

Hurricane Preparedness Plan

For the

Empress Unit Owners

Prepared and approved by
The Empress Board of Directors
Created: May 16, 2022

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Introduction

Preparations. Disaster prevention includes ensuring your condominium is as strong as possible against a storm. This includes having shutters that are up to or superior to the latest code and removing items from outside that could become missiles. It also includes having the supplies on hand to weather the storm. The suggestions provided here are only guides. You should use common sense in your disaster prevention.

1. Develop a primary and backup plan. Since we live in an area that will be under mandatory evacuation during a Category 1 hurricane, the cornerstone of these plans should be the location to which you will evacuate, the route to get there, and the timing for evacuation. Your primary plan should address the normal situation where you have a lot of warning time and you can evacuate to any place you choose. Your back up plan should be for those circumstances where warning time is minimal, and you have to evacuate to a local area shelter or other local area locations.
2. Create a disaster supply kit. There are certain items you need to have regardless of where you ride out a hurricane. The disaster supply kit is a useful tool when you evacuate as well as making you as safe as possible in your condominium. Be sure to include a seven (7) day supply of medications.
3. Secure your home.

Hurricane Watch and Hurricane Warning

A hurricane watch issued for our part of the coast indicates the possibility that you could experience the onset of tropical storm force winds (39-73 mph) within 48 hours. This watch should trigger your family's disaster plan especially those actions that require leaving our barrier island, if you have not already done so.

A hurricane warning that is issued for our part of the coast indicates that the onset of tropical storm force winds is expected within 36 hours or less. Once this warning has been issued, your family should have already evacuated.

The Empress. We live on a barrier island in a surge zone. Our emphasis should be to evacuate as early as possible. The normal tendency is to want to wait until the situation is very clear before deciding whether to evacuate; this is normally after a hurricane warning has been issued.

NOTE: During one of the last hurricanes it took 12-15 hours to reach Georgia.

Frances, Jeanne and Wilma (2004 & 2005)

The Empress suffered relatively minor damage, compared to that suffered by other condominiums in our area, as a result of these three hurricanes passing over us. Our lack of damage is primarily attributed to the 89-foot-wide, well vegetated dune and the wide beach we have to our east. We do not have this protection now.

We have been fortunate in recent years that we have only suffered coastal damage

Additional Information. Additional information on the St Lucie County Emergency Operations can be found on the internet at www.stlucieco.gov, and then click on Emergency Operation Center.

There are many sources of general information before, during, and after a hurricane. These include the internet, local and national TV news, and newspapers. If no mandatory evacuation has been declared, information specific to the Empress can be obtained from our office prior to and after the hurricane has passed or after we are allowed back on the Island. Additionally, when electricity is restored, the Empress will provide updates via e-mail.

The next section provides details concerning the Unit Owners responsibilities before a hurricane, the forms that need to be completed and an introduction to hurricanes in general.

Unit Owners' Responsibilities

This section outlines the specific responsibilities the unit owners have in regard to the Empress Condominium.

1. ***Away from the unit.*** When a unit owner is going to be away from his/her unit during the hurricane season, Chapter 12 of the Empress By-Laws state the following:

“ A unit owner or his occupant who plans to be absent during the hurricane season must prepare his Unit prior to his departure by designating a responsible firm or individual to care for his Unit should a hurricane threaten the Unit or should the Unit suffer hurricane damage, and furnishing the Association with the name(s) of such firm or individual. Such firm or individual shall be subject to the approval of the Association.”

Notes:

- a. Unit owners cannot depend upon, nor is it the responsibility of, our maintenance staff to do hurricane preparations for you.
 - b. Empty all refrigerators and freezers prior to departing.
 - c. You should make arrangements with a firm or an individual to be responsible for your unit.
 - d. If for some reason you did not empty the refrigerator/freezer prior to departing the Empress, this should be a stated task for the caretaker prior to a storm hitting our area.
 - e. Make sure there is a clear understanding of what the caretaker will or will not do.
 - f. The office has a standard form that can be used to identify the caretaker. The completed form will be placed in your unit folder.
2. ***Seasonal Residents' actions prior to leaving the Empress.***
 - a. Execute the form mentioned in Note “f” above.
 - b. Close and lock all shutters.
 - c. Close and lock/secure all windows and sliding glass doors.
 - d. Empty all refrigerators and freezers. For those garage owners who have a refrigerator and/or freezer in the garage, you should also empty these since, if a mandatory evacuation is declared and the commercial electricity is lost, the emergency generator will not come on until approval to return to the Island is given. (See Chapter 4 for information regarding the emergency generator.)
 - e. Ensure all unnecessary electrical devices are unplugged.
 - f. Ensure all items are removed from the balcony.
 3. ***Actions for on-property residents prior to evacuation/storm hitting.***
 - a. Close and lock all shutters. This should be done no later than 48 hours prior to evacuating or the storm arriving.
 - b. Close and lock/secure all windows and sliding glass doors.
 - c. Empty all refrigerators and freezers. Food may be disposed on in the dumpster at least 48 hours before storm or taken to your evacuation location. Remove ice and shut off ice maker. For those garage owners who have a refrigerator and/or freezer in the garage, you should also empty these since, if a mandatory evacuation is declared and the commercial electricity is lost, the building emergency generator which provides power for the garages as well as elevators will not come on until approval to return to the Island is given
 - d. Ensure all unnecessary electrical devices are unplugged.

e. Ensure all items are removed from the balcony.

