

Evacuations are more common than many people realize. Hundreds of times each year, transportation and industrial accidents release harmful substances, forcing people to leave their homes. Fires and floods cause evacuations even more frequently. Almost every year, people along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts evacuate in the face of approaching hurricanes.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE CITY OF WARWICK EVACUATION MAP](#)

When community evacuations become necessary, local officials provide information to the public through the media. In some circumstances, other warning methods, such as sirens or telephone calls, also are used. Additionally, there may be circumstances under which you and your family feel threatened or endangered and you need to leave your home, school, or workplace to avoid these situations. The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. If the event is a weather condition, such as a hurricane that can be monitored, you might have a day or two to get ready. However, many disasters allow no time for people to gather even the most basic necessities, which is why planning ahead is essential.

Coastal/Hurricane Evacuation Information

- Develop a family evacuation plan before an actual storm threatens your area.
- Be familiar with the low lying areas you may live around or have to pass through to evacuate (For coastal communities these areas can be seen on the Rhode Island Coastal Evacuation Maps).
- If ordered to evacuate, do not wait or delay your departure.
- If possible, leave before local officials issue an evacuation order for your area. Even a slight delay in starting your evacuation will result in significantly longer travel times as traffic congestion worsens.
- Select an evacuation destination that outside of the affected area.
- In choosing your destination, keep in mind that the hotels and other sheltering options in most inland metropolitan areas are likely to be filled very quickly in a large hurricane evacuation event.
- If you decide to evacuate, you must be prepared to wait in traffic.
- The large number of people in this state who must evacuate during a disaster will probably cause massive delays and major congestion along most designated evacuation routes; the larger the disaster, the greater the probability of traffic jams and extended travel times.
- If possible, make arrangements to stay with the friend or relative who resides closest to

your home and who will not have to evacuate. Discuss with your intended host the details of your family evacuation plan well before the threat of an evacuation.

- If a hotel or motel is your final intended destination during an evacuation, make reservations before you leave. Most hotel and motels will fill quickly once evacuations begin. The longer you wait to make reservations, even if an official evacuation order has not been issued for your area or county, the less likely you are to find hotel/motel room vacancies, especially along interstate highways and in major metropolitan areas. Find Pet-Friendly hotels and motels.
- If you are unable to stay with friends or family and no hotels/motels rooms are available, then as a last resort, go to a shelter. Remember, shelters are not designed for comfort and do not usually accept pets. Bring your disaster supply kit with you to the shelter and make arrangements for your pets.
- Make sure that you fill up your car with gas, before you leave. Preferably a day before you evacuate or you may find yourself stuck in long lines.
- Do not attempt re-entry to an affected area until the officials say it is ok.

Evacuation is never easy and evacuees should be prepared for the following:

- Extremely heavy traffic with slow highway speeds; residents and tourists in highly vulnerable areas (shaded in yellow and green on RI Coastal Evacuation Maps) should leave the areas sooner rather than later;
- Access to gas stations, restaurants and restroom facilities will be severely limited;
- No one should enter an evacuation route without a full tank of gas;
- Evacuees should bring their Shelter Go Kit and have their Car Emergency Kit ready when evacuating;
- Evacuees must obey all special traffic signs and law enforcement orders;
- Disabled vehicles should be removed from the travel lanes, if possible;
- Dial 9-1-1 only when there is a life-threatening emergency;
- Motorists should avoid slowing down or stopping to talk to emergency workers except in a life threatening emergency or if requested by emergency worker.

The amount of time it takes to evacuate an area depends upon a variety of factors that include the size of the vulnerable population, high hazard areas and transportation routes. Evacuation is a difficult process for not only the evacuee who may spend hours waiting in traffic, but also for those emergency officials who must devote their skills to ensuring residents are moving as quickly and safely as possible.