



## **PHPOA Evacuation and Recovery Guide**

This guide includes recommended preparation and evacuation procedures if a hurricane threatens the island and covers practical steps to be taken during the recovery stage. You need to be prepared to evacuate your home within twenty four hours and should be aware of the challenges that you may confront upon returning to your home. This guide will help you to make prudent decisions during very uncertain times.

The track, intensity and speed of the hurricane will dictate when the Governor of South Carolina issues a Mandatory Evacuation, but you should monitor media reports and be prepared to leave on short notice. For your own safety, you should consider leaving the island before a Mandatory Evacuation is announced.

Once a mandatory evacuation is announced, POA operations and security will immediately transition towards evacuation preparations. Once preparations are complete, the POA office will close, and security operations will cease so that all personnel can evacuate. Once we evacuate, the phone system will not be monitored. Communications will be restricted to email, the eblast system and SMS messaging. The primary means of communication will be through the email blast system. Responding to individual emails will be a challenge due to our limited personnel resources in the event of an evacuation.

**We want to be able to communicate important information about our community to you. Please make sure that you are receiving the Friday Flyer so that you receive important updates from the POA leading up to, during and**

**after the evacuation. The availability of medical assistance, law enforcement, power and water supplies may be non-existent. It is possible that all services will cease, and you will be on your own. It is never advisable to ignore a mandatory evacuation. Security and the POA are not equipped to assist residents who chose not to evacuate.**



The recovery process will likely be difficult and frustrating. The Beaufort County Emergency Management Department will announce when residents of Beaufort County are permitted to return home. Since Hilton Head is a barrier island, the Town of Hilton Head will advise once the island is ready to be opened.

Beaufort County Emergency Management Hurricane  
Hotline # 1-833-254-6400

Depending on the severity of the storm and flood surge, there may be significant property damage and an accumulation of storm debris. You may be confronted with the decision of whether to rebuild or repair and where to live during reconstruction.

There will be many challenges for the Hilton Head community to address in the event that a hurricane hits the island. For its part, the PHPOA will work with local, state and federal agencies to comply with applicable provisions of the law. The PHPOA has prepared an action plan and taken preventative measures to alleviate potential problems during the evacuation and recovery process. Contracts have been secured for debris clean-up through Crowder Gulf and the Town of Hilton Head. POA staff and Palmetto Hall Security are assigned specific tasks to prepare for an evacuation and the recovery process.

The POA, the Board of Directors and the Architectural Review Board will be working diligently with outside agencies to make the recovery process run smoothly for those having to rebuild or make significant repairs to their home. Contact the POA office if you would like to make arrangements to have copies of your plans and documents that the POA has on file. You can provide these files to the Town of Hilton Head to register for their Emergency Permitting program in the event that your property sustains damage during a hurricane.

**Please review the following information to be aware and be prepared.**

**Section 1 - Get ready now**

Prepare to get off the island quickly to avoid traffic congestion.

Maintain a folder of evacuation information including an evacuation route map. Refer to the South Carolina Department of Emergency Management and the Town of Hilton Head resource links on the POA website under the Hurricane/Weather Emergency Tab. Route maps are provided by SCDEM and the TOHH.

Document personal property and take photos of the exterior of your home.

Locate and label the main water shut-off valve.

Monitor the weather, particularly during Hurricane Season. June-November is the official hurricane season with the peak months being August- October.

Create a list of contacts and phone numbers who you might need to employ after a hurricane. Tree contractors, roofers, building contractors, plumbers, handyman electricians, landscapers etc....

Identify temporary housing options to be used during an evacuation. Pet owners should investigate whether pets are permitted at your destination.

If your home is equipped with them, test the installation and operation of hurricane shutters, fabric or panels. Identify who will install the hurricane protection and confirm their availability.

Establish an emergency communication plan, including a central contact, such as a friend or relative living out of state, in case family members become separated and lose communications.

**Verify that you are receiving communications from the POA office. The Friday Flyer is sent every week. This email blast system is crucial for maintaining consistent contact during evacuations. Messages will be sent frequently during an evacuation.**

Make a list of what you will pack to take with you during an evacuation. Emphasis should be placed on items such as cash, credit cards, driver's license, prescriptions, or things that cannot be replaced such as vital documents, family photos and heirlooms.

Compile items to include in an Evacuation Supply Kit:

- Insurance policy and agent contact information
- Cleaning supplies; bleach, gloves rags
- Device chargers
- Water (store some in your home for use upon return)
- Alternative cooking source, such as a Sterno stove, charcoal grill or propane grill
- Non-perishable food (canned meats, fish, vegetables, soups, pudding)

- Non-electric can opener
- Disposable plates, glasses, and utensils
- Toilet paper
- Disposable washcloths
- Matches and candles
- Camera or smart phone to document the damage to your house upon return
- Non-electric clock radio with extra batteries
- Flashlights with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Insect repellent – you will need plenty when you return home
- Blankets and pillows
- Garbage bags

Prepare to be gone for at least 48-72 hours. Keep your disaster supply kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you need to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.

## **Section 2 – Prior to a Mandatory Evacuation**

Monitor the media for weather advisories, news and communications from the Governor if a Mandatory Evacuation is announced.

Identify a location to evacuate to and book your accommodations early. Personally notify family members and friends about your evacuation plans. **It is strongly recommended that you refrain from posting on social media your evacuation plans.**

Use the Evacuation Map to plan your route.

Secure outdoor objects that might become flying debris (garbage cans, porch furniture, etc.).

Top off fuel tanks of vehicles and load up with necessary items.

Move gas/BBQ grills to garage and turn off gas at the tank.

Turn off gas at any outdoor propane tank, contact your propane supplier if you need assistance.

Turn off the water at the shut-off valve after first filling a bathtub with storage water. Make sure circuit breaker for the hot water heater is off.

Place tightly rolled towels at the base of each outside door.

Install hurricane shutters, if available.

Disconnect power, internet connection, computers, monitors and electronics.

Turn off all lights and unplug all electrical items. You may prefer to turn off power at all non-essential circuit breakers. Leave AC and refrigerator on.

Close all drapes, blinds, and interior doors.

Lock all doors and windows.

Consider moving valuable items to higher elevations inside your home.

Check on fellow neighbors that may need assistance during the evacuation process.

Complete an Evacuation Checkout Form provided on the POA website under the Hurricane/ Weather Emergency tab and return it to Security. This information will be provided to Hilton Head Fire and Rescue.

### **Section 3 – If you ignore the Mandatory Evacuation and decide to stay in your home**

Security officers will be ordered to evacuate, and first responders may not be available. At the front gate, entrance lanes gate arms will remain in a locked and

open position. Electricity and a clean water supply may not be available. **Ignoring the Mandatory Evacuation Order is dangerous and is NEVER advisable.**

Remain indoors during the hurricane. Blowing debris can injure and kill. Travel is extremely dangerous. Be especially aware of the “eye” of the hurricane. If the storm center passes directly overhead, there will be a lull in the wind lasting for a few minutes to a half hour or more. At the other side of the eye, the winds will increase rapidly to hurricane force and will come from the opposite direction.

Storm surge is a great dome of water often 50 miles wide, which sweeps across the coastline near where the eye of the hurricane makes landfall. The surge, aided by the hammering effect of breaking waves, is like a giant bulldozer sweeping everything in its path. The stronger the hurricane, the higher the storm surge. This is unquestionably one of the most dangerous part of the hurricane. Nine out of ten hurricane fatalities are caused by the storm surge.

The floods and flash floods brought by the torrential rains of a hurricane are dangerous killers. Even though hurricanes weaken rapidly as they move inland, the remnants of the storm can bring 6 to 12 inches of rainfall to the areas it crosses. The resulting floods have caused great damage and loss of life.

The winds of a hurricane (70 mph or more) are very dangerous and can spawn tornadoes. The greatest threat from hurricane winds is their cargo of debris – a deadly barrage of flying missiles such as lawn furniture, signs, roofing, trees and branches, siding, etc.

Tie a piece of white cloth (i.e. t-shirt, rag, pillow case) on the mailbox to alert emergency responders that you remained in your house and ignored the Mandatory Evacuation.

#### **Section 4 – If you evacuated and are returning home for the recovery process**

Email blasts and our SMS System will be the POA’s primary source of communications. The Palmetto Hall POA will be receiving updates from the Town of Hilton Head Island as well as Beaufort County. All pertinent information will be forwarded to those on our email distribution list.

Beaufort County issues hurricane reentry passes ( for early reentry) to a limited number of POA personnel and security so that preparations can be made for the return of residents to each community. Once security and POA personnel have gained access to the community, the POA will provide updates, to include information on roads, ground conditions in the community, TOHH information, as well as details on schedules for reopening.

The Beaufort County Emergency Management Department will announce when property owners are permitted back into Beaufort County. Instructions about returning to the island will come from the Town of Hilton Head Island. There may be a delay if the island is too badly impacted and is not accessible even if the rest of Beaufort County is open.



**Upon returning to your residence....**

Walk around and check the structure before entering. If unsure of its safety, do not go in.

Do not turn on or touch electrical outlets or panel boxes if you are near any standing water.



Follow the recommendations of your insurance company for property damage claims.

Don't drink tap water until local utility officials state that the water supply is normal. Even then, run the water for several minutes before using it.

Watch for snakes, alligators, wild dogs or other wildlife that may be displaced and dangerous.

If you must throw away valuables, take photographs of them for insurance purposes.

Take pictures of exterior damage to structure and trees.

