

2026 HURRICANE SURVIVAL GUIDE

PREPARE NOW  STAY SAFE  SURVIVE THE STORM



MAKE
A PLAN



BUILD
A KIT



PROTECT
YOUR HOME



STAY
INFORMED



HELP YOUR
COMMUNITY

Message from the StormTrack 3 Team

For those of us who call the Cape Fear home, hurricane season is a reality we face every year. From the beaches of Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties to communities along the Cape Fear River and inland, tropical storms and hurricanes have left lasting impacts on our region. And looking ahead, they will do so again.

While every storm is different, one thing remains the same: preparation is our best defense. Whether it's the threat of damaging winds, flooding rains, storm surge, tornadoes or extended power outages, severe weather can develop quickly and change lives in a matter of hours.

The good news is that the steps you take today can help protect your family, your property and your peace of mind when a storm threatens the Cape Fear coast.

In this WWAY Hurricane Guide, you'll find expert advice, emergency planning resources, evacuation information and practical tips to help you prepare before, during and after a storm.

You'll also learn how to stay connected with the latest forecasts, watches, warnings and coverage from the WWAY StormTrack 3 Weather Team throughout hurricane season.

Our goal is simple: to help every family across southeastern North Carolina stay informed, stay prepared and stay safe.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30. Now is the time to make a plan, build your emergency kit, review your insurance coverage and know what you'll do if a storm threatens our coast.

Because when the next hurricane forms in the Atlantic, your preparation can make all the difference.

Stay ready. Stay informed. Stay safe.

— WWAY Chief Meteorologist Lee Haywood

WWAY Hurricane Guide: Preparing the Cape Fear for Hurricane Season

Hurricane season poses serious threats across southeastern North Carolina including storm surge, river flooding, tornadoes, dangerous winds and prolonged power outages.

The WWAY StormTrack 3 meteorologists encourage residents to prepare before storms threaten the region. Residents in Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties face increased storm surge risks, while Bladen and Columbus counties frequently experience inland flooding along rivers and low-lying communities. Preparation starts before the storm forms.



Pictured from left to right: Charles McKeller;
Chief Meteorologist Lee Haywood; Jason Korver

Stay Connected During Hurricane Season

Follow WWAY and the StormTrack 3 Team for:

- Hurricane watches and warnings
- Live radar coverage
- Flood alerts
- Evacuation information
- School and government closures
- Recovery updates

Print this page and add your contacts and keep this page with your Hurricane Survival Kit. County Directories can be found on pages 22 – 26.

County Emergency Management: _____

Utility Company: _____

Family Contacts: _____

Scan Here to Download Complete Guide:



Common Hurricane Myths

MYTH	REALITY
Opening windows equalizes pressure	Opening windows can increase damage
Tape protects windows	Tape does not prevent windows from breaking
Category 1 storms are not dangerous	Lower-category storms can still produce deadly flooding and tornadoes

Hurricane History

Top 7 Costliest Hurricanes 1900 - 2024

①	Hurricane Katrina 2005	\$201.3 Billion
②	Hurricane Harvey 2017	\$160.0 Billion
③	Hurricane Ian 2022	\$119.6 Billion
④	Hurricane Maria 2017	\$115.2 Billion
⑤	Hurricane Sandy 2012	\$88.5 Billion
⑥	Hurricane Ida 2021	\$84.6 Billion
⑦	Hurricane Helene 2024	\$78.7 Billion

*Costs are based on 2024 Consumer Price Index adjusted cost

Hurricane Survival Guide

Hurricane season brings serious risks to coastal and inland communities. This guide provides essential information to help you prepare for, survive, and recover from hurricane threats. Review this information before hurricane season begins and keep it accessible throughout the storm season.

Know Your Risks

Southeastern regions can face multiple hurricane hazards, including **hurricane-force winds, storm surge, inland flooding, tornadoes, river flooding, and power outages**. Areas near rivers and low-lying communities can flood even if the storm makes landfall far away, so plan for impacts beyond the coastline.

Southeastern North Carolina Faces:

- Hurricane-force winds
- Inland flooding
- River flooding
- Storm surge
- Tornadoes
- Power outages

Areas near rivers and low-lying communities can flood even if the storm makes landfall far away.

Hurricane Categories

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale

Category 1	74-95 MPH	Some Damage
Category 2	96-110 MPH	Extensive Damage
Category 3	111-129 MPH	Devastating Damage
Category 4	130-156 MPH	Catastrophic Damage
Category 5	157+ MPH	Catastrophic Damage

Hurricane Alerts

Alert Type	What it Means
<p>Hurricane Watch = Be Prepared</p>	<p>Conditions are possible. Typically issued up to 48 hours before expected impacts. This is when you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review plans <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel vehicles <input type="checkbox"/> Gather supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Charge devices
<p>Hurricane Warning = Take Action</p>	<p>Conditions are expected. Typically issued within 36 hours. This is when you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take action immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter or evacuate <input type="checkbox"/> Complete all preparations

Hurricane Safety Tips

Action: Evacuating

- Leave if in mandatory evacuation zone
- Protect and secure home before evacuating
- Follow evacuation routes; no shortcuts
- Have AT LEAST 3 days of supplies
- Have 1 month supply of medication
- Wait until officials clear you to return home

During the Hurricane: Stay Safe

- Stay indoors in an interior room away from windows
- Monitor weather updates continuously
- Be prepared for **power outages**
- Remain indoors until officials give the **all-clear**
- Cover windows with storm shutters or plywood
- Have at least **2 weeks** of supplies
- **Do NOT** go outside during the eye of the storm

After the Hurricane

Stay cautious after conditions improve.

Wait for local officials to give the all-clear before venturing out.

- Downed power lines
- Flooded roads
- Damaged buildings
- Generator dangers (carbon monoxide)
- Spoiled food

Stay informed through official channels and have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts. Your preparation today can save lives tomorrow.

Flooding is the Biggest Threat

Flooding is one of the leading causes of hurricane-related deaths in North Carolina. Communities near the Cape Fear River, Black River, Lumber River and Waccamaw River remain especially vulnerable during tropical systems. Never drive through flooded roads. Turn Around, Don't Drown.

Turn Around, Don't Drown.

Flood Safety Tips:

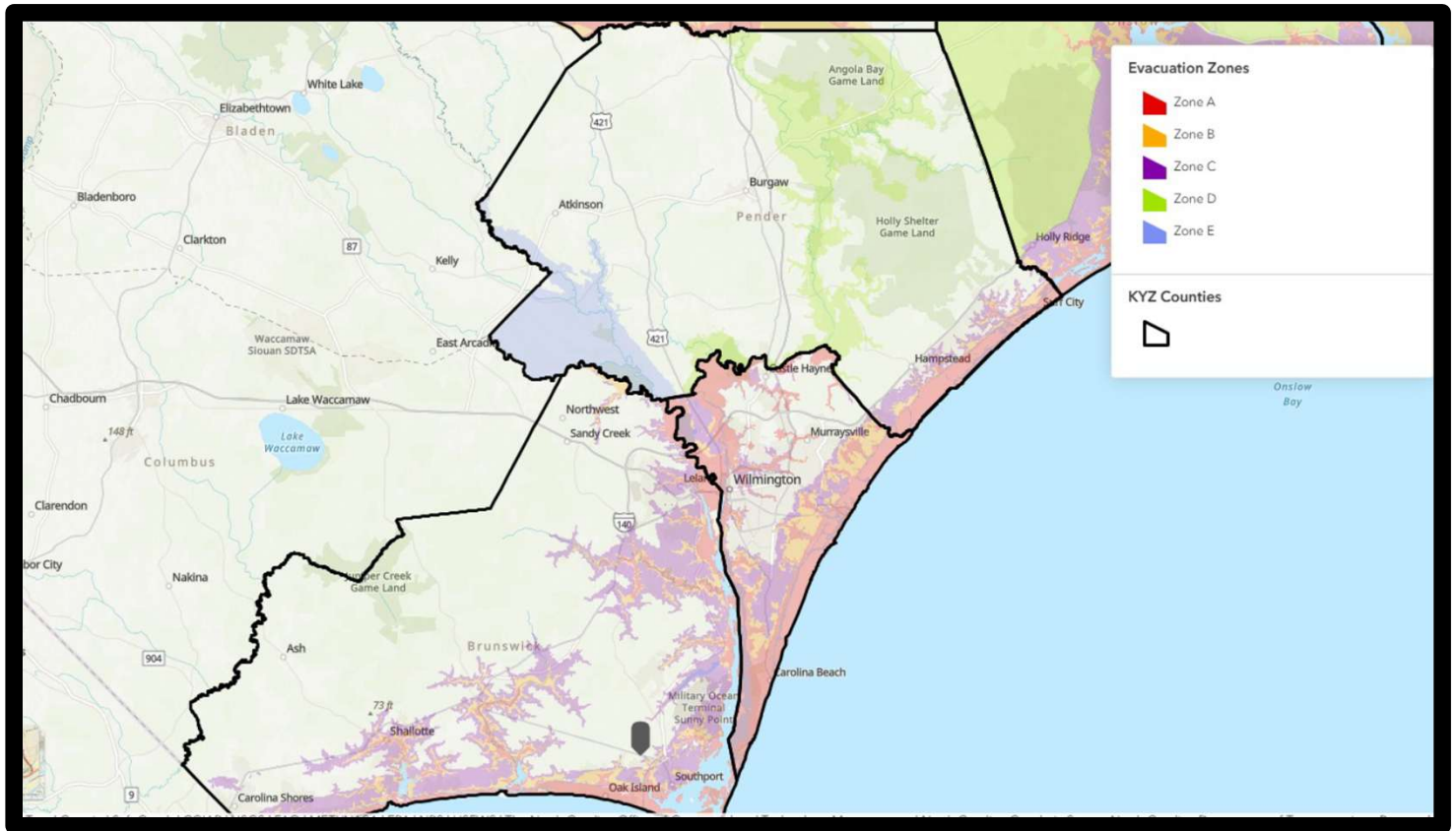
- Avoid flooded roads
- Move to higher ground immediately
- Stay away from downed power lines
- Monitor NOAA Weather Radio
- Follow WWAY StormTrack 3 updates

Scan Here to Download Complete Guide:



Know Your Zone

Evacuation zones for southeastern North Carolina coastal counties.



North Carolina uses a color-coded evacuation zone system to help determine which residents should evacuate first during hurricanes and tropical storms. Residents should know their evacuation zone before hurricane season begins.

Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties use evacuation zones. If officials issue an evacuation order, Zone A evacuates first. Additional zones follow if needed. Know your zone before hurricane season begins.

Print this page and add your zone, shelter and evacuation route. Keep this page with your Hurricane Survival Kit.

Write it down before the storm

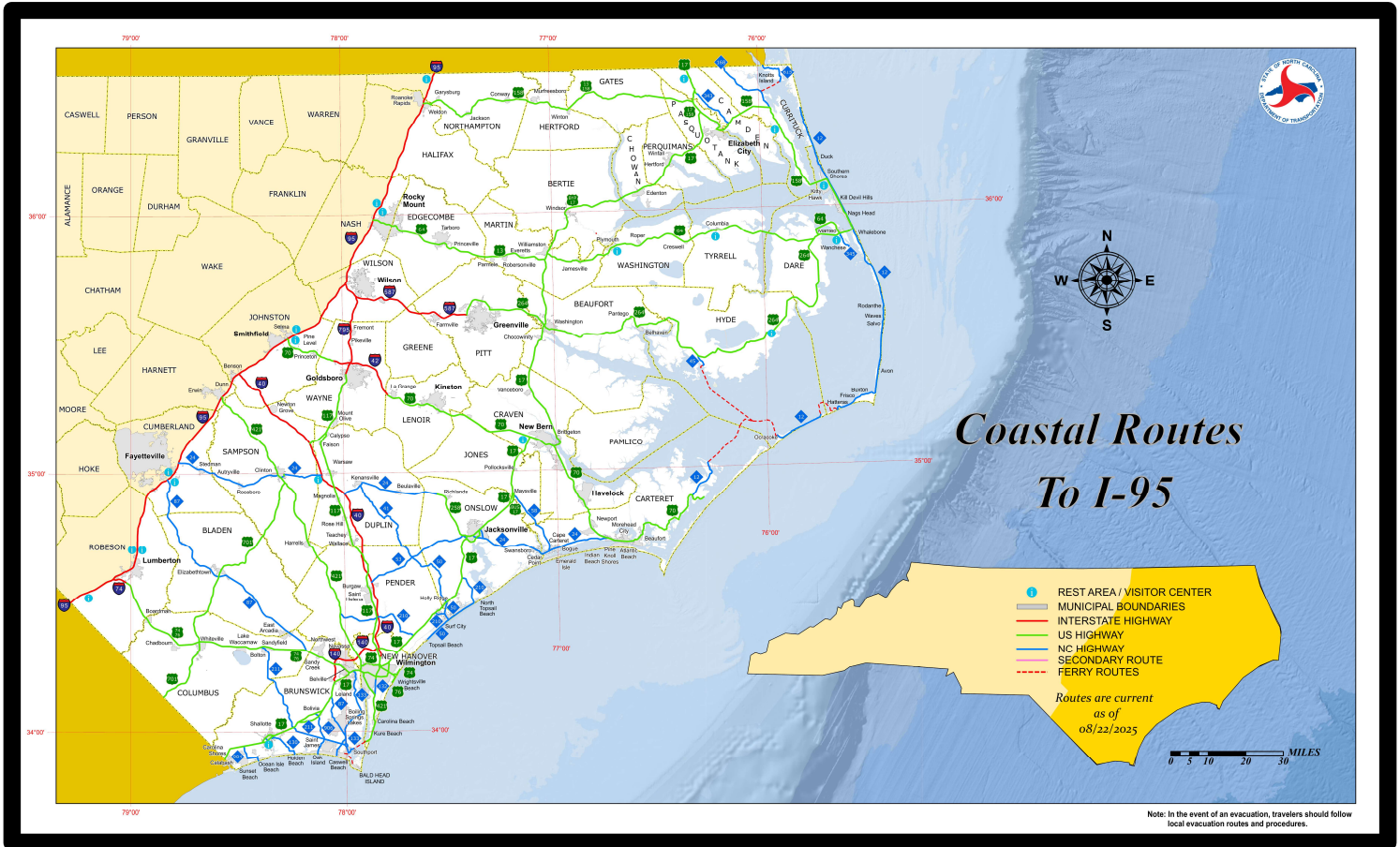
Zone: _____

Shelter: _____

Evacuation route: _____

Know Your Zone

Major Coastal Evacuation Routes



Coastal evacuation routes across eastern North Carolina leading inland toward Interstate 95.

Preparedness Checklist

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Before the Storm

- Know your evacuation zone
- Fill vehicles with gas
- Charge phones and batteries
- Review insurance policies
- Secure outdoor items

Special Considerations

Families with Children	Older Adults	Pet Owners
Formula, diapers, comfort items	Medication list, medical equipment backup power	Food, water, vaccination records, leashes and carriers

Print this page and add your information. Keep this page with your Hurricane Survival Kit.

Family Notes:

Emergency Contact(s): _____

Meeting Location: _____

Out-of-town Contact: _____

Preparedness Checklist

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Build Your Emergency Kit

- Water** (1 gallon per person per day for at least 3 days)
- Non-perishable food** (3-day supply)
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- First aid kit
- Weather Radio
- Water-filled Bathtub
- Medications** (at least 7-day supply)
- Cash** and important documents in waterproof container
- Phone chargers and portable power banks
- Personal hygiene items
- Pet supplies (food, water, medications, carriers)
- Tools and supplies (manual can opener, duct tape, plastic sheeting)
- Comfort items for children

Generator Safety

Key Safety Guidelines

Placement and Ventilation

Generators must be used outdoors in a well-ventilated area, at least 15 – 20 feet away from windows, doors, and vents to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Never operate a generator inside your home, garage, or shed, even with doors or windows open.

Consider using a canopy or generator tent to protect it from rain while ensuring proper airflow.

Carbon Monoxide Precautions

Generator exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, and deadly gas. Install battery-operated CO alarms in your home and garage to alert you to dangerous levels. If you feel dizzy, weak, or nauseous while using a generator, move to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

Refueling Safety

Never refuel a generator while it is running or hot. Allow it to cool for several minutes before adding fuel to prevent fires or explosions. Use only the fuel recommendation by the manufacturer and store it in approved containers.

Electrical Safety

- Do not plug a generator into a home outlet, this can cause back feeding, endangering utility workers and damaging appliances.
- Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords to connect appliances directly to the generator.
- If connecting to your home's electrical system, hire a licensed electrician to install an approved automatic transfer switch.

Maintenance and Preparation

Regularly inspect and maintain your generator, including oil changes, air filters, and spark plug. Test it periodically before hurricane season to ensure it operates reliably. Keep spare parts and fuel stabilizers on hand.

Weather Protection

Operate generators on a dry, level surface. Avoid running them in rain or wet conditions to prevent electric shock. Ensure your hands are dry when handling the generator.

Pet Safety

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Essential Pet Emergency Supplies

Food and Water

- At least 5–7 days of pet food
- Bottled water for each pet
- Food and water bowls
- Manual can opener for canned food

Medications and Medical Records

- 1–2 weeks of medications
- Copies of vaccination records
- Prescription information
- Contact information for your veterinarian
- Basic pet first aid supplies

Safety and Containment

- Sturdy carrier or crate for each pet
- Leashes and harnesses
- Muzzle if needed for stressed animals
- Litter box and litter for cats
- Waste bags and cleaning supplies

Comfort Items

- Blankets or towels
- Favorite toys
- Treats
- Familiar bedding to reduce anxiety

Important Documents

- Keep copies in a waterproof bag or digitally on your phone:
- Vaccination records
- Microchip information
- Proof of ownership/photos
- Emergency contacts

Pet Safety

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Before the Storm: Make a Pet Emergency Plan

Know Where You'll Go

- Identify pet-friendly hotels, shelters, boarding facilities, or friends/family outside evacuation zones.
- Do not assume every emergency shelter accepts pets.
- Have at least two backup locations in case your first option is full.

Update Identification

- Make sure pets wear collars with current ID tags.
- Microchip pets and keep registration information updated.
- Keep recent photos of your pets in case you become separated.

Prepare a Pet Emergency Kit

- Have supplies ready before hurricane season begins. Store items in waterproof containers if possible.

During a Hurricane:

Keep Pets Indoors

- Bring pets inside early before conditions worsen.
- Keep them in a secure room away from windows.
- Loud winds and thunder can frighten animals and cause them to run away

Never Leave Pets Behind

- If an area is unsafe for people, it is unsafe for pets. Animals left behind may become trapped in flooding, injured by debris, or unable to access food and water.

Maintain Routine if Possible

- Feed pets on a normal schedule.
- Walk dogs during breaks in severe weather only when safe.
- Keep cats indoors at all times during storms.

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Pet Safety sponsored by



Evacuation Safety for Pets

Transporting Pets

- Secure pets in carriers or crates while traveling.
- Never allow pets to roam freely inside vehicles during evacuations.
- Keep leashes on pets during stops.

What to Expect at Shelters

- Some emergency shelters accept pets, but rules vary:
- Pets may need proof of vaccinations.
- Animals may be housed separately from owners.
- Bring your own supplies, food, and crates.
- Service animals are generally allowed in all emergency shelters

Fish and Aquariums

- Keep battery-powered air pumps available during outages.
- Avoid sudden temperature changes.
- Have backup water treatment supplies.

Birds

- Cover cages during severe weather to reduce stress.
- Keep birds away from drafts and broken windows.

Livestock and Large Animals

- Move animals to higher ground if flooding is possible.
- Clearly label animals with owner information.
- Maintain trailers and transportation plans before storms develop.

Pet Safety

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After the Storm

Watch for Hazards

- Floodwaters and debris can hide dangerous objects or chemicals. Be cautious of:
 - Downed power lines
 - Sharp debris
 - Contaminated water
 - Wildlife displaced by flooding
 - Hot pavement and broken glass

Keep Pets Leashed

- Even familiar neighborhoods may look and smell different after a storm, causing pets to become disoriented.

Monitor Stress and Health

- Storms can trigger anxiety or illness in animals. Watch for:
 - Loss of appetite
 - Excessive panting or shaking
 - Hiding or aggression
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Contact a veterinarian if symptoms persist.

