

# Important Resources

## Meteorology / Weather

National Hurricane Center: [nhc.noaa.gov](http://nhc.noaa.gov)  
Key West Weather: [weather.gov/keywest](http://weather.gov/keywest) or 305-295-1316

## General Information

Florida Keys Visitor Assistance (24/7): 800-771-KEYS  
Monroe County Keys Emergency Information:  
800-955-5504 • [monroecountyem.com](http://monroecountyem.com)  
Florida Keys Public Access Cable Television: Channel 76  
Official Florida Keys Visitors Web Site: [fla-keys.com](http://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 Airlines: 800-433-7300  
Delta Airlines: 800-354-9822  
Silver Airways (United/JetBlue): 800-229-9990

## Key Largo

Enterprise:  
305-451-3998 & 305-367-2611  
Thrifty: 305-852-6088

## Rental Cars

Avis: 305-743-5428  
Budget: 305-743-3998  
Enterprise: 305-289-7630

## Marathon

Alamo: 305-294-6675 • Avis: 305-294-4846  
Budget: 305-294-8868 • Dollar: 305-296-9921  
Enterprise: 305-292-0220 • Hertz: 305-294-1039  
National: 305-296-8472 • Thrifty: 305-292-5595

## Key West

## Other Ground Transportation

Emerald Limousines: 800-524-7894 • 305-852-1468  
Florida Keys Express Shuttle: 305-743-7454  
Greyhound Shuttle: 800-231-2222 • 305-296-9072  
Keys Shuttle: 888-765-9997 • 305-289-9997  
Luxury Limousines: 800-664-0124 • 305-853-5550  
Super Shuttle: 800-258-3826 • 305-871-2000  
TransFloridian: 877-246-4786

## Hotel Offerings Out of the Florida Keys

Florida Information Hotline: 1-800-342-3557 • [FloridaEvacuates.com](http://FloridaEvacuates.com)

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

# Prepared in Paradise



*Information for  
Florida Keys  
travelers  
during the  
Atlantic-basin  
hurricane  
season*

The  
Florida Keys  
& Key West  
fla-keys.com

## When you live and play in paradise ...

Mother Nature sometimes likes to remind you 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), that system is classified a hurricane.

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

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

### Constantly Monitoring Tropical Weather

Throughout summer and fall, emergency management officials receive continuous tropical weather system alerts from the National Hurricane Center and the Key West National Weather Service Office.

When it appears a hurricane may pose a threat to the islands, emergency managers communicate with local and state officials as well as the TDC 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 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.

\*Source: Key West National Weather Service Office. Based on historical data analysis, 1985-2015.

Based on official weather and emergency management directives, the TDC transmits advisories to lodging facilities to provide details on potential evacuation orders and any need for guests to leave the Keys.

If you are traveling in the Keys and hear of a storm threat, check with your lodging's front desk, or visit [fla-keys.com](http://fla-keys.com), or call the 24/7 visitor assistance line at 800-771-KEYS or the 24/7 weather office at 305-295-1316. The Keys emergency management hotline, during an emergency is 1-800-955-5504 or visit [monroecountyem.com](http://monroecountyem.com).

If a visitor evacuation order is necessary, officials strive to issue it by no later than noon to provide sufficient time to make alternative travel arrangements. The Lodging Association of the Florida Keys & Key West encourages its members to refund any unused nights as soon as officials issue a visitor evacuation order.

During an evacuation 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 should respond to the warning quickly because of the extra time required to secure watercraft. If the storm continues to track toward the Keys, the Florida Keys Overseas Highway's (U.S. Hwy. 1) single drawbridge in Islamorada 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 not arrived, must temporarily delay their trip until the risk has passed.

### Please Excuse the Interruption

Officials know evacuation orders cause unwelcome interruptions in visitors' vacation plans, but safety is a 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 800-342-3557 or go online to [FloridaEvacuates.com](http://FloridaEvacuates.com) 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 [fla-keys.com](http://fla-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. Keys social media outlets including Facebook ([facebook.com/floridakeysandkeywest](https://facebook.com/floridakeysandkeywest)) and Twitter ([@thefloridakeys](https://twitter.com/thefloridakeys)) are also used to communicate details.

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- Official hurricane season is June 1 to Nov. 30, but the highest probability of activity typically is Aug. 15 – Oct. 1.
- In the unlikely event of a storm threat to the Keys, the local tourism council helps communicate the need for visitors to leave the region for their safety.
- During and average week of hurricane season, the probability of a Florida Keys visitor having to evacuate is less than 2 percent.\*

- High winds and potential severe flooding create unsafe and uncomfortable conditions in an impacted area.
- Storms can threaten most Caribbean countries, Mexico and North American coastal areas from Texas through Nova Scotia.
- Modern-day hurricane forecasting normally provides more than ample time to safeguard people and property.