



HURRICANE INFORMATION GUIDE

THIS GUIDE PROVIDES IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING WHAT TO DO BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A STORM.

2026 SEASON

Colorado State University hurricane researchers are predicting a below-average Atlantic hurricane season for 2026, forecasting 13 named storms between June 1 and November 30. Of those, six are expected to become hurricanes, with two reaching major hurricane strength (Category 3 or higher) with sustained winds of 111 mph or greater. The anticipated development of El Niño conditions is expected to increase atmospheric wind shear across the Atlantic, which can inhibit storm formation and limit overall activity, resulting in a less favorable environment for hurricane development.

Tropical Storm Watch - Tropical storm conditions are possible within 36 hours. Your preparations should be underway.

Tropical Storm Warning - Tropical storm conditions are expected within 24 hours. Your preparations should be rushed to completion.

Hurricane Watch - Hurricane conditions are possible within 36 hours. Your preparations should be underway.

Hurricane Warning - Hurricane conditions are expected within 24 hours. Your preparations should be rushed to completion.

ARE YOU SIGNED UP FOR "NIXLE ALERTS?"

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office to communicate directly with citizens in situations involving significant public safety incidents such as bridge closures. Nixle does not track users and no information is sold to a third party. Sign up at: www.Nixle.com.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Hurricane Season begins June 1st and ends November 30th. The time to prepare for hurricane season is now. This guide is designed to provide valuable information that you can use before, during and after a storm.

2026 Storm Names

- Arthur
- Bertha
- Cristobal
- Dolly
- Edouard
- Fay
- Gonzalo
- Hanna
- Isaias
- Josephine
- Kyle
- Leah
- Marco
- Nana
- Omar
- Paulette
- Rene
- Sally
- Teddy
- Vicky
- Wilfred

RECEIVE OCSO ALERTS BY DOWNLOADING THE APP



SCAN TO DOWNLOAD





CITY OF DESTIN

Mayor

Bobby Wagner

Director of Public Works & Emergency Management

Michael Burgess

Public Information Director

Tamara L. Young, PhD

Councilmembers

Jim Bagby

Rodney Braden

Dewey Destin

Chatham Morgan

Terésa Hebert, Mayor Pro Tem

Kevin Schmidt

Sandy Trammell

City Manager

Larry Jones, DBA/OL, MPA

All hurricane related information will be posted to our website at www.cityofdestin.com. The city will ensure the public will have the most up-to-date information as it becomes available as well as helpful links for resources.



The city is also using Facebook to provide accurate and timely information to residents, businesses, and visitors. Like our Facebook page - **City of Destin Government** to stay up-to-date on general city information as well as emergency information.

SIGN UP FOR LOCAL WEATHER ALERTS AT ALERTOKALOOSA.COM

OR BY TEXTING

OKALOOSAFL TO 888777



SAFFIR-SIMPSON SCALE

CATEGORY 1 74 - 95 mph winds: Damage primarily to shrubbery and trees. Damage to mobile homes. No real damage to other structures. Low-lying coastal roads inundated. Minor pier damage. Some small craft in exposed anchorage torn from moorings. Power outages possible for several days to over a week.

CATEGORY 2 96 - 110 mph winds: Considerable damage to shrubbery and tree foliage. Some trees blown down. Major damage to mobile homes. Extensive damage to poorly constructed signs. Some damage to roofing materials of buildings. Some window and door damage. Coastal roads and low-lying escape routes inland cut off by rising water two to four hours before arrival of the hurricane's center. Considerable damage to piers. Marinas flooded and small craft in unprotected anchorages torn from moorings. Power outages likely for one to two weeks.

CATEGORY 3 111 - 129 mph winds: Large trees blown down. Some damage to roofs. Some window and door damage. Some structural damage to small buildings. Mobile homes destroyed. Serious flooding at coast and many smaller structures near coast are destroyed. Low-lying escape routes inland cut off by rising water three to five hours before the hurricane's center arrives. Widespread power outages likely for several weeks.

