

MAY 2010

SURVIVING THE STORM... IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

# COUNTY CONNECTION

*Hurricane & Safety News: E-Lert*

**INBOX**

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

Pinellas County Emergency Management: (727) 464-3800 | [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency)

Find your evacuation level: (727) 453-3150 | [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/knowyourzone.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/knowyourzone.htm)

Register for special needs transportation: (727) 464-3800 | [www.pinellascounty.org/forms/special-needs.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/forms/special-needs.htm)

Follow Pinellas County Emergency Management on Twitter: [twitter.com/PinellasEM](https://twitter.com/PinellasEM)

Sign up for the Community Notification Service to receive text emergency information on your cell phone: (888) 689-8905

Set your Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) equipped all-hazards alert radio for Pinellas County: Enter code 012103

If you know of someone who would like to receive the E-Lert newsletter, have them visit [www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/subscribe.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/subscribe.htm)

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## WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

**Institute of Business and Home Safety**

[www.disastersafety.org](http://www.disastersafety.org)



When you think about it, the vast majority of your day is spent either at home or at your place of work. Since that is the case, why not help to make those

## SALLY SAYS

### FROM THE DESK OF PINELLAS COUNTY'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

What were you doing 30 years ago on May 9? You may have been in school, looking forward to the end of the year activities. Maybe you were busily preparing a report for work, taking a trip, headed to a golf course or any one of dozens of activities that fill our busy lives on a typical day.

But, for the lives of many, May 9, 1980, was the day when the Tampa Bay area discovered what it's like to experience tragedy in its own backyard. That's the day that the M/V Summit Venture, a freighter trying to navigate the treacherous shipping channel in a blinding thunderstorm, collided with a support on the old Sunshine Skyway Bridge. A large section of the bridge gave way, and 35 people fell to their deaths.

The accident that morning also woke area residents to the fact that we live in an area that has a vulnerable infrastructure. This incident closed the bridge completely for days, and for the next seven years, all traffic was shunted to the untouched northbound span.

Now, think to yourself ... what if a hurricane were to come to the Tampa Bay area? What if the rising water and powerful waves damaged the Skyway, Howard Frankland, Gandy and Courtney Campbell bridges? What if it took weeks to repair just one of those structures to partially restore traffic flow over the bay?

### WOULD YOU BE READY?

Check your calendars. It is May. Hurricane season begins June 1, and it has now been 89 years since the last hurricane made a direct hit on Pinellas County. Nearly one million residents call the county home, and many of them would be looking to evacuate if a storm were coming. And they'd also be



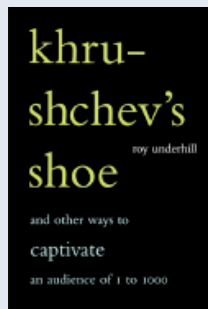
locations safer places to live and work? The Institute of Business and Home Safety is an organization dedicated to reducing the social and economic effects of natural disasters and other property losses by conducting research and advocating improved construction, maintenance and preparation practices. The site is full of information on how to improve the chances of your home and business surviving a disaster. Definitely worth a look.



### TOM'S BOOK OF THE MONTH

**What is Pinellas County's Hurricane Preparation Specialist Tom Iovino reading this month?**

*Khrushchev's Shoe: and other ways to captivate an audience of 1 to 1,000*  
By Roy Underhill  
ISBN- 13: 978-0738206721



A book that has absolutely nothing to do with disasters? Yes. Why? As E-Lert subscribers, you have an interest in disaster preparedness that goes beyond the average citizen's. And one day, you may have to explain to a neighbor, friend or coworker why you are making storm preparations while the sun is shining. Underhill looks at how people's perceptions affect the information they pay attention to and retain. It also explores effective methods of delivering that information to get the best involvement and results. The title refers to the famous incident that took place at the United Nations in 1960. Soviet

looking to return soon afterwards, which would most likely not be possible for a while. You can see why planning for yourself is so important. There are many factors to consider. One request I have of all citizens, "Stop planning for the events you have experienced here and instead plan for the realities that a true direct hit by a hurricane will bring." Utilize the information at your disposal and learn what those possibilities look like. Only with a clear picture can you best prepare yourself.

Now is the time to ask yourself if you have a minimum of one week's worth of supplies on hand. That includes food, medications, a gallon of water per person per day to drink, a cooler and other essentials. If you don't - the time has come to start preparing your supplies so you could survive a storm's impact.

