



2024 Hurricane Season QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q 1: How are decisions made about what the hospital will do during a hurricane?

A. See the organization's Hurricane Response Plan on www.smh.com and on [PULSE/Emergency Management site](#). The plan provides the information necessary for an effective and safe response to hurricanes that could affect our main campuses, North Port facility and/or ambulatory sites.

Q 2: Who is assigned to work before, during and after a hurricane?

A. Department directors will assign employees through MyTime to one of the following teams:

Pre-Team

Non-clinical employees assigned to the Labor Pool to assist with the intake of Medically Dependent Persons (formally PSN) needs and other preparations. Assignments may include registration, set-up, transport, meal delivery, etc. Pre-Team Labor Pool members may go home prior to the facility being secured and arrival of Response (A) Team members.

Response (A) Team

Employees identified by their department director to work during an emergency. These staff members may carry out their normal duties, or they may be assigned to a Labor Pool to assist with assignments during a hurricane response period. Department directors are required to provide advanced notification and/or an emergency work schedule to each Response A Team member on an annual basis. If the employee is unable to report to work during a declared emergency period, he/she must contact his/her direct supervisor to inform them of their situation as soon as possible.

Recovery (B) Team

Employees who are not immediately required to work at the onset of the emergency period; however, they may be re-assigned to "Response Team" depending on organizational needs. They will be asked to relieve Response A Team members once the immediate emergency has passed. Under emergency conditions or severe weather, or when a State of Local Emergency has been declared, the B Team will adhere to guidelines associated with the job category assigned to them at the time of the emergency or weather event.

Physician Team

Physicians have disaster plans that are coordinated through the Medical Staff office. Members of the Medical Staff will serve on the Response (A) Team to help provide on-site coverage throughout a hurricane.

Q 3: Are there any exemptions from a Hurricane Assignment?

A. All employees are assigned to a Hurricane team as designated by their department. Staff who have extenuating circumstances, such as a medical condition or disability, are on FMLA, or serve as a caretaker/caregiver for a disabled family member or a person with special needs, or have other qualifying conditions, may seek an exemption from a Hurricane Team assignment by completing a Hurricane Exemption form along with supporting documentation – The form includes a list of conditions. The form must be submitted each year. Please see your manager for additional information.

Q 4: What actions will be taken if I do not report for my work assignment?

A. Assignments to hurricane teams are mandatory and part of your health care obligation to serve the community. Sarasota Memorial Health Care System will never require you to put yourself at risk, but we do require you to fulfill your assignment, if needed, in the event of a hurricane. If your home or family sustains

flooding/damage and you cannot fulfill your assignment, or you have an extenuating circumstance, please contact your manager immediately. Failure to fulfill a mandatory assignment may result in a final warning, up to and including termination.

Q 5: Where should A Team members park?

A. Parking information will be provided at the time of a storm. Parking will be in designated locations, and staff will be directed where to park.

Q 6: What do I need to bring and wear?

A. Hurricane A Team members should be prepared to stay at SMHCS for an extended period of time and should bring their hospital ID badge, along with sleeping bags, air mattresses (twin size only) or foam pad, along with bed linens. Several days' worth of cash, changes of clothing, toiletries and personal hygiene items, prescriptions, towels, and any special dietary food, in addition to supplies for Child Care or pets that have been pre-registered should be brought also. For more information, please refer to page(s) 25-26 of the Hurricane Response Plan, which is located on [PULSE](#) and www.smh.com. Please plan to wear your regular uniform/scrubs. For staff in other areas: Comfortable clothing/shoes are highly recommended. The hospital may get chilly, especially at night, so consider bringing long-sleeved shirts or a light sweater or jacket. Jeans are allowed.

Q 7: Can A or B Team members bring family members to the hospital?

A. Facilities are limited and must be reserved for patients, assigned Medically Dependent Person's (MDP's) and A Team members. In addition, the hospital may become a receiving facility for patients evacuated from other hospitals. To ensure we have sufficient capacity and supplies, the hospital is **not** able to accommodate employees' family members, with the exception of children of A & B Team members who pre-registered for Child Care. Please make plans ahead of time to help keep your loved ones safe.