Conserve water used for cooking.

Disinfect tap water. Boil for five minutes. Add 16 drops (1/4 teaspoon) of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon (providing the bleach contains hypochlorite as its only ingredient). Let the water stand unopened for one hour before drinking. Boil water from toilet tank or bathtub for five minutes before using.

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning after floodwaters to avoid infection from sewage and other contaminants

Wear thick-soled shoes at all times to avoid injury or possible infections from floodwaters.

If not already off, flip the main circuit breaker to the off position, and do the same with all other breakers in the box.

Be sure that the main electrical connection to your house is not damaged (this connection is located near the meter). If it is detached or damaged, an electrical repairman must fix it before the power company will reconnect.

If you have not already done so, unplug any appliances that use motors, such as computers, TV, refrigerator, DVD, washer/dryer, hair dryer, etc. If there is

something wrong with the power supply, they can be seriously damaged when the power returns.

Do not connect portable generators directly to the panel box - use an extension cord plugged into the generator for appliances. Do not run a generator indoors.

Flip the main breaker to the on position when you know your power has been restored. Then start flipping other circuits on, one at a time, starting with the single breakers which carry a lighter load. If the breaker stays in the on position, it should be ok. (If it flips back to off, leave it there, because you'll need an electrician to fix it.) Next, turn on the breakers that are hooked together and which supply power to large appliances, such as HVAC, refrigeration, etc. Don't plug in any appliances yet. Go ahead and turn on the lights. Once the lights are on, try to determine if they are as bright as they used to be. If they appear dimmer, there could be a faulty connection in the negative (ground) wiring in the house. This reduced power is what can destroy machines with motors. If the lights seem too dim, immediately flip the main circuit to off. If your lights seem as bright as usual, turn off the circuits for the large appliances, plug them in, and then flip the switch on again. If the breakers stay in the on position, your electricity is probably OK.

A significant amount of landscape debris may be strewn on your property. It is the responsibility of each Property Owner to arrange to clear his/her property and bring the debris to the roadside, cut into 5 foot lengths. It is recommended that residents use a local tree contractor who possesses proof of insurance and a TOHH business license.

A FEMA contractor will remove the landscape debris for disposal. The POA will communicate timelines for cleanup. This will require patience. The debris will be collected but it might take many weeks for the debris collection to commence.

## **Section 5 – If your property sustained damage or is destroyed - ARB Guidelines**

### A. General

Following a hurricane or other disaster, in which Hilton Head Island has legally been declared a disaster area, the following procedures will be in effect so that affected Property Owners can quickly restore their properties to habitable conditions. It is the intent to maintain the high quality of Palmetto Hall's residential environment while keeping records and approvals of exterior design changes in order to maintain the integrity of our community's covenants.

Please review the ARB Standards and contact the POA office with any questions prior to the commencement of construction to remediate major damage to your home. Proceeding with work that falls outside the scope outlined below could result in fines.

## B. Procedure

The ARB maintains the files of available developed property plans and other documents. These files will be instrumental in effecting reconstruction, since the Town of Hilton Head Island will also have certain permit procedures in place for emergency repairs. In addition, Palmetto Hall requires the following:

1. Minor Damage – In situations where trees need to be removed, roofs need minor repairs, windows and/or doors need to be replaced and the building needs to be repainted because of minor exterior damage, no prior approval of the ARB will be required as long as no changes of any of the exterior finishes are made.

a. Tree removal is permitted when they have fallen on the ground, across structures or are leaning more than 30°. The removal of healthy trees without a POA permit may result in fines.

b. Roof repairs are permitted when involving less than 50% of the total roof surface (including garage) and the exact same materials match the texture and color of the existing roof.

c. Windows, doors and garage door replacement is permitted provided they match the color and type of the previous windows and doors.

d. Exterior wall material replacement is permitted when involving less than 50% of the total surfaces and the exact same materials match the texture and color of the existing surfaces.

2. Major Damage – In situations where the building is going to be reconstructed identically to the current updated plans on file with the ARB, a Residential Construction application will be required.

3. Destroyed – In situations where the building needs to be completely razed and rebuilt and the Property Owner decides to change the design, size or exterior materials in any way, the traditional ARB application and approval process will be required in accordance with the ARB Standards.

**In Conclusion,** hurricane preparation is crucial for those of us lucky enough to reside on Hilton Head Island. Individual homeowners should allocate time to making a hurricane evacuation plan that can be leveraged when needed. The Town of Hilton Head and its citizens recovered from Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Lessons were learned and those involved now know more about the process.

The Town of Hilton Head, along with its contractor Crowder Gulf is well equipped to assist the Hilton Head/Bluffton community again in the event of another disaster. The Palmetto Hall POA will endeavor to assist Palmetto Hall homeowners in every possible way to recover and restore the community in the event of another hurricane.