The Skyway accident 30 years ago showed us that we live where our infrastructure is vulnerable. It would all be a waste if the lessons we learned that day and in other recent experiences weren't remembered as we move ahead.

Survivor or victim? The answer rests with you.

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## NEW EVACUATION MAPS ARE COMING

Pinellas County is a great place to call home. The white, sandy beaches and blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico still beckon visitors to come and play. The shady parks and preserves invite residents to come and enjoy a picnic in the not-too-hot-yet spring weather. The neighborhoods are still quaint and tree-lined.

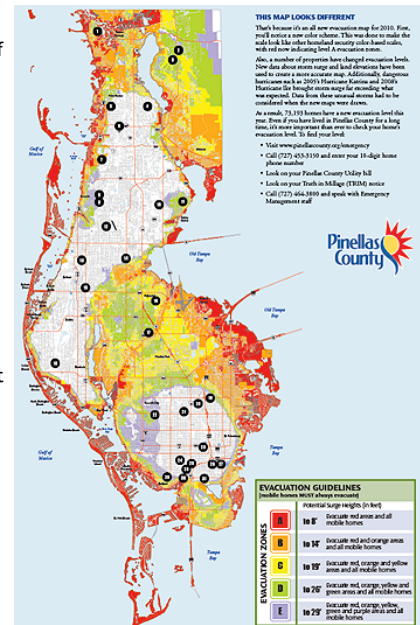
So, why are the evacuation maps changing? That's an excellent question, but first, how are evacuation maps created?

Twice in the past ten years a plane has flown over Pinellas County and used a device called a LIDAR - Light Detection and Ranging - to measure ground elevation above sea level. This geographic picture gives us the basis to determine how vulnerable all areas of the county are to flooding from storm surge during a hurricane. LIDAR technology has continually improved and this second round of measuring, with much better instruments and processes, has provided the next generation of data so that a more accurate evacuation map can be drawn.

Also, the National Hurricane Center frequently updates a sophisticated computer model called SLOSH - Sea, Lake and Overland Surge from Hurricanes - to determine how large of a storm surge will be pushed ashore during storms. This SLOSH model now runs thousands of simulations for hurricanes of different sizes approaching from different directions, making landfalls at different locations and at different forward speeds. For each run, the highest surge totals are determined. When all of these simulations are run, the highest water marks are marked out and shown on a map. The data from the SLOSH models gets better as more powerful computers are used.

Also, new data was created from unusual storms with devastating impacts - such as hurricanes Katrina and Ike - which had to be added to the calculations. While not considered typical storms, both brought much higher-than-expected surge to the areas they affected.

What does this mean for Pinellas County? New evacuation maps drawn from this data will be used this year. Over 73,000 properties will change evacuation levels in 2010. Please check your evacuation level to determine if it has changed, and be sure to adjust your plans accordingly.



Premiere Nikita Khrushchev believed his message wasn't being received by his audience, so he removed his shoe and banged it on the podium to emphasize his point. It made an indelible impression on his audience.

## MAY'S CHECKLIST



- As we approach hurricane season, carefully monitor weather forecasts daily to stay up to date on the latest conditions.

- May is a critical month to check your disaster survival kit. With the season just about to start, do a quick inventory of the essential supplies in your survival kit. Replace anything that is out of date and make sure that your kit reflects your family's current needs.

- Now is a great time to help your children get ready for the season. Have them pack their own survival kit with non-perishable food, favorite books and games and their own flashlight with extra batteries. This will help them feel some control over a potentially scary situation.

- Pinellas County Emergency Management is also tweeting on Twitter. You can follow these updates at [twitter.com/PinellasEM](http://twitter.com/PinellasEM) at your computer or on your cell phone. Configure your Twitter account by following the settings link on the Twitter page.

## WEATHER FACTS OF THE MONTH

- The World Meteorological Organization has established a rotating list of storm names that repeats every six years. The 2010 list of hurricane names will be the same as those used in 2004 ... you remember 2004? ... with the following exceptions:

Colin replaces Charley, a powerful Category 4 storm which appeared to be headed directly to Tampa Bay before taking a turn and landfalling in the Port Charlotte/Punta Gorda area.

Fiona replaces Frances, an enormous Category 2 storm that brought high winds to the Florida panhandle for nearly two days as it crossed.