CATEGORY 4 130 - 156 mph winds: All signs are down. Trees and shrubs blown down. Extensive damage to roofs, windows and doors. Complete failure to roofs on many small residences. Major damage to lower floors of structures near the shore due to flooding, battering waves and floating debris. Prolonged outages likely; some areas may be without power for several weeks to months.

CATEGORY 5 157 + mph winds: Trees and shrubs are blown down. Considerable damage to roofs. Very severe and extensive damage to windows and doors. Complete roof failure on many homes and buildings. Extensive shattering of glass. Some complete building failures. Small buildings overturned or blown away. Low-lying escape routes inland cut off by rising water three to five hours before the hurricane's center arrives. Long-term outages lasting months; some areas may be uninhabitable for extended periods.

Destin homeowners, businesses and residents alike are encouraged to sign up for "**Alert Okaloosa**," a messaging system used to alert residents about weather emergencies requiring immediate action.

Alert Okaloosa, which is operated by the Okaloosa County Emergency Management Division, will notify residents in the area where severe weather is predicted, to let them know ahead of time if they will be impacted by weather such as tornadoes, flash floods, etc.

Notifications can be received via: *Email *Business phones *Home phones *Cell phones

To ensure that the system will call you when your address or business is threatened by an emergency or by severe weather, simply register your address and contact information in the Alert Okaloosa County portal. Access here: AlertOkaloosa.com

NOTE: BRIDGES ARE CLOSED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ONCE SUSTAINED WIND SPEEDS EXCEED 40 MPH.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

FIRE-MEDICAL-SHERIFF EMERGENCIES ONLY

Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency
850-651-7400

Destin Fire Control District
850-837-8413

Destin City Hall
850-837-4242

Destin Code Compliance
850-279-6658

Destin Public Works
850-837-6869

Destin Building Department
850-654-1119

Destin Community Center
850-654-5184

Destin Morgan Sports Center
850-650-1241

Destin Library
850-837-8572

Destin Water Users
850-837-6146

Destin Water and Sewer
850-699-3647

County Health Department
850-833-9240

Okaloosa County Division of Emergency Management Citizen's Hotline
311 or 850-609-7000

FL Division of Emergency Management
1-850-413-9900

FL Highway Patrol
1-800-459-6553

FEMA
1-800-525-0321

Florida Power & Light
1-800-225-5797

Okaloosa Gas
850-729-4700

Cox Communications
850-796-1269

Waste Management
850-862-7226

PAWS
850-243-1525

Red Cross/NWFL
1-800-733-2767

Price Gouging Hotline
1-866-966-7226

HOLD A FAMILY MEETING

Discuss the hazards of hurricanes. Explain some of the things you will be doing to keep everyone safe. Start a written list of things you will need to take care of before hurricane season and encourage everyone in the family to contribute their ideas.

DISCUSS WHETHER YOU WILL NEED TO EVACUATE

This is the question that each family must answer. It is of utmost importance to know which zone you are in. Page 4 of this guide is the Okaloosa County's Official Evacuation Map for Destin. Determine where you live. As you can see, Okaloosa County Emergency Management officials will issue their recommendation for residents and visitors to evacuate based on where they live and the storm conditions. Where will you go if an evacuation order is given? Going to a family or friend's house or hotel outside the evacuation area is your best choice. If you choose to go out of town, do so well in advance of the storm. Since shelters (see page 6) provide for only basic needs, this should be your choice of last resort.

ENSURE YOUR ASSETS ARE PROTECTED WITH FLOOD INSURANCE

Flood Damage is not covered by Homeowner's Insurance. Contact your insurance agent and inquire about flood insurance coverage for both your structure and contents. Flood Insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program is easy to secure and is available to the vast majority of Destin properties. Remember to inventory your home possessions and photograph items of value on an annual basis. Review your homeowner's and flood insurance policies before hurricane season starts to ensure you have adequate coverage as insurers may not create new or add to existing coverage.

