

RAD REMEDY'S HURRICANE IRMA LOWDOWN

Hi. If you're reading this, you may be looking for shelter and wondering what to do, what to bring, etc. or perhaps you've decided to stay put and try to weather the storm. Please use this handy guide as a means of finding what you need even if cell service or WiFi goes down from the storm.

RAD Remedy's philosophy is based in informed consent and harm reduction - we ultimately want you to be safe, and believe that you are able to understand your risks given your particular circumstances. So please, be aware and informed of the risk you face and make the best choice for yourself and your family.

(Also, a disclaimer that RAD Remedy, its volunteers, staff, and community partners are not liable for any injury or harm caused by consulting this guide. You understand that you read and use this information at your own risk and if that's unacceptable to you, put down this guide and walk away.)

First, we really, really encourage you to seek shelter. Irma is a storm of significant magnitude that has caused substantial damage in the places it's already been. As far as we can tell, most if not all of the shelters are run by FEMA and the Red Cross. We are currently in talks with the American Red Cross staffer leading the efforts in Florida. Please know that *Red Cross shelters are safe havens with discrimination prohibited on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.* We know there are also protections in place concerning staff and volunteer conduct, but we are working to confirm whether a client to client harassment policy exists and if so, how the process works for reporting. We will update this document when we receive more information.

If you witness or experience discrimination in services or shelter in Miami-Dade or Broward counties in Florida, please call or text: 305-702-0276 or email: emergency@outmiami.org

If you are outside those areas, contact us at RAD Remedy and we'll see what we can do: Text our Executive Director Riley at: 773.817.5458 or Email info@radremedy.org.

Note: please be sure to get names, dates/times, locations, etc. so we can take action.

What to Bring to a Shelter:

- All of your documentation, especially your birth certificate, social security card, drivers license, records of name changes or legal transition activity, and any documentation about your transition (physician/psych letters, for example). Be sure to keep them in one place (a ziploc bag, for example).
- Any medications, preferably with the prescription label (e.g. the box T comes in, not just the vial)
- List of Medications if you're unable to bring them
- Bedding, clothing, cots, etc.
- Presenting aids (body and breast forms, gaffs, binders, packers)
- Food, water, toilet paper, cash, entertainment (books, magazines)
- Flashlights, battery operated radio, and batteries
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, etc. and some discreet way of disposing of them that can be carried into a bathroom stall.
- A few feet of paracord or rope (can be used for tons of things, but particularly helpful tying your possessions together for security)
- A friend if at all possible. It's totally unfair and completely stupid, but sometimes non-trans people more readily believe a non-trans person who stands up for us and advocates.



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Be advised that shelters are usually in schools and may not have supplies, and also be aware that the Red Cross workers you see are likely actually ordinary citizen volunteers.

*Before you go to a shelter, always check with your local emergency management agency for availability & services. Sometimes shelters get full and don't have space or supplies enough to shelter everybody. They often have a pre-registration list. There are reports of extra shelters that may not be listed on shelter lists opening due to the nature of Irma. **Know where you are able to go before you leave.***

You may be able to get transportation to the shelter. Check! It may be hard to park a vehicle near an evacuation center.

Not all shelters will take pets. Often, there are restrictions (like an up-to-date vaccination record and a crate) before you are allowed to bring your pet(s) to a pet-friendly shelter. Those are important questions to ask when figuring out what shelter you are going to.

There are some shelters designed for the medically needy. In this case, medically needy means reliant on things like electrical equipment, oxygen, dialysis, or individuals with physical, cognitive, or medical conditions who may require assistance from medical professionals. Although special needs shelters provide more care than a general shelter, they do not provide the level of care found in a medical facility. If you need this type of care, please ask your local emergency management agency where those shelters are and what is required for you to be able to access that facility. They may provide transportation, but it is likely dependent on availability. ASK. You won't know until you ask.

Shelters will take your name and likely your information. At this time, all reports say that there will not be immigration checks done with this information, but the Polk County Sheriff's office did say that they will be doing warrant checks. No other Sheriffs have publicly confirmed that they will also do warrant checks.

If you decide to hunker down in place, know that there have been a variety of ways officials have handled those who stay. There have been reports of officials saying basically "If you stay put, you are on your own and rescue will not occur." Also, there are reports of officials using the Baker Act (aka "5150") to involuntarily commit (for up to 72 hours) homeless people who refuse to evacuate in Miami-Dade County. It is unknown if they will extend this policy to others who choose not to evacuate.

There are many guides out there on ways to prepare for a hurricane properly. Please use them. We will link to FEMA's guide, as well or check out their app.

Some important points (but certainly not a complete list):

- Clean water is much more important than food. You don't need to buy bottled water, you can fill up all the containers that hold water that you have, including (but not limited to): jugs, pitchers, coolers, plastic containers, your bathtub, your washing machine. You should also keep a stash of water that is for cleaning things and flushing the toilet.
- Freezing blocks of ice now may help you keep your perishable food fresh. If your power goes out, you can move the blocks into your fridge and keep the door closed. Eat your perishable items first.



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- Shoot for canned goods if available, since water (and critters) cannot get into it.
- Sandbags should be layered with plastic and placed in a semi-circle shape away from the door, allowing the door to open wide enough for you to leave if necessary. Please look up instructions for this if needed. If you look it up and plastic is not involved in the instructions, it is wrong and should not be followed.
- We've all been lied to - putting tape on the windows does not actually help. It just makes larger pieces of broken glass and large pieces of glass flying at you are much scarier than little ones.
- Keep interior doors shut, especially if there is a broken window. This may possible helps balance the pressure and *may* help you keep your roof. Interior doors are much weaker than exterior doors, and this is not foolproof, but may help.
- Have pet carriers, go bags, basic supplies in something that you can carry. Be prepared to urgently leave if necessary. If you leave, you may be walking in flood water with debris floating at you, so flip-flops aren't your best footwear option.

Open and Closed Resources (Hospitals, Pharmacies, etc.) & Emergency Numbers:

We have done our best to pull together a list of hospital and pharmacy closures and limitations as well as emergency numbers by county. This represents our best effort with a small cadre of community members, some of whom are directly in the storm's path themselves. Heed the most up to date information source as it is likely the more accurate.

You should print these lists. There is no guarantee you will have access to the internet or cell service in order to otherwise get this information. If you need to get to a hospital, it is important to know where the one closest to you that is open and you may not be able to rely on things like a phone, internet, GPS, etc. *Know where you are and where the resources are around you.*

Please. Be safe.

