

## Important Resources

### Meteorology/Weather

National Hurricane Center: [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)

Key West Weather: [www.weather.gov/keywest](http://www.weather.gov/keywest) or (305) 295-1316

### General Information

Florida Keys Visitor Assistance (24/7): (800) 771-KEYS

Monroe County Emergency Information: (800) 955-5504

Florida Keys Public Access Cable Television: Channel 76

Official Florida Keys Web Site: [www.fla-keys.com](http://www.fla-keys.com)

Key Largo Chamber of Commerce: (305) 451-1414

Islamorada Chamber of Commerce: (305) 664-4503

Marathon Chamber of Commerce: (305) 743-5417

Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce: (305) 872-2411

Key West Chamber of Commerce: (305) 294-2587

### Airlines

American Eagle: (800) 433-7300

Cape Air: (305) 293-0603

Continental Connection: (800) 523-3273

Delta Connection: (800) 354-9822

USAirways Express: (800) 428-4322

### Rental Cars

#### Key Largo

Enterprise: (305) 451-3998

Ocean Reef Enterprise: (305) 367-2611 • Thrifty: (305) 852-6088

#### Marathon

Avis: (305) 743-5428 • Budget: (305) 743-3998

Enterprise: (305) 289-7630 • Hertz: (305) 289-8731

#### Key West

Alamo: (305) 294-6675 • Avis: (305) 294-4846

Budget: (305) 294-8868 • Dollar: (305) 296-9921

Hertz: (305) 294-1039 • National: (305) 296-8472

Thrifty: (305) 292-5595

### Motor Coaches

Greyhound Shuttle: (800) 410-KEYS or (305) 296-9072

Super Shuttle: (800) 258-3826 or (305) 871-2000

Keys Shuttle: (888) 765-9997

Luxury Limousine: (800) 664-0124 or (305) 367-2329

TransFloridian: (877) 246-4786

**Visit Florida Hotel Hotline: (800) 287-8598**

# Prepared In Paradise



*Information For Traveling  
In The Florida Keys During  
The Atlantic Hurricane Season*

**In a Critical Medical or Law Enforcement Emergency  
Dial 911**

The  
Florida Keys  
& Key West  
fla-keys.com

**W**hen you live and play in paradise, Mother Nature sometimes likes to remind you that the same forces that created the comfortable climate and lush landscape can damage them as well.

In California or Japan the reminder might be an earthquake; in Indonesia, a tsunami; in Hawaii, a volcanic eruption.

Sometimes the Florida Keys are threatened by tropical cyclones, a name for a low-pressure weather system with organized thunderstorm activity and circular winds. When sustained wind speed reaches 74 mph (119 kmh), it is classified a hurricane.

The Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC), the agency responsible for Keys tourism promotion, has a formal communications program with emergency officials to communicate any need for visitors to leave in the unlikely event a hurricane threatens the region.

The Council has developed this program because the Keys tourism industry cares about visitors and their safety. The TDC provides reliable and accurate information about traveling to the Keys, and even advises people when it is not appropriate to travel in the event of a storm threat.

### ***Constantly Monitoring Tropical Weather***

Throughout the summer and fall, emergency management officials receive continuous information from the National Hurricane Center and the Key West National Weather Service Office. They are alerted to all developing tropical weather systems.

When it appears a hurricane may pose a threat to the island chain, emergency managers communicate with various local and state officials as well as the tourism council to discuss visitor and resident evacuations.

Hurricane forecasting is not an exact science and officials base their assessments and action plans on available forecast data at the time it is issued. Warnings must cover a broad area, even though historically most storms miss or just skirt the Keys, with little or no impact.

### ***If a Hurricane Threatens the Keys***

If a hurricane threatens the Keys, a mandatory evacuation order will be issued asking all visitors to leave. Usually the evacuation begins about 48 hours before the projected arrival of the storm's

fringes and is only ordered if there is a significant threat.

Based on official weather and emergency management directives, the TDC faxes and e-mails lodging facilities information for guests about evacuation orders and details on leaving the Keys.

If you're traveling in the Keys and hear of a storm threat, check with your lodging's front desk, visit [www.fl-keys.com](http://www.fl-keys.com), call the 24/7 visitor assistance line at (800) 771-KEYS or the 24/7 weather office at (305) 295-1316.

Should a visitor evacuation order be necessary, officials strive to issue it in the morning to provide ample time to make alternative travel arrangements.

The Lodging Association of the Florida Keys & Key West encourages its members to provide refunds of any unused nights as soon as officials issue a visitor evacuation order.

There is no need to panic, but visitors are urged to follow emergency directives in a timely manner, to avoid delays and leave safely. Boaters do need to respond to the warning quickly because of extra time needed to secure watercraft. If the storm continues to track toward the Keys, the Overseas Highway's two drawbridges eventually will be ordered not to open for vessels, to avoid delays for vehicular traffic.

Obviously, visitors who plan to travel to the Keys, but have yet to arrive, must temporarily delay their trip until the risk has passed.

### ***Please Excuse the Interruption***

Officials fully understand that an evacuation order causes an unwelcome interruption in visitors' vacation plans, but human safety takes priority.

If you must evacuate and find it inconvenient to return home, other parts of Florida not in the storm's forecast track may be an option. Call Visit Florida at (800) 287-8598 to locate lodging in safe areas.

### ***When Visitors Can Return***

Once the storm passes, officials will assess the area's infrastructure. If the storm has had little or no impact, visitors should be able to return quickly.

Visit [www.fl-keys.com](http://www.fl-keys.com) or call (800) FLA-KEYS in the U.S. and Canada to check the destination's basic infrastructure, tourism facilities and recommended dates for visitors to return.

- **The official Atlantic hurricane season is June 1- Nov. 30, but the traditional peak of activity is from Aug. 15 to Oct. 1.**
- **Storms can sometimes threaten most Caribbean countries, eastern Mexico and North American coastal areas from Texas through Nova Scotia.**
- **Modern-day hurricane forecasting provides plenty of time to safeguard people and property.**
- **High winds and the potential for severe flooding make it unsafe and uncomfortable for people to be in an area being impacted by a hurricane.**
- **In the unlikely event of a storm threat to the Keys, the local tourism council helps communicate the need for visitors to leave for their safety.**
- **For an average week during hurricane season, the probability of a Florida Keys visitor needing to evacuate because of a storm is less than 2 percent.\***

\*Source: National Weather Service Key West. Based on historical data analysis, 1985-2005.