ASSESS YOUR HOME FOR VULNERABLE AREAS

Do a walk-through of your home/property to evaluate your roof, windows, garage door, landscaping, etc. to determine what actions you will need to take to make your home safe. **DO NOT CUT LIMBS AND BRANCHES IF A HURRICANE IMPACT IS IMMINENT.** If debris cannot be collected before a storm hits the debris can become dangerous projectiles in strong winds. It is important to clear debris from your home year round and not wait until there is a hurricane threat. **PREVENT FLOODING!** Do not dump or throw anything into inlets, ditches, swales or outfalls. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug drain channels. If you see dumping or debris in these areas, contact the City of Destin Code Compliance Department at 850-654-1119 or after hours at 850-279-6658.

SECURE YOUR HOME

Decide what actions you will need to take to protect your home and your property (shutters, generator, etc.) and to keep as comfortable as possible during a recovery. Put up shutters if you have them. Turn refrigerator to lowest setting and lower the A/C temperature. Charge cell phones and electronic devices. Place flashlights and batteries throughout the house and keep one with you. Do not use candles.

VEHICLE STORAGE & PROTECTION

Decide where you will store or park your vehicle, boat or RV. Gas up your vehicles. Move vehicle(s) into a garage or next to a building; avoid parking near trees and utility poles. Check your vehicle insurance policy and keep it in the same safe place as your homeowner's policy.

DETERMINE WHETHER ANYONE IN YOUR HOME HAS SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS OR IS VULNERABLE IN AN EMERGENCY

Discuss whether anyone has special needs in an emergency because of a medical condition, or because they are elderly or disabled. Make arrangements in advance to accommodate those needs, including prescriptions. Gather your emergency kit and keep it handy.

MAKE A PLAN FOR YOUR PETS

Determine how you will address your pet's needs and make a plan in case you have to evacuate. Try to take your pet to a veterinary hospital, boarding kennel, family or friends who live outside the evacuation area. The American Humane Society, AKC Companion Animal Recovery, and Florida Emergency Management web sites have great tips for preparing your pet. If you are planning to evacuate your pet with you when you leave, check out this helpful website www.ready.gov/animals. This site will let you know which hotels will accept traveling pets/service animals.

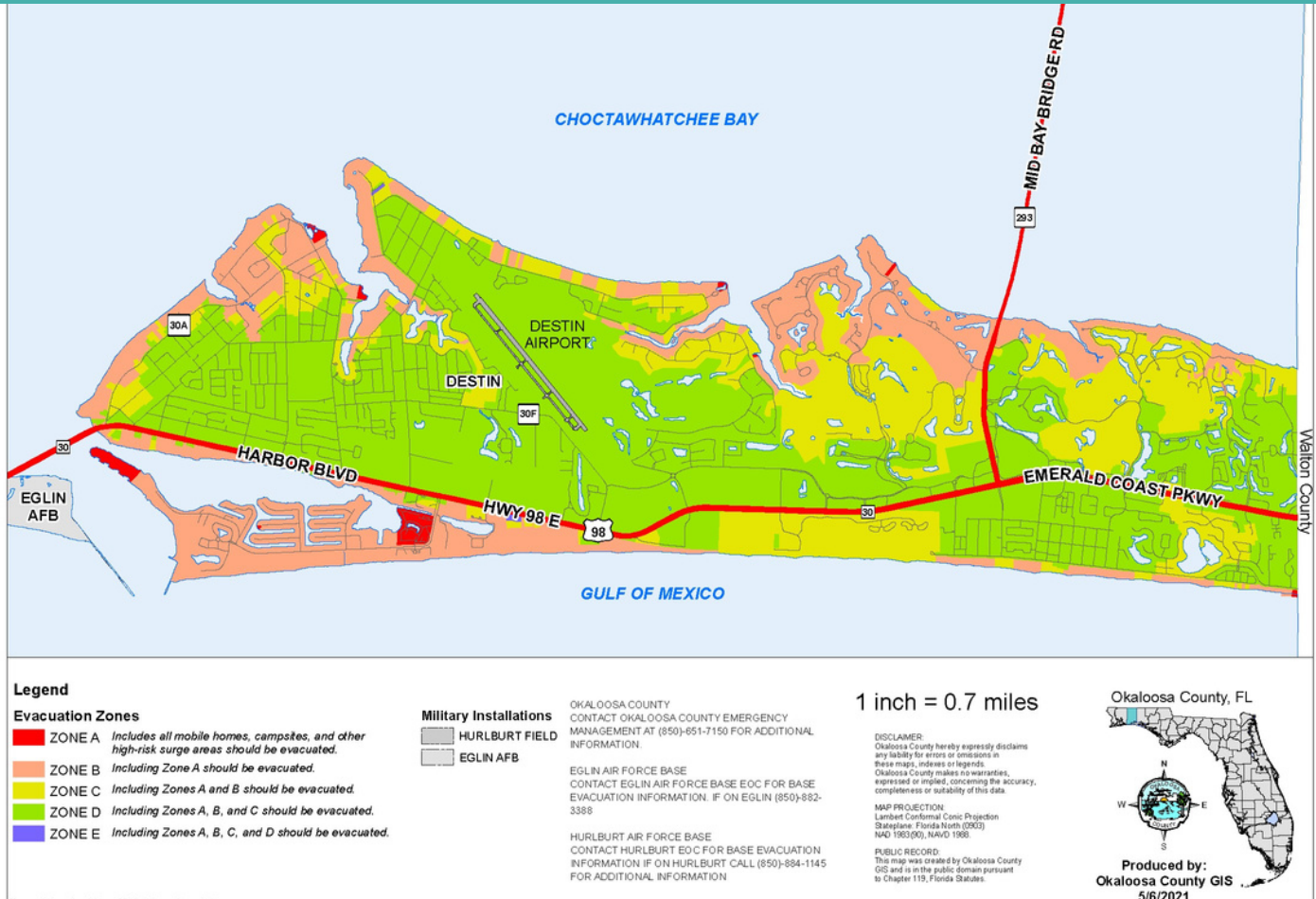
GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES

Determine your family's food and water needs. Assemble your hurricane kit accordingly. The new rule of thumb is you should have about seven days of food and water per person. Fill water containers, bath tubs and sinks. Freeze water jugs and fill ice chests. Be sure to stock up on batteries.

NOTIFY OTHERS OF YOUR PLAN

Let family or friends know what your hurricane plan is so they can check on you in the aftermath of a storm. Establish an out-of-town contact.

KNOW YOUR ZONE BEFORE A STORM HITS



KNOW THE HAZARDS

Storm Surge - is an abnormal rise of water generated by a storm's winds. Storm surge can reach heights well over 20 feet and can span hundreds of miles of coastline. Storm surge and large waves produced by hurricanes pose the greatest threat to life and property along the coast.

Wind - Tropical storm-force winds are strong enough to be dangerous to those caught in them. Hurricane-force winds, 74 mph or more, can destroy buildings and mobile homes. Debris, such as signs, roofing material, siding and small items left outside become flying missiles during hurricanes. Winds can stay above hurricane strength well inland.

Rain - Because of the tropical nature of hurricanes, they contain rain which can be torrential and cause floods and flash floods. Turn Around Don't Drown.

Boating is a way of life here in Destin. So take action early to protect your vessel. Here are a few helpful hints...



For a boat stored on a trailer, lash the boat and trailer down in a protected area. Let the air out of the tires before tying the trailer down. Place blocks between the frame and the axle inside each wheel. Secure with heavy lines to fixed objects from four directions, if possible.

For boats in the water, hurricane moorings should be located "in advance of a storm." Permission should be obtained from the appropriate people.

A practice run should help you identify any obstacles you could face when it is time to act.

If you choose to relocate your boat, leave early for safe harbor.

Record and keep your vessel registration number, description and location where it is secured. If you lease a marina slot for your boat, check your lease or ownership contract. Know your responsibilities.

If you are out of town, arrange for someone locally who is knowledgeable of the procedures to care for your boat.

When you are securing your boat include removing boat documents, radios and other valuables from the vessel.