Q 8: Will Child Care be offered?

A. Yes, Sarasota Memorial Health Care System will provide on-site Child Care for A & B Team members who have no other alternatives, but **staff must pre-register**. Child Care registration is available online at <https://www.smh.com/hurricane>. Note that at the beginning of each new year (January 1st) the registrations from the previous year will be removed and staff will need to re-register their children every year. Child Care is provided for staff while they are working their assigned shift. Staff must plan to take care of their children when their shift is over.

Q 9: Can A Team members bring a pet to the hospital?

A. SMH-Sarasota & SMH-Venice campuses **may** offer an emergency pet shelter on a limited basis for pets of A (Response) Team members, based on staffing availability. The location and activation of the shelter will be determined by the Incident Command Center. The opening of a **pet shelter is not a guarantee, so please find alternate means of sheltering your pet ahead of time**, such as with family and/or friends, boarding facilities, kennels, and veterinarian offices.

- If SMHCS is able to offer a pet shelter, your pet(s) must be registered ahead of time. The online registration portal can be found at <https://www.smh.com/hurricane> and will close 2 days prior to a weather event. Pet(s) can be registered anytime throughout the year via this portal.
- Note that at the beginning of each new year (January 1st), registrations from the previous year will be removed and you will need to re-register every year.
- Go to PULSE/Emergency Management site for the Pet Shelter procedures so you know what to expect, what to bring, and your responsibilities for supporting your pet(s) while serving on the A team.

Q 10: Where do A Team members report for duty? How will shifts be staffed?

Where to go:

All A Team members should report to their designated department locations at the time announced by hospital leaders. Employees who are not immediately needed by their designated department should report to the Labor Pool at one of the two locations shown below (dependent upon which hospital campus you are reporting to).

- Non-exempt, hourly A Team members are expected to be properly clocked in at his or her work location at the start of the hurricane activation time announced by hospital leaders.
- All exempt, salaried A Team members must be clocked in within one hour after arrival, regardless of whether they are assigned to the Labor Pool or their own department. Clocking instructions will be provided prior to hurricane activation time. Exempt, salaried employees may briefly report to their designated department locations first to drop off their belongings if they wish.

Labor Pool Locations: SMH-Sarasota' Labor Pool site is on the first floor of the Courtyard Tower near the Surgery Reception. SMH-Venice's Labor Pool will be coordinated from the Human Resources office.

Staffing and Shifts:

- As a general rule, shifts will be staffed in 12-hour increments on the clinical units or as required by the Labor Pool. This includes employees who are working in their "home" departments.
- Actual job duties performed before, during and after the storm will be in accordance with your specific departmental plan. Assignments are subject to change based on the needs of the organization. Staff will generally be provided an 8-hour sleep time as well as mealtime (normally ½ hour for each 24-hour period). Depending on the severity of the emergency, staff may be asked to work additional hours, and should be relieved after 16 consecutive hours of worked time.

Hospital access:

- Sarasota Memorial Health Care System will control access to its facilities soon after the designated time that A Team members are asked to report for duty. To ensure safety during dangerous weather conditions, hospital entrances and exits will be secured, with staff and patients asked to remain inside the hospital until the "All Clear" is announced.

Q 11: How will I be paid?**EMPLOYEES ON SITE**

Clinical and non-clinical A (Response) Team employees reporting to work for the duration of the hurricane should plan on working 12-hour shifts or as otherwise assigned. Based on hospital census and department needs, employees may be re-assigned to other departments or may be assigned duties that are not their regular duties. Employees are required to report to their supervisor if they are on the schedule to work, working, or have no duties to perform.

NON-EXEMPT POSITIONS (HOURLY)

- Non-exempt employees who report for duty and/or actually work during a declared emergency are compensated at their normal pay rates (regular or overtime and shift differentials) for hours actually worked.
- Non-exempt employees who are on duty for 24 or more consecutive hours are compensated for all hours actually worked as determined by management staff and in addition, compensated for eight hours of sleep time and actual mealtime (normally ½ hour per shift) for each 24-hour period as defined by management.
- Depending on the severity of the emergency and Labor Pool needs, staff may be asked to work additional hours, and should be relieved after 16 consecutive hours of worked time.
- Employees will be paid straight time for the first 40 hours worked during the work week, then overtime for the hours worked in excess of 40 hours within the work week.
- For pay purposes, the work week begins Sunday morning at 12:00 am.

- Non-exempt employees are required to login to the API time and attendance system at the time they are required to report to work and clock out when they are released to leave the hospital.

EXEMPT POSITIONS (SALARIED)

- Exempt, salaried employees who report for duty and work in anticipation of, during or after a declared emergency are compensated at their normal minimum guaranteed salary.

Q 12: Where will I sleep, shower, and eat during activation?

A. Response A Team employees will be assigned to a sleeping area by department leaders or Labor Pool supervisors via the Incident Command Center. Questions or concerns about assigned sleeping areas and shower locations may be directed to your management team.

Cafeterias will have extended hours for mealtimes and will be open during other hours for snacks and beverages. Employee rates will be applied. Note: Leadership at the Health Care Center & ER at North Port will provide information on meal/sleeping arrangements with staff.

Q 13: If I am the Recovery (B) Team, how will I know when to report for duty?

A. Members of the B Team are expected to report to work after the hurricane, once roads are declared safe for travel, to relieve the A Team. B Team members should monitor the Employee Hot Line at (941) 917-8799 (SMH-Venice: 941-261-8799), their email, www.smh.com, SMHCS social media (Facebook and Twitter), and local TV and radio news for hospital-related announcements during and after the hurricane. Depending on circumstances, the organization will try to give B Team members at least several hours' notice before they need to report for duty. B Team members should be prepared to present their hospital ID badge for access.

Q 14: After the hurricane, when will the A Team be released to go home?

A. Hurricane A Team members may leave when relieved by the B Team (Recovery) and/or with the approval of their manager. Although an "all clear" may be announced, you must **confirm with your manager** BEFORE YOU LEAVE the premises that you are relieved of your duties, and to determine when you are to report back to work.

Q 15: If I am not on the A or B Team, how will I be paid?

A. If you are not assigned to work during the hurricane response or recovery periods, employees will use PTOA or time off without pay as approved by your manager.

Q 16: If I am not on the A or B Team, when do I report back to work?

A. Sarasota Memorial Health Care System plans to return to normal business activities as soon as possible when the hurricane has passed, following an announcement of "All Clear," which indicates that roads are safe for travel. Returning to your normal work schedule will depend on local conditions and the organization's ability to resume routine business activities. Should normal schedules be interrupted for an extended period, attempts will be made to notify you. Please monitor local news, the Employee Hotline: 941-917-8799 (SMH-Venice: 941-261-8799), your email, www.smh.com, SMHCS social media (Facebook and Twitter) for updates. Any questions about your schedule should be directed to your manager.

Q 17: Where can I find key contact numbers and SMHCS hurricane policies and procedures? How can I reach the Incident Command Center and Labor Pool?

A. Comprehensive hurricane information is posted on the Emergency Management site on PULSE and on www.smh.com. The Hurricane Response Plan includes information about patients; evacuation of the facility, if necessary; accommodations, activation procedures and other important issues that may arise.

- **Command Center:** If a severe storm threatens our region, watch for emails/communications about the exact time/date the Incident Command Center may open. Command Center contact numbers: SMH-Sarasota 941-917-3800 / SMH-Venice 941-261-3700 / Health Care Center & ER at North Port 941-308-8460.
- **Labor Pool:** Watch for emails/communications about the exact time/date the Labor Pool will open. *Labor Pool Locations:* SMH-Sarasota Labor Pool will be located on the first floor of the Courtyard Tower near the Surgery Reception. SMH-Venice Labor Pool will be located in the Human Resources office. Contact numbers: SMH-Sarasota 941-917-5515 / SMH-Venice 941-261-5555 / Health Care Center & ER at North Port 941-917-5515.

Q 18: Where will Child Care be located during the activation period?

