

Every resident of New Port Richey lives in a flood zone.

To reduce loss of lives and property, advance preparation for a hurricane, coastal storm, or flooding is important.

FLOOD WARNING

The City and Pasco County have warning systems. The NOAA Hurricane Center (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) is responsible for providing information on the current status of storms. Warnings will be given on television, radio and telephone. Tune into these media for instructions during times of possible flooding. Public ADVISORIES on tropical storms or hurricanes are issued every 6 hours. Once a WATCH OR WARNING has been issued, notices will be issued every 3 hours and every 2 hours once a reliable center appears on radar. Hourly radar position estimates are issued between the 2 hour public advisories.

Stay informed. The City receives notification through Pasco County in the event of an emergency. The Pasco County Office of Emergency Management operates a comprehensive emergency warning system including emergency news releases, voice cable override, government access channels (such as Bright House Channel 615 & 622), the Emergency Alert System, and the Community Notification System. This system is used for floods as well as other emergencies. Listen to the news and weather channels, for example NBC, ABC, CBS, The Weather Channel and also local radio stations such as 97.1 FM, 101.5 FM or 105.5 FM, while you have electric power. Keep a battery-operated radio or television available in case of a power outage.

The majority of the City IS located in a flood zone and an Evacuation Level A Zone, which is the first level ordered to evacuate. Therefore, there is generally a need for residents living along the Pithlachascotee River as well as those west of U.S. 19 to evacuate when an evacuation order or advisory is issued. In that event, the City Police, Fire, and Public Works personnel will drive down the streets and/or go door to door if necessary, to announce and advise residents of the need to evacuate. DO NOT rely on gossip.

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards:
www.weather.gov/nwr

KNOW YOUR FLOOD ZONE

Almost all properties within the City of New Port Richey are located within the "Special Flood Hazard Area". Because you live close to the Gulf of Mexico and near the Pithlachascotee River, many areas flood with only a high tide and west wind. There is a 26% chance of being flooded over the life of a 30 year mortgage.

The City has had 3 major floods in the last 15 years. The "No Name" storm of 1993 was completely unexpected. Your property may be vulnerable to flood from heavy storms. You can contact the Building Department at 727-853-1047 or come to City Hall to find your flood zone.

BUILD RESPONSIBLY

All development (new construction, repair/replacement work, additions, signs, fences, fill, tree removal, etc.) requires a permit. Contact the Development Department at 847-1047, for further information. Illegal flood plain development should also be reported to the Development Department.

FLOOD SAFETY

1. Do not walk through flowing water. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. The water may be contaminated by sewage leaks or infested with snakes.
2. Look before you step. Watch for broken glass, nails and slippery surfaces.
3. Have your electricity turned off by the power company. Do not use appliances that have been in water.
4. Look out for animals and harmful insects. Fire ants and snakes will be looking for dry ground.
5. Do not drive through flood waters, Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.
6. Be alert for gas leaks. Do not smoke or use candles, or open flames until you know the area has been ventilated.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM FLOOD DAMAGE

Moving outdoor furniture and relocating downstairs furniture to upper stories or higher locations will minimize loss. Sandbags can be placed to help slow down flood waters reaching your possessions.

Retrofitting, grading a yard and correcting drainage problems are ways to minimize loss prior to floods occurring. Retrofitting involves building flood walls, elevating a structure, etc. The City of New Port Richey's Building Official can assist property owners in these techniques.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

New buildings in the flood plain must be protected from flood damage. Our building code requires that new residential buildings must be elevated one foot above the base flood elevation. The ordinance also requires that all substantial improvements to a building must be treated as a new building. A substantial improvement is when the value of an addition, alteration, repair or reconstruction project exceeds 50% of the value of the existing building. In the case of an addition, only the addition must be protected. In the case of an improvement to the original building, the entire building must be protected. Additionally substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards e.g., a residence damaged so that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged must be elevated above the base flood elevation.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

The City has a system of drainage channels and ditches for storm water management purposes. They are maintained on a regular basis by our Public Works Department. These ditches are of vital importance since the water flowing through them not only drains our city, but also inland areas. State law prohibits dumping in these waterways. Our City Code prohibits any littering or dumping in any manner or amount. Violations should be reported to the Police Department at 841-4550.

HURRICANE EVACUATION

Be prepared for a HURRICANE EVACUATION ORDER. When a state of emergency has been declared by the Pasco County Office of Disaster Preparedness, ALL residents must evacuate the City of New Port Richey. The following information may save your life.