EVACUATION

The City of Destin partners with the Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in getting the word out before, during and after storms. Contact the Citizens Information Line at 3-1-1 (or 850-609-7000) for any information regarding evacuations. The city will send all information about conditions in Destin to the EOC and the local media. All information will be posted to our city website and social media.

If you decide to leave, leave early! If you leave from Destin, it is suggested that you travel North by using the Mid-Bay Bridge and connector road to Hwy. 85 or Hwy. 285. From Hwy. 85 or Hwy. 285, you should travel North to I-10.

It is important to note that East on Hwy 20 to Freeport may be an unsafe route if storm conditions are already in the area due to low-lying areas. West on Hwy 98 to Fort Walton Beach may also be an unsafe route if storm conditions are already in the area. Of course, this is PRIOR to sustained winds in excess of 39 miles per hour because once the wind speeds reach that level ALL bridges will be closed.

When traffic signals are not working, intersections should be treated as four-way stops. To prevent accidents, please wait your turn and always be PATIENT!

IF YOU STAY

If you stay, please be aware that there may become a time during a storm event when no emergency services are available. Typically, EMS will not respond once winds reach 40 mph and the fire department will not respond once winds reach 50 mph. If you don't live in an evacuation zone or a mobile or manufactured home, you should probably stay home if your house is secure, shuttered and can withstand a hurricane. Make sure a neighbor or family members know that you will be there. Determine a "safe room" in your residence where you can ride out the storm. Rooms without windows such as bathrooms, pantries, laundry rooms, stairwells, hallways or large interior closets are good choices. Gather all supplies you will need early. Stock the safe room with: food, water, flashlights, battery-operated radio or TV, extra batteries, medication, clothing, mattress, blankets and pillows, cell phone, games or books and important gadgets.

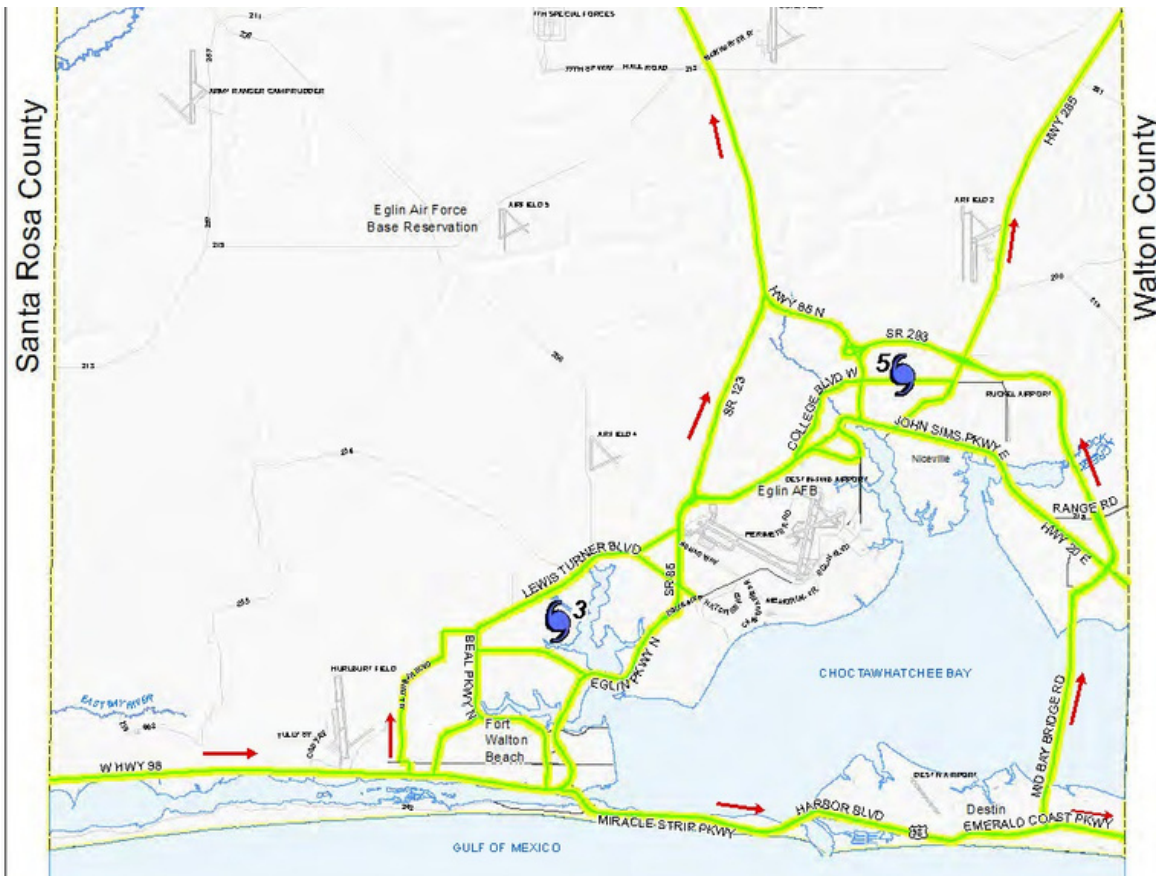
EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM

Listen to one of these local emergency broadcast stations during an emergency alert for important information from Okaloosa County and the City of Destin.

Local Radio Stations:

- AM 1260
- AM 1050
- FM 99.5
- FM 104.7
- FM 105.5

**SIGN UP FOR LOCAL ALERTS AT
ALERTOKALOOSA.COM, TEXT
OKALOOSAFL TO 888777 OR SCAN
THIS QR CODE**



MAP PROJECTION:
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection
Stateplane: Florida North (0903)
NAD 1983(90), NAVD 1988.

PUBLIC RECORD:
This map was created by Okaloosa County GIS and is in the public domain pursuant to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

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DATA REVISED
Shelter Location data current as of 2/2021

Okaloosa County, FL



Produced By:
Okaloosa County GIS
Date: 4/16/2021

PUBLIC SHELTERS

There are NO shelters in Destin. Currently, Okaloosa County has seven main shelters located north of Destin. They are:

***Antioch Elementary School** - 4700 Whitehurst Ln., Crestview

***Baker School** - 1369 14th St., Baker

****Davidson Middle School** - 6261 Old Bethel Rd., Crestview

***Kenwood Elementary School** - 634 Eagle St. NE, Fort Walton Beach

***Northwest Florida State College** - Raider Arena, 100 College Blvd. E, Niceville

***Riverside Elementary School** - 3400 Redstone Ave., Crestview

***Shoal River Middle School** - 3200 E Redstone Ave., Crestview

* **Pets are not kept with the populace. They are kept separately.**

** **Davidson Middle School is a Special Needs and Pet Friendly Shelter.**

Please note that "shelter" is just a convenient name for evacuation center. Okaloosa County cannot guarantee any particular level of safety at a shelter. The facilities are selected because they are outside of hurricane surge zones and are of generally sturdy construction.

SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTERS

If you or your family member has special needs and will need assistance during an evacuation, here's what you need to know. People are generally registered through their home health provider, hospice or their medical equipment provider. However, people can register themselves by visiting the following link: <https://snr.flhealthresponse.com/Home/Index> -OR- call Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center at 850-651-7150 for assistance. Once the information is received it is sent to the Okaloosa County Health Department for evaluation. The Health Department makes the decision as to who is eligible to go to the Special Needs Shelter. This decision is based on established criteria. The Health Department also operates the shelter when it is activated. **The special needs shelter is located at Davidson Middle School in Crestview and can house only 65 special needs residents.** For more information, please contact the Okaloosa County Health Department at 850-833-9240 x 2304.