Igor replaces Ivan, a devastating

You can find your new evacuation levels by checking the [Emergency Management website](#), calling (727) 453-3150 and entering your Pinellas County home phone number or by checking your utility bill or Truth in Millage notice sent from the Property Appraiser's office. If you need additional assistance it can be found at Emergency Management by calling (727) 464-3800.

You will also notice that the evacuation zone colors have changed as well. This new color scheme was decided on for statewide use and is in line with other color-based scales such as the Homeland Security scale.

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## WE ARE LESS THAN ONE MONTH AWAY

The 2010 Atlantic hurricane season starts on Tuesday, June 1. That means that now is the perfect time to complete your plans to survive a storm. This includes building your survival kit, finding your evacuation level and updating your list of important phone numbers.

Last year's hurricane season was one of the lightest on record, with only nine named storms and only three strengthening to hurricane intensity. Can you expect a repeat of that this year? Well, 2009 was in many ways like the record breaking 2005

season ... something unusual. Just as no one could have expected another record breaking year right after 2005, you shouldn't be looking at 2010 to be a repeat of last year's lack of activity.

Noted hurricane forecasters Dr. William Gray and Dr. Phillip Klotzbach are calling for an above-average year of activity for 2010. A weakening El Niño and other factors are being cited as indicators of a busier season. For more information on how they arrive at their forecasts, visit [hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu](http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu).

Are the forecasts always right? Well, weather is a complex system, and while season predictions have been made since the 1980s, they can't always predict exactly how many storms will form. Every year, they identify new factors that play a role in the number of storms, but, it's important to remember that even Drs. Gray and Klotzbach remind residents in vulnerable locations to prepare as if this is the year a storm will affect them. And if we have only one storm, but it hits Pinellas County, it will be an active year.

For the record, these are the storm names for the 2010 season.

Alex	Hermine	Otto
Bonnie	Igor	Paula
Colin	Julia	Richard
Danielle	Karl	Shary
Earl	Lisa	Tomas
Fiona	Matthew	Virginie
Gaston	Nicole	Walter

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## BUSINESS INTERRUPTION INSURANCE IS SURVIVAL INSURANCE

If a fire, hurricane or other major disaster destroys a business structure, property insurance will cover



Category 3 storm that made landfall in the Florida panhandle, moved through the Mid-Atlantic states, turned back toward Florida and regained its tropical characteristics before a second landfall in western Louisiana.

Julia replaces Jeanne, a Category 3 storm that made landfall two miles from where Frances made landfall three weeks earlier.

- The same list was used in the 1998 season, which saw deadly hurricanes Georges and Mitch. Both of those names were retired after that season.
- This list was also used in the 1992 season, when Category 5 Hurricane Andrew laid waste to areas south of Miami.
- Surprisingly, not all seasons that used this list of names saw terrible hurricanes. The 1986 season saw one of the lightest seasons on record, with only six storms forming and no names retired.

#### TUNE IN TO PCC-TV

*Inside Pinellas Today* is a daily look at the news, events and happenings from around



Pinellas County. *Inside Pinellas Today* is designed to help you stay informed and get connected with your Pinellas County government. (New shows Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 4:35 p.m.)



The E-Lert is a production of the Pinellas County Communications Department.



Click here to follow Pinellas County Emergency Management on Twitter.

#### THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

Click here to download. 

To view this newsletter online go to [www.pinellascounty.org/newsletters/e-lert/hurricane\\_news.html](http://www.pinellascounty.org/newsletters/e-lert/hurricane_news.html)

rebuilding, but what about other ongoing expenses? Payroll, taxes and utilities still must be paid - and business interruption insurance protects against the loss of income to meet these responsibilities. Business interruption insurance is part of the standard business owner's property insurance policy and cannot be purchased separately. An insurance agent can explain the plans that are available. The policy covers actual loss of net business income that would have been earned had it not been necessary to suspend operations due to a covered cause of loss.



What triggers the policy is direct physical damage to property. It covers lost earnings and expense of continuing normal operations. There is typically a waiting period of 48- to 72-hours before business interruption insurance kicks in.

