Assess Your Sheltering Needs for 2018 Hurricane Season

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – Have you thought about your sheltering plans for hurricane season?

In Puerto Rico, flooding and mudslides from Hurricane María reached areas never affected before. As a result, FEMA encourages Puerto Rico residents to re-evaluate their sheltering needs. People with disabilities and special healthcare or access and functional needs should also make shelter plans a priority.

Sheltering in place – If you plan to ride out the storm in your home:

- Make sure it is in good repair and meets local hurricane building code specifications. Have the proper plywood, steel or aluminum panels to board up windows and doors.
- Check your home's flood hazard zone in FEMA's updated Advisory Base Flood Elevations map, when published. This can help determine what preventive steps to take.

- Store at least 10 days' worth of supplies including one gallon of water and non-perishable foods per person per day, special diet meals, medications and medical devices.
- Keep pets inside the house or take them to a pre-identified safe location.
- Review your family communication plan.
- Identify several places you could go and several evacuation routes, in case evacuation is mandatory.

Sheltering out of home – If you decide to stay with friends or neighbors:

- Inform your family of your sheltering location and review your communications plan.
- Take along your supplies including food, water, medications and medical devices.

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- Identify a kennel and secure a spot if you have a pet.

Mass care sheltering – If you need to stay at an official shelter:

- Pre-identify your closest shelter. If local officials call for an evacuation, don't hesitate. Leave early.
- Keep the gas tank at least half full in case you need your vehicle to leave the area. If relying on public transportation, contact your local emergency agencies about evacuation procedures before a hurricane.
- Inform your family of your sheltering location and review your communications plan.
- Plan to take a disaster supply kit with you. Include special dietary meals, medications and medical devices. Have a copy of your prescriptions in a sealed plastic bag in case you need to refill them.
- Coordinate with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure someone is available to care for or rescue your pets if you can't.
- Pack a kennel, leash, ID tag and vaccination certificate for your pet. Pets will be taken to a reserved space. Certified service pets are allowed to stay with their owners for emotional support.

Despite where you are sheltering:

- Listen to local media for storm-related updates.
- Make sure your battery-powered radio is working and you have extra batteries.
- Download **fema.gov/mobile-app** to receive severe weather alerts, safety tips and much more. Stay updated with weather-related alerts from the U.S. National Weather Service.
- Sign up for alerts from your local emergency management office so notifications, including evacuation orders, go directly to your phone and email.
- Collect and update your personal and financial records and documents.

The time to prepare for a hurricane is before the season begins—when you are not under pressure. Being prepared can mean the difference between being a hurricane victim and a hurricane survivor.

If you or someone in your family is experiencing issues with disaster-related stress, call Línea PAS at **800-981-0023,** TTY **888-672-7622**.

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For more information on hurricane season preparedness, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4339.

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*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at **800-621-FEMA (3362) 711/VRS** - Video Relay Service). Multilingual operators are available. (Press **2** for Spanish). TTY call **800-462-7585**.*

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