- 1) The majority of the City is classified as Evacuation level A, the most dangerous classification. Because New Port Richey is located on the Gulf of Mexico with elevation near sea level, **EXTREME FLOODING WILL BE IMMINENT.**
- 2) In the event of a HURRICANE, local radio stations and cable television systems will carry evacuation and emergency information for the entire Pasco County area.
- 3) If you are ordered to evacuate, make sure your home is secure and then leave immediately. If you live in a mobile home and an evacuation order is given, you must leave immediately. **DO NOT WAIT.** The roads will be extremely congested and the travel time required to go only 3 miles may take up to 2 hours!
- 4) Evacuation route signs are posted throughout the City. Travel only on your assigned evacuation route. Using any other route will only cause further delay or other routes may be closed by high water, storm damage, or by government authorities.
- 5) Anyone who fails to evacuate when ordered to do so is violating the law and is subject to arrest.
- 6) Before leaving for the shelter, turn off your electric power at the main panel, shut off the water valve coming into your house, and shut off the gas at the source.
- 7) **TAKE TO THE SHELTER:** Medicines (2 week supply), special dietary foods, blankets and/or sleeping bags, flashlight with extra batteries, portable radio with extra batteries, extra clothing, lightweight chairs/cots, personal items, cell phone and charger, games/toys for children, snacks, dry cereal, peanut butter and crackers.
- 8) Pets are not allowed in most shelters. Make arrangements to get them to a safe location now. A pet friendly shelter is available at the Mike Fasano Hurricane Shelter in Hudson at 11611 Denton Ave.
- 9) **DO NOT** take alcoholic beverages, pets, weapons, extra food other than special dietary items, or valuables to the shelter.
- 10) **DO NOT** leave the shelter until the "all clear" order is issued.
- 11) Notify your family where you will be and contact them as soon as possible after the "all clear" order.
- 12) Your County Office of Emergency Management registers residents who, because of age or handicap, will need assistance during an evacuation. You will be registered only if you have exhausted all other possible means of assistance. If you will need assistance, or if you need further information, please contact the Pasco County Office of Emergency Management at 847-8137 or the New Port Richey Police Department, 851- 4553.

BUY FLOOD INSURANCE

Homeowners insurance policies do not cover losses due to flooding. New Port Richey participates in the National Flood Insurance program which makes flood insurance available to everyone in the City. We strongly urge you to buy flood insurance to protect yourself from a devastating loss.

There is a 30 day waiting period before coverage goes into effect. Property owners can insure their buildings and contents; renters can insure their possessions. Just because you have not been flooded in the past does not mean you will not be flooded in the future. Information about flood policies is available from your insurance agent. Call them now so you will be prepared. Do not wait for a disaster to devastate your family! Flood insurance covers all surface floods.

RESOURCE PROTECTION BUFFERS FLOOD HAZARD REDUCTION

In our City, natural floodplain areas provide an excellent habitat for diverse wildlife and enhance water quality, as vegetation and soils found within the floodplain serve as water filters, intercepting surface water runoff before reaching the Gulf.

Because there are areas of wetlands in the City, there is native vegetation and wildlife which must be protected. The undeveloped floodplain areas lessen the effects of storm and flood waters by providing natural storage areas for flood waters and by buffering the coastal areas from storm surges, thus protecting human life and property from flood damage.

See Objective 1.8 of the New Port Richey 2030 Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element, which is available on the City's website here: <http://fl-newportrichey.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/954>

More information is available in Section III of New Port Richey's Land Development Code, which is available online here: www.municode.com/library/fl/new_port_richey/codes/code_of_ordinances

You are receiving this information because your property IS located in the flood plain & repetitive loss area!

FLOOD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

There are various websites that can help guide you with assistance if you are interested in mitigating your property. It is important to keep your flood insurance policy in force. Some grants and programs will only accept you if you have a current flood insurance policy. **For more information visit FEMA.gov, Disasterassistance.gov or Floodsmart.gov.**

When you return home be patient. Do not expect to be able to return home as soon as the storm passes. Authorities will need to assess the area first. Once major roads are cleared and safety hazards, such as downed power lines, are corrected, return orders will be given. Be sure to have a valid ID. Check points may be set up. After the storm passes, avoid the urge to sightsee. Roads should be left clear for emergency vehicles. Also, there may be dangerous situations such as dangling power lines, eroded roadbeds or snakes seeking dry ground. Enter your home with caution. Check for any obvious structural damage. Open the windows to allow your home to dry. Be alert for holes in the floor, loose boards, hanging or loose plaster, or other hazards.

Be careful of fire. Do not strike a match until you are sure there are no broken gas lines in the area. Do not take lanterns, torches or any kind of flame into a damaged building. If there has been flooding, have an electrician inspect your home or office prior to turning on the breaker.

Photograph damage to your home and property for insurance claims.

Wear sturdy shoes when walking through debris or broken glass, and use heavy gloves when removing debris. Protect yourself from contractor fraud. Hire only licensed contractors. Obtain a written estimate or contract. Insist on a start/completion date and payment terms in the contract.