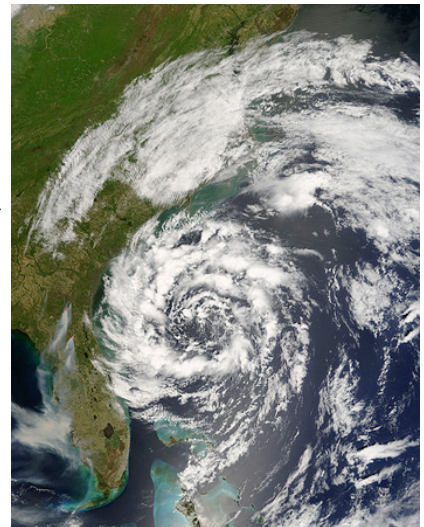
If a business is closed due to someone else's loss, there is no coverage under the standard policy; however, a business that is heavily reliant on a single vendor or supplier may consider adding "contingent business" interruption insurance. This provides coverage if physical damage happens to their property which impact your business. For more information on business insurance from the Insurance Information Institute at [www.InsuringFlorida.org](http://www.InsuringFlorida.org).

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## STORMS IN HISTORY

### SUBTROPICAL STORM ANDREA, MAY 9 - 11, 2007

As storms go, Subtropical Storm Andrea in May of 2007 was no big deal. It started out as the tail end of a cold front that had dropped over the Southeast in late spring. The first circulation was noted by the National Hurricane Center just east of South Carolina, and the storm began moving southwest toward the northern Florida coast. The winds in Andrea reached 60 miles per hour, but the storm never truly organized into a full blown tropical system. The storm wobbled for a few days off the coast of Jacksonville then started moving northwest in response to the arrival of another cold front.



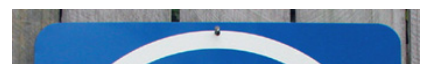
What made Andrea so notable was that it formed after a very dry winter and spring for the Southeast. A series of large wildfires had been burning for weeks in the Okefenokee Swamp in southern Georgia. The winds blowing from the north on the west side of the storm carried smoke and ash from the fire as far south as Fort Lauderdale. At times in the Tampa Bay area, visibility was reduced to less than one mile and the air quality was listed as unhealthy.

Due to the relative lack of damage caused by Andrea, the name will be used again in the 2013 season. For more information on Subtropical Storm Andrea, visit the Wikipedia page at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropical\\_Storm\\_Andrea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropical_Storm_Andrea).

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## WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Should a hurricane threaten the Tampa Bay area, an evacuation order may be issued. What exactly does that



mean?

An evacuation order is given to get people away from the deadliest part of a hurricane - storm surge. Evacuation levels are based on elevation above ground that could be inundated by the surge driven ashore during a storm. There is one notable exception to this: all mobile homes, regardless of their elevation, must be evacuated. They cannot withstand the high winds of a hurricane.



There are two types of evacuations that can be ordered.

The first is a recommended evacuation. In the event of the approach of a tropical storm or a hurricane crossing the state and exiting over Pinellas, the potential for storm surge may not be as great. In these cases, emergency managers may recommend that residents in mobile homes and low-lying areas that frequently flood consider evacuating to higher ground and/or sturdier structures than they have available at home. This is done for the safety of those in areas we know to be vulnerable.

The second type is a mandatory evacuation. Mandatory evacuations are issued when the probability of storm surge is high, and loss of life could occur if residents don't move. These evacuations will be ordered up to a certain letter zone and will always include mobile homes. It is incredibly important that if your home is in an evacuation level that you know your level, plan for a 'stay' and 'go' option, and if your level is ordered to go, move quickly but safely outside of the evacuation area.

It is illegal to stay in a home under a mandatory evacuation order. Under Florida Statutes 252.38, the local authority has the ability to take necessary steps to provide for the health and safety of people and property. Chapter 252.50 sets refusal to follow an evacuation order as a second-degree misdemeanor.

Does this mean the police will drag you out of your property? No. They will be too busy helping those who will be following the evacuation order. However, this does provide law enforcement the basis to remove anyone who is impeding the flow of an evacuation. Also, by not evacuating, your insurance company may not approve your claims because you are involved in an illegal activity on your property. Double check your insurance policy to be sure you know what is covered. And more important than the insurance consideration, we ask you consider, "Is staying worth gambling with your life or your loved ones' lives?" And what if you should change your mind but it's too late for first responders to safely try to provide assistance? It's why we emphasize the survivor versus victim question - the answer truly does rest with you.

Remember, emergency managers are counting on you to be prepared and do the right thing and keep yourself and your family out of dangerous situations. Please know your evacuation zone and have a plan for where you will go should something happen this hurricane season.

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Visit the Pinellas County government website at [www.pinellascounty.org](http://www.pinellascounty.org).