



Hurricane Communications Template

For Administrators

Effective communication is crucial for health centers and clinics to ensure the safety and well-being of their patients and staff during hurricanes. This document provides guidance and sample messages that can be used to disseminate important information and alerts before, during, and after hurricanes.

Before a hurricane

Recorded phone message or email – preparedness and staying informed

A hurricane is expected in [impacted region].

You can look up risk for flooding at your home's location at [Riskfactor.com](https://www.riskfactor.com). This site will tell you the likelihood that flooding will occur at your address.

You can check for flood alerts and hurricanes/tropical storms on your phone, computer, or local news station. You can also get information on floods and hurricanes or tropical storms at [weather.com](https://www.weather.com).

In case you need to evacuate, keep a kit of emergency supplies ready so you can easily grab and go. [Clinic name] will remain [open / closed]. If open, specify hours and services provided

Know the difference between a flood warning and flood watch.

Flood warning is issued when flooding is happening or will happen soon. Some roads will be flooded.

Flood watch is issued when flooding is possible. Stay tuned to radio/TV/news media and be ready to seek higher ground.

Severe storms and hurricanes create conditions where injuries are more common. Know the risks to your health from hurricanes and floods and how to minimize them:

- Standing water – even as little as 6 inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- Power outages – if you use electric medical devices, you will need to have a back-up power plan in case you lose power.
- Infections – Standing water can contain bacteria and viruses that can cause disease. It can also serve as breeding ground for infection-transmitting mosquitos.
- Poor water quality – After severe storms, water may not be safe to drink, especially water from private wells. Listen for boil water advisories. Throw away any food and bottled water that may have contacted floodwater.

- Mold – Molds can grow after flooding, which can then cause coughs, congestion, and headaches as well as asthma flares.
- Electrocution – Strong winds can knock down or damage power lines. DO NOT touch any downed power lines or wade into standing water that power lines may have fallen into because this can electrocute you. Turn off the power to your appliances at the circuit breaker or fuse box if your home has flooded because wet appliances may also pose an electrocution risk.
- Falling trees, utility poles, and buildings – They can become unstable and fall on people and property.
- Carbon monoxide exposure – If you lose power, do not heat your home or cook by burning fuels such as wood or propane. These can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Social media post or text messages – preparedness (1-5 days in advance)

A hurricane is expected in [impacted region].

You can look up risk for flooding at your home's location at [Riskfactor.com](https://www.riskfactor.com). This site will tell you the likelihood that flooding will occur at your address.

You can check for flood alerts and hurricanes/tropical storms on your phone, computer, or local news station. You can also get information on floods and hurricanes or tropical storms at [weather.com](https://www.weather.com).

Potential for a hurricane exists in [impacted region]. Monitor weather forecasts for updates. Create an evacuation plan. You can find your evacuation zone and route here.

Get your emergency kit ready in case you need to evacuate.

Social media post or text messages (36 hours in advance)

A hurricane is approaching in [impacted region]. Monitor local media outlets for evacuation orders and prepare to evacuate. Know what evacuation zone your home is in and what the best evacuation routes are so that you can evacuate if needed. You can find your evacuation zone and route here.

During a hurricane

Social media post or text messages – prepare for evacuation

A hurricane is forecasted for [impacted region]. Pay attention to local media outlets for updates on the hurricane. Stay inside until you hear or see an official message that the hurricane is over. Stay away from windows because you can get hurt by pieces of broken glass or flying debris. Stay in a room with no windows or go inside a closet. Turn off gas and water supplies before you evacuate.

Keep your emergency supply kit ready to go. Remember to bring:

- All medications plus an extra stock for 7 days
- Medical paperwork, including a list of all conditions, medications, and dosages taken
- Charged essential medical equipment and back-up batteries
- All assistive devices including eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids, and communication devices

[Clinic name] is open for [specify services] services from [opening time] to [closing time]. Due to damage at our normal location, we are currently providing services at [address / location].

Note: Only include the second sentence if your clinic has changed location

After a hurricane

Recorded phone message or email – clinic status

[Clinic's name] has / has not experienced significant damage as a result of the hurricane. We are working to get all services up and running as soon as possible.

To the degree possible, provide a brief overview of the damage and steps taken so far towards restoration.

Social media post or text messages – clinic status and safety

Like you, the clinic staff have just been allowed back into [impacted area] and we will begin inspecting the damage to our facility. Stay safe as you begin to assess the damage to your home. Remember:

Do not enter your home until it is safe to do so

Look for obvious structural damage, downed power lines and the smell of gas. Alert utilities companies as necessary.

Hurricanes can cause contamination of ground water. Check [local resource] to know what water quality safety measures are in place for your protection.

Notes: