

Returning Home After a Hurricane

1. Pay attention to local officials for information and special instructions. Your local Emergency Operations Center has reliable and current information. Also refer to Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM.gov) and FEMA.gov for up to date information
2. Be careful during clean up. Wear protective clothing, use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning [mold or other debris](#). People with [asthma and other lung conditions](#) and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled, even if these individuals are not allergic to mold. Children should not help with disaster cleanup work.
3. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
4. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.
5. Do not wade in flood water, which can contain dangerous pathogens that cause illnesses. This water also can contain debris, chemicals, waste and wildlife. Underground or downed power lines also can electrically charge the water.
6. Save phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems often are down or busy after a disaster. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.
7. Document any property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company for assistance.
 - Photos/Videos of the interior and exterior of your home, narrate the video, smooth, slow pan shots with close up photos. Save to the cloud and send to someone outside of the disaster impacted area. Do Not Clean Up until after this is done
 - If you have to remove items, again...document, then save them until an insurance adjuster views the items. Wear protective gloves and masks to protect yourself from mold/mildew
 - Apply for FEMA Individual Assistance & save your FEMA ID, this can open many resources needed as you recover: <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/> or 1-800-621-3362, FEMA APP (google/apple) or visit your local Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)

- File an insurance claim and save the claim number
- Record the name, phone number and position of everyone you talk to- all calls and interactions concerning everything to do with your Helene recovery.
- Start a notebook and save everything including receipts for food, lodging, emergency repairs and anything else directly related to Hurricane Helene

Recovering from a disaster of this magnitude is a long and frustrating process. Take care of yourself and those you love; self-care is crucial and often ignored during a crisis. No entity can ever be fully prepared for a disaster of this scope! Remember: this is a marathon and not a sprint.

**And as always:
WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER**