

Don't panic till the Waffle House closes. Do one section a month and you won't have to.

Florida's emergency team says your kit should last your family at least 7 days. Batteries, tarps, smoke alarms, and fire extinguishers are tax-free in Florida all year. Find most of this at Publix, on Amazon, or at stores near you.

NOVEMBER Water

About \$40 to \$70 for a family of 4

- ☐ **Buy a case of water every time you go grocery shopping.**
Goal: 1 gallon per person, per day, for 7 days. A family of 4 needs 28 gallons. That's about 9 cases.
- ☐ **Grab a few big gallon jugs too.**
Handy for cooking and brushing teeth.
- ☐ **Keep it all inside, out of the sun.**

WICKS SAYS

Florida's got water everywhere. Just not in your kitchen when the storm hits. That's on Florida.

DECEMBER Food

About \$30 to \$60 per person

- ☐ **Stock 7 days of food you don't have to cook.**
Peanut butter, crackers, canned tuna, cereal, granola bars.
- ☐ **Buy a hand can opener.**
The electric one won't work with no power.
- ☐ **Get a cooler and ice packs.**
- ☐ **Paper plates, cups, and trash bags.**

WICKS SAYS

Power's out and Publix is closed? No chicken family deal for you. Plan ahead.

JANUARY Light and power

About \$50 to \$90

- ☐ **A flashlight for every person.**
- ☐ **Batteries for all of them.**
Tax-free in Florida all year.
- ☐ **A phone power bank. Keep it charged.**
- ☐ **A battery fan.**
Fans cool you, not the room, so only run it when you're in there.

WICKS SAYS

Your phone at 4 percent with no AC is scarier than a palmetto bug flying at your face.

FEBRUARY Insurance and papers

About \$10 to \$20, plus cash

- ☐ **Call about flood insurance.**
Regular homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding, and a new flood policy usually takes 30 days to start. Learn more at [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov).
- ☐ **Take photos of every room and your stuff. Save them to the cloud.**
Proof for insurance if anything gets damaged.
- ☐ **Put IDs, insurance cards, and policies in a waterproof pouch.**
- ☐ **Keep some cash in small bills.**
ATMs and card readers need power too.

WICKS SAYS

Buying flood insurance when the storm's on the news is like buying sunscreen after the sunburn.

MARCH Meds and first aid

About \$20 to \$40

- ☐ **Buy a first aid kit.**
- ☐ **Write down everyone's meds and doses.**
- ☐ **Keep a week of meds on hand.**
Ask your pharmacist about refilling early when a storm is coming.
- ☐ **Spare glasses and hearing aid batteries, if your family uses them.**

WICKS SAYS

Rain with a name? We chill. No meds? Not chill.

APRIL Pets and kids

About \$20 to \$50

- ☐ 7 days of pet food and water.
- ☐ A pet carrier and a leash.
- ☐ Photos of your pet's shot records on your phone.
- ☐ Diapers, wipes, and baby stuff, if you need them.
- ☐ Cards, books, and board games for no-power boredom.

WICKS SAYS

Your pet is not a person. But it still needs a go bag.

MAY The house

About \$40 to \$80, more for shutters

- ☐ Get shutters, or plywood cut to fit your windows.
Tape doesn't stop glass from breaking.
- ☐ Trim trees and clean out the gutters.
- ☐ Buy a tarp.
Tax-free in Florida all year.
- ☐ Get a weather radio.
- ☐ Look up your evacuation zone.
Type in your address at floridadisaster.org/knowyourzone and it shows your zone.
- ☐ Pick where you'd go and how you'd reach family.

WICKS SAYS

June 1, you're ready. Everybody else is fighting over the last loaf at Publix. What's going on out here?

STORM'S COMING The last-minute list

When a storm is headed your way

- **Fill your gas tank early.**
Lines get long and stations run out.
- **Charge every phone and power bank.**
- **Fill the bathtub with water.**
For flushing and washing, not drinking.
- **Turn the fridge and freezer to the coldest setting.**
Freeze some water bottles to keep food cold longer.
- **Bring in patio chairs, trash cans, and anything that can fly.**
- **A tropical storm is rain with a name. Still watch for flooding and know your zone.**
A watch means it could hit. A warning means it's coming.

WICKS SAYS

It don't get serious till the Waffle House closes. But if officials say go, you go.

A starter list for planning, not official emergency advice. Always follow your county emergency officials. Prices are rough 2026 estimates and change by store. Official info: floridadisaster.org, floridarevenue.com/DisasterPrep, floodsmart.gov, and nhc.noaa.gov.