4. **Actions when no mandatory evacuation is declared, and the decision is to stay.** Ensure you have enough non-perishable food, water, ice, medications, etc. that you will need for at least 7 days. Checklists for the recommended actions are found in many hurricane preparation documents published by the County, State, Publix Grocery, etc.
5. **If you choose to stay when a mandatory evacuation is declared.** It is common knowledge that people cannot be forced out of their homes even though there may not be electricity, water, elevator service, or emergency service to the area. If you decide to stay when a mandatory evacuation is ordered, provide your name and the name and contact number of your next of kin to the office.
6. **Island Re-entry.** Once a storm has passed and county officials determine it is safe to access the barrier islands, residents and/or homeowners will be required to stop at the check-point and present two (2) documents to justify their access. These documents include a utility bill, insurance declaration or property tax statement along with a government-issued identification.
7. **Caution.** Even if most dangerous situations had been removed, some may remain. Please use extreme caution. There may be downed power lines, debris, broken glass, sand, etc. everywhere. Commercial electricity may be off. Our emergency generator may or may not be working.

Disclaimer

Florida law requires that all condominiums over seven (7) stories in height must have a “Hurricane Preparedness Plan”. This plan has been adopted by your Board of Directors in compliance with Florida law and as a tool to assist the members and residents of the Empress Condominium. The adoption and creation of this plan by the Board of Directors of the Empress Condominium is not in anyway intended to create any liability for Empress Condominium Association, Inc., its officers, directors or employees. The plan is intended only to be of assistance. Each individual owner or resident should use his or her best judgment in an emergency situation. Any time an individual has a doubt as to the appropriate action to be taken, he or she should consult St. Lucie County Emergency Management Services, the St. Lucie County Sheriff’s Department or St. Lucie County Fire Rescue.

Appendix 1

Forms

EMPRESS CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO OFFICE ON LEAVING CONDO CLOSING & HURRICANE PREPARATION FORM

UNIT: _____ NAME: _____ DATE: _____

CONTACT PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PHONE: _____

REQUIRED ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO LEAVING CONDO:

- 1) MY STORM SHUTTERS HAVE BEEN CLOSED AND LOCKED ()
- 2) MY WATER MAIN AND HOT WATER SUPPLY VALVES HAVE BEEN SHUT OFF ()
POWER TO THE HOT WATER TANK HAS BEEN TURNED OFF ()
- 3) MY REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER HAVE BEEN EMPTIED OF ALL PERISHABLE ITEMS ()
(INTENDED FOR HURRICANE CLOSURES ONLY)
- 4) ALL MOVEABLE ITEMS (FURNITURE, PLANTS, ETC) FROM BALCONIES AND ENTRY AREAS HAVE BEEN PLACED INSIDE MY UNIT ()
- 5) MY UNIT IS CHECKED WEEKLY BY _____ PHONE _____
WHO HAS MY PERMISSION TO ENTER MY UNIT. I HEREBY FURTHER RELEASE THE EMPRESS CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC. AND EMPLOYEES FROM ANY AND ALL LIABILITIES DUE TO DAMAGE TO, OR LOSS OF, PROPERTY RESULTING FROM SAID ENTRY.

****FOR SELF-CARETAKING, PLEASE PROVIDE SIGNATURE:**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO LEAVING CONDO:

- 1) I HAVE "FLOOD BUSTER ALARMS" INSTALLED AND BATTERIES CHECKED ON THE FLOOR NEXT TO MY HOT WATER HEATER TANK () A/C UNIT ()

SIGNED: _____

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CHECK WITH THE BUILDING MANAGER – THANK YOU!

Appendix 2
Hurricane Overview

Hurricanes

Saffir/Simpson Hurricane Scale. The Saffir/Simpson Hurricane Scale is used by the National Weather Service to give public safety officials an assessment of the potential wind and storm surge damage from a hurricane. The scale categories are as follows:

Scale Number	Winds (mph)	Damage
1	74-95	Minimal
2	96-110	Moderate
3	111-130	Extensive
4	131-155	Extreme
5	155+	Catastrophic

Category 1 Hurricane. No major damage to buildings except by the surge in coastal areas. Damage to unanchored mobile homes. Some damage to poorly constructed signs. Also, coastal flooding and minor pier damage. Note: *A mandatory evacuation of barrier islands will be issued for Category 1 storm. Jensen Beach is listed as a flood zone for a category 1 surge.* - Examples: Irene 1999 and Wilma 2005.

Category 2 Hurricane. Some damage to building roofs, doors and windows. Considerable damage to mobile homes. Flooding damages piers and small craft in unprotected moorings may break their moorings. Some trees blown down. - Examples: Bonnie 1998, Georges (FL & LA) 1998 and Frances 2004

Category 3 Hurricane. Some structural damage to small residences and utility buildings. Large trees blown down. Mobile homes and poorly built signs destroyed. Flooding near the coast destroys smaller structures with larger structures damaged. Terrain may be flooded well inland. - Examples: Keith 2000, Fran 1996, Opal 1995, Alicia 1983, and Jeanne 2004

Category 4 Hurricane. More extensive damage, certain wall failures with some complete roof structure failure on small residences. Major erosion of beach areas. Terrain may be flooded well inland. - Example: Hugo 1989

Category 5 Hurricane. Complete roof failure on many residences and industrial buildings. Some complete building failures with small utility buildings blown over or away. Flooding causes major damage to lower floors of all structures near the shoreline. Massive evacuation of residential areas may be required. - Examples: Andrew (FL) 1992, Camille 1969 and Labor Day 1935.

Using this scale, a Category 4 hurricane would have winds between 131 and 155 mph and, on the average, would usually be expected to cause 100 times the damage of the Category 1 storm. Depending on circumstances, less intense storms may still be strong enough to produce damage, particularly in low lying coastal areas that have not prepared in advance.

Debris such as signs, roofing material, and small items left outside become flying missiles in hurricanes. Extensive damage to trees, towers, water and underground utility lines (from uprooted trees), and fallen poles cause considerable disruption.