park it facing your escape route.
- › Keep vehicle doors closed but unlocked. Roll up windows, leave keys in the ignition, and disconnect automatic garage door openers.

- › Shut all windows and doors in your home. Lock up if you evacuate.
- › Confine pets to one room and prepare to take them with you if you evacuate. Arrange to stay with someone outside the danger zone if needed.
- › Tell someone where you are going. Use a route away from fire zones and stay alert to changing fire conditions.

BE SAFE WHEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR HOME AFTER AN EVACUATION:

- › Only return when officials declare it safe and confirm that water is drinkable.
- › Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and embers. Hidden heat pockets can cause burns or reignite fires. Pets and livestock are also at risk.
- › Document any property damage with photos. Take inventory and contact your insurance provider promptly.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WILDFIRES:

- › [National Fire Protection Association](https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire)
www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire
- › [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov/wildfires)
www.ready.gov/wildfires



BURNING OUTDOORS IN FLORIDA

WHEN BURNING OUTDOORS, FLORIDA LAW REQUIRES A BURN PERMIT UNLESS:

- > You are burning only yard waste; and
- > You burn inside a burn barrel or properly prepared fire pit; and
- > You have prepared all the necessary tools to control the fire.

Yard waste is any vegetative debris such as grass clippings, brush, leaves, tree limbs, palm fronds, etc. that is a result of yard maintenance. You may burn yard waste if it was generated on your property and will fit in an 8-foot diameter pile or non-combustible container. The fire has to be ignited after 8 a.m. and be extinguished one hour before sunset.

If you are not sure about burning yard debris or land clearing or you need a permit, contact the local Forestry Office.

Chipola Forestry Center

Florida Forest Service

9040 Highway 77

Southport, FL 32409

Phone: (850) 691-0800

For burn permits from the Florida Forest Service, call **(850) 373-1801**.

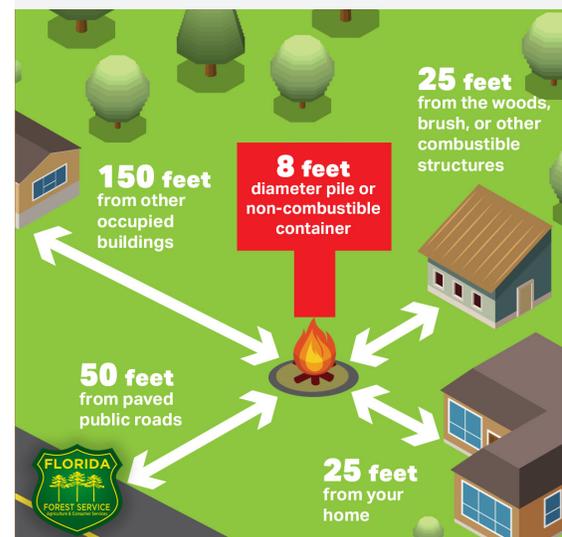
Before burning, check with local city and county officials to find out if there are any restrictions in your area. Burn bans can be imposed by local governments if conditions have been dry and it is unsafe to burn.

Clear an area down to bare soil around your pile to prevent the fire from spreading. Cover a non-combustible container with wire mesh to keep sparks from flying out and starting new fires.

REMEMBER - SAFETY SHOULD ALWAYS BE A PRIORITY!

REQUIRED SETBACKS FOR YARD WASTE BURNING:

- > 25 feet from any wooded area
- > 25 feet from your residence
- > 150 feet from any other occupied dwelling
- > 50 feet from any paved, public road





HAVE A PLAN

- › Know at least two escape routes from each room.
- › Install smoke alarms throughout the home and test them monthly.
- › Keep areas clear around furnaces, water heaters, and electrical outlets.
- › Practice fire escape plan regularly, and ensure everyone knows the designated meeting spot outside.
- › Purchase fire extinguishers and consider a Class K extinguisher for the kitchen to handle grease fires.
- › Chimneys should be inspected and cleaned regularly.
- › If the home has natural gas, know where the main shut-off valve is located.
- › Make copies of important documents and photos to store with a trusted friend or family member. Keep the originals in a fireproof safe.