A. The location(s) for Child Care will be determined by the Incident Command Center upon activation and announced through the Employee Hotline: 941-917-8799 (SMH-Venice: 941-261-8799), employee emergency messages, and SMH email. It is critical that all employees have a predetermined plan for their families in the event of a hurricane or other potential disaster. Child Care will be available for employees working during or after a storm for those who have no other child care options, but you **must pre-register** each child. Online registration is located at <https://www.smh.com/hurricane>. Hospital campuses are primarily reserved for patients and staff and will not be able to accommodate additional family members. SMHCS encourages you to have your family evacuate the area if government authorities order an evacuation.

Parents working on the day shift will be responsible for caring for their dependents after their shift is over. Child Care Services will supervise children and teens of night shift employees after their shift ends, so staff members can sleep. Parents should pack bottles and milk together in clearly labeled bags; pillows; diapers; blankets; medications; special dietary food; and other essential items for their children. Food and snacks will be provided.

Q 19: Where do Medically Dependent Persons go?

A. Medically Dependent Persons must register with Sarasota County 941-861-5000 prior to hurricane season and will be assigned to an appropriate shelter by Sarasota County.

Sarasota County has designated SMH-Sarasota as a medical shelter for Medically Dependent Persons who require a hospital setting during an emergency situation. Local emergency officials will establish other shelter locations for people with medical needs who do not require a hospital setting.

Integrated Case Management and the Logistics Center help coordinate the intake, placement, and other processes for any MDPs who may be assigned to Sarasota Memorial.

Q 20: What physicians will be on staff during the hurricane?

A. Physicians have disaster plans in place that are coordinated through the Medical Staff office. Members of the Medical Staff will serve on the Response (A) Team to help provide on-site coverage throughout a hurricane. Per normal procedure, staff may consult the "Today's Physician On Call List" under the "Emergency Care Center" department site on PULSE to contact physicians. During the hurricane activation period, physician participation will be coordinated through the Physician Command Center.

Q 21: What if the facility loses utility services such as water or electricity?

A. Sarasota Memorial Health Care System has backup power systems in place at both hospital campuses, the Health Care Center & ER at North Port, and the Sarasota Memorial Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. Red receptacles and light switches should always be used in case any portion of a generator capability is compromised, as these receptacles have priority for generator support. The SMH-Sarasota campus has an emergency well that can provide water for general non-drinking use if necessary, and bottled water

available for consumption by patients and staff. The SMH-Venice campus will utilize the holding pond to provide water for general non-drinking use if necessary and has emergency plans in place to provide bottled water if additional supplies are needed.

Q 22: Do we have downtime procedures for charting in the patient’s record and recording timecards for staff?

A. Each department should have emergency downtime plans and procedures in place to ensure smooth operations if main communications/utility systems are compromised. If any of these key systems are not working, a notification will be sent to staff indicating that downtime procedures should go into effect. Also as outlined in policy 00.PER.07, the hospital will record staff’s worked time manually, using the Emergency Timecard (Form E), when downtime procedures are in effect.

Q 23: What happens if the building sustains major damage, or a staff member gets injured?

A. First and foremost, staff/patients should seek refuge in the closest and safest area. In the event of major damage, the hospital will immediately issue a disaster activation that will include the rescue of individuals, the securing and repair of the damaged area, and/or evacuation of patients and personnel into other areas of the hospital. Staff who require medical treatment at any time should go to or be transported to the Emergency Care Center. For leaks and minor repairs needed during the hurricane activation period, please contact your corresponding Command Center:

- SMH-Sarasota – 941-917-3800
- SMH-Venice – 941-261-3700
- Sarasota Health Care Center & ER at North Port ECC - 941-308-8460

Q 24: How will nursing mothers store breast milk if a member of Team A?

A. We recommend that nursing mothers speak to their managers about storing clearly labeled and packaged milk in their employee refrigerator/freezer. Breast milk is a food item and there are no contraindications for storing it in a normal fridge/freezer in the department/unit. If space is expected to be sparse in the employee fridge/freezer on the unit, the employee must bring a cooler. Milk can be kept on ice for 24 hours, with the ice changed as needed.

Q 25: Where can I find information on the location of area hurricane shelters, evacuation levels, and hurricane planning tips?

A. For location of area hurricane shelters, evacuation levels and other disaster planning information, scan the QR Code below with your cell phone camera for the county you live in.

Sarasota County



Charlotte County



Manatee County