OKALOOSA COUNTY TRANSIT TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY RIDES TO SHELTERS

Whenever the National Weather Service issues a severe weather warning or watch for Okaloosa County, Destin residents with no other means of transportation to evacuate are encouraged to call Okaloosa County Transit (OCT) to arrange transportation to emergency shelters. If you live in a hurricane evacuation zone, mobile home, are electricity dependent, or otherwise cannot stay in your home during a severe weather event, you should call 850-833-9168 for transportation to one of the county's designated shelters. All rides to shelters are free during a declared emergency. Once sustained winds reach 35 mph, vehicles are called off the road; therefore, it is imperative that citizens seeking shelter comply with the follow requirements:

- Provide a complete address including apartment or lot number of your pick up location, and a phone number where you can be reached with pick up information in advance.
- Once the shelters are open, citizens who have requested transportation will be called and informed of estimated pick up time.
- Be ready to travel when the vehicle arrives. (Depending on the severity and speed of the storm and number of citizens requiring transportation, drivers will not be able to wait or make additional trips.) For more information on Okaloosa County Transit please visit their website at www.ecrider.org.



*Do not walk through flowing or standing water.

*Do not drive through flowing or standing water. Unseen obstructions or hazards may cause damage to you or your vehicle.

*Avoid downed power lines and electrical wires. Report downed power lines to the power company.

*Be alert for small animals that flushed out by flooding conditions.

*Turn on the electricity one breaker at a time and watch for smoke or sparks.

*Carefully check for structural damage before entering a building.

*Thoroughly check your house for gas leaks. Do not smoke, use candles or open flames until you are sure no leaks exist; ventilate enclosed areas if you think gas is present.

Please be aware that in the event of a catastrophic event, the entire City of Destin could be inaccessible. If that happens, there could be checkpoints from the Okaloosa/Walton County line to the Mid-Bay Bridge to the Marler Bridge at East Pass. You will not be allowed into the city, nor if you stay will you be allowed to leave and come back.



DEBRIS PICKUP TIPS

Before a storm, do not cut down trees or do any major yard work. Yard waste may not be picked up prior to the storm and therefore, could become flying debris.

After the storm please do not delay in cleaning your property and getting the debris to the right-of-way. The City of Destin will work with Waste Management (WM) or City authorized disaster debris removal service to pick up the debris as soon as possible. **Remember to separate your debris into piles** . . One for household garbage . . One for recycling . . One for yard waste . . One for any construction debris . . One for household hazardous waste (cleaners, auto fluids, paint). Please do not pile debris around or on top of fire hydrants, ground transformers, etc.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR CITY

In the event a major hurricane strikes Destin, please allow the city time to reopen any heavily damaged areas **PRIOR** to your return.

- After a storm, city staff will be inspecting structures for habitability. They will inspect each structure and place a bright green inspection placard for those buildings that are habitable or that are habitable and need repairs. They will also place a red inspection placard on buildings deemed **UNSAFE** for human occupancy. These inspection cards will be placed on a visible location on the outside of a structure. **Do not remove the inspection notices until authorized to do so by city staff.** Red placards on homes means the buildings have been determined to be structurally **UNSAFE** and owners must contact the City of Destin Building Department 850-654-1119 to determine corrective steps.
 - Checkpoints may be set up and manned by Okaloosa County Sheriff Deputies, or the National Guard, to cordon off severely damaged areas. **NO ONE** will be allowed access into those areas until it is safe. Usually, the Holiday Isle and Crystal Beach neighborhoods are the most affected because of the storm surge, and may be inaccessible.
 - The City will call in phone, gas, water and electric utility crews to assess and repair damages done to infrastructure.
 - City officials will work with local utility companies and law enforcement agencies to let homeowners or their designees into the affected area(s) to view their property, **as soon as it is safe to do so.**
 - Increased law enforcement will patrol both land and water.
 - Possible mandatory curfews could exist immediately after the hurricane.
 - Fire and emergency medical response will operate once winds have decreased below 35 mph sustained.
 - Debris clearing contractors will begin assisting with cleanup of debris 24 hours post storm. Debris cleaning teams will begin clearing major roadways for emergency response once the storm has passed.
 - Public Works will be inspecting and cleaning debris from drainage systems citywide.
 - During times when sections of the city may be closed, the city **MAY** implement a windshield tour of the damaged area for the affected property owners. Please check the city's website (www.cityofdestin.com) after a storm for more about this.
- If you stay through a storm, but leave the affected area that has been evacuated after a storm, you will be denied access back until the area has been declared safe. The above re-entry protocol will apply.