MAJOR CAUSES

- › **COOKING EQUIPMENT:** Never leave food unattended when cooking.
- › **HEATING DEVICES:** Maintain clear space around all heating equipment.
- › **SMOKING:** Never smoke in bed or in bedrooms.
- › **ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:** Check for frayed cords, overloaded outlets, or flickering lights.
- › **CANDLES:** Never leave burning candles unattended. Keep them away from flammable materials.
- › **CHILDREN AND FIRE:** Curious children can accidentally start fires by playing with things they should not. Keep matches, lighters, and flammable objects out of reach.

› FAULTY WIRING:

- Lights dim when appliances are used.
- Frequently blown fuses or tripped breakers.

› OUTDOOR GRILLS:

Keep grills away from the house, furniture, and overhanging plants.

› FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS:

Store safely, far from heat sources.

› LIGHTING:

Ensure lampshades and covers are not too close to light bulbs.

STEPS TO FOLLOW

- › Ensure the safety of all family members and pets.
- › Call 9-1-1, even if the fire appears small or contained.
- › Contact the insurance company to begin the claims process.
- › Do not re-enter the home until authorities say it's safe.
- › Once cleared to enter, document all damage by taking photos and making a list.
- › Find a safe temporary place to stay if the home is uninhabitable.
- › Hire a certified professional for fire damage cleanup and restoration.

NEED HELP?

The American Red Cross provides support and resources before and after a fire.

BAY COUNTY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
ADMINISTRATION	850-248-8140
ADDRESSING	850-248-8374
ANIMAL CONTROL	850-767-3333
BUDGET OFFICE	850-248-8240
BUILDERS SERVICES	850-248-8350
CAFE	850-248-8196
CODE ENFORCEMENT	850-248-8290
COMMUNICATIONS	850-248-8170
CO-OP EXTENSION	850-784-6105
COUNTY ATTORNEY	850-248-8175
EMERGENCY SERVICES	850-248-6040
EMS	850-248-6070
ENGINEERING	850-248-8301
FACILITIES	850-248-8120
FIRE SERVICES	850-248-6040
GENERAL SERVICES	850-248-8732
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	850-248-8071
HUMAN RESOURCES	850-248-8201
HOUSING	850-248-2465
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	850-248-8004
LIBRARY	850-522-2100
MEDICAL EXAMINER	850-747-5740
MOSQUITO CONTROL	850-248-8720
PARKS & RECREATION	850-248-8730
PLANNING	850-248-8250
PUBLIC WORKS	850-248-8302
PURCHASING	850-248-8270
RECORDS MANAGEMENT	850-248-8278
RISK MANAGEMENT	850-248-8230
ROADS	850-248-8810
SECURITY	850-248-8195
SOLID WASTE	850-236-2212
TRANSIT	850-248-8161
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING	850-248-8740
UTILITY SERVICES	850-248-5010
VETERANS SERVICES	850-248-8280

CONSTITUTIONAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT	850-747-5100
CLERK FINANCE	850-747-5219
PROPERTY APPRAISER	850-248-8401
SHERIFF	850-747-4700
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS	850-784-6100
TAX COLLECTOR	850-248-8501

MUNICIPAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CALLAWAY	850-871-6000
LYNN HAVEN	850-265-2121
MEXICO BEACH	850-648-5700
PANAMA CITY BEACH	850-233-5100
PANAMA CITY	850-872-3010
PARKER	850-871-4104
SPRINGFIELD	850-872-7570

OTHER

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL	850-233-5070
FLORIDA STATE INFO CENTER	1-866- 693-6748
ONLINE	http://411.myflorida.com
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE	850-215-9965

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
FIRE / POLICE / AMBULANCE	9-1-1
BAY COUNTY DISPATCH	850-784-4000
ANIMAL CONTROL DISPATCH	850-248-6034
POISON INFORMATION	1-800-222-1222

A PUBLICATION OF

BAY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AND BAY COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

840 WEST 11TH STREET
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32401

TELEPHONE: (850) 248-8140

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

700 HIGHWAY 2300
SOUTHPORT, FL 32409

TELEPHONE: (850) 784-4000



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BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV

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at the Bay County website: www.baycountyfl.gov