Pet Safety sponsored by



- Pet-friendly evacuation destination identified
- Carrier/crate ready
- Food and water packed
- Medications prepared
- Vaccination records copied
- Leash, harness, litter, waste bags included
- ID tags and microchip updated
- Recent pet photos saved

Hurricane Recovery Directory

Water Damage & Storm Restoration

- SERVPRO of New Hanover**
Phone: 910-762-8180
- Restore Pros of Coastal Carolina**
Phone: 910-994-5454
- A&I Fire and Water Restoration**
Phone: 910-799-5135
- Puroclean**
Phone: 910-793-8585

Roofing & Home Repair

- Patriot Roofing**
Phone: 910-218-0600
- Southern Premier Roofing**
Phone: 910-764-8640
- Choufani and Bailey Roofing**
Phone: 910-779-4778
- RoofCo**
Phone: 910-995-5903
- Flores & Foley**
Phone: 910-371-1400
- Harbor Roofing**
Phone: 910-262-5508

Hurricane Recovery Directory

Tree Removal, Land Clearing & Debris Cleanup

- Vinedresser Lawn and Landscape**

Phone: 910-352-6901

- Wilmington Tree Removal**

Phone: 910-782-4913

- Brinker Tree and Land Service**

Phone: 910-612-0476

- Paul Bunyan's Tree Service**

Phone: 910-799-6524

- Coastal Tree Trimmer**

Phone: 910-431-5731

- Klimb Pro Expert Tree Care**

Phone: 910-936-2202

Junk Removal & Property Cleanouts

- Cam's Junk Removal**

Phone: 910-297-0339

- Junkluggers**

Phone: 910-518-6281

- 1-800-Got-Junk Wilmington**

Phone: 910-530-1131

- All That Junk**

Phone: 910-863-1899

- College Hunks**

Phone: 910-473-5163

Hurricane Recovery Directory

NEW HANOVER COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITIES

- Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (water/sewer):
(910) 332-6550

- Duke Energy outages/customer service:
(800) 769-3766

- Piedmont Natural Gas:
(800) 752-7504

- Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA):
(910) 332-6550

NON-EMERGENCY

- New Hanover County non-emergency dispatch:
(910) 452-6120

- New Hanover County Sheriff's Office:
(910) 798-4200

- Wilmington Police Department:
(910) 343-3600

Hurricane Recovery Directory

BRUNSWICK COUNTY UTILITIES

- Brunswick EMC:
Phone: (800) 842-5871

- Duke Energy outages/customer service:
Phone: (800) 769-3766

- Piedmont Natural Gas:
Phone: (800) 752-7504

- Brunswick County Public Utilities:
Phone: (910) 253-2657

- H2GO (Belville/Leland area water & sewer):
Phone: (910) 371-9949

NON-EMERGENCY

- Brunswick County Sheriff's Office / non-emergency:
Phone: (910) 253-2777

- Alternate non-emergency dispatch line:
Phone: (910) 253-7490

- Project Homesafe
<https://www.brunswicksheriff.com/project-homesafe>

Hurricane Recovery Directory

BLADEN COUNTY UTILITIES

- Bladen County Water District:
Phone: 910-862-6996

- Duke Energy outages/customer service:
Phone: 800-769-3766

- Four County EMC:
Phone: 910-259-2171

- South River EMC:
Phone: 910-892-8071

- Piedmont Natural Gas:
Phone: 800-752-7504

NON-EMERGENCY

- Bladen County Sheriff's Office:
Phone: (910) 862-6960

Hurricane Recovery Directory

COLUMBUS COUNTY UTILITIES

- Columbus County Public Utilities:
Phone: (910) 640-6609

- Brunswick EMC:
Phone:(800) 842-5871

- Duke Energy outages/customer service:
Phone: 800-769-3766

NON-EMERGENCY

- Columbus County Sheriff's Office:
Phone:(910) 642-6551

- Whiteville Police Department:
Phone:(910) 642-5111

Hurricane Recovery Directory

PENDER COUNTY UTILITIES

- Pender County Utilities:
Phone: (910) 259-1570

- Duke Energy outages/customer service:
Phone:(800) 769-3766

- Jones-Onslow EMC:
Phone:(910) 353-1940

- Four County EMC:
Phone: (910) 259-2171

- Piedmont Natural Gas:
Phone:(800) 752-7504

NON-EMERGENCY

- Pender County Sheriff's Office:
Phone: (910) 259-1212

- Pender County Communications/dispatch:
Phone: (910) 259-1515