



Tiered Evacuation and Know Your Zone FAQs

Introduction:

Beginning June 1, 23 localities in coastal Virginia will begin using new tiered evacuation zones to communicate important public safety information and evacuation instructions to those who live, work in or are visiting Hampton Roads, the Middle Peninsula, the Northern Neck and the Eastern Shore. The new zones are designed to enhance current evacuation plans, boost public safety, and improve travel efficiency in the event of hurricanes or other disasters.

The tiered evacuation zones were developed in close cooperation with local emergency managers and are based on the most up-to-date engineering data for the region.

Residents of coastal Virginia are urged to Know Your Zone. You can use a new interactive map at KnowYourZoneVA.org to determine which storm evacuation zone you live in based upon your street address.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How will these new zones enhance current evacuation plans, boost public safety and improve travel efficiency in the event of hurricanes or other disasters?

The new tiered evacuation zones identify areas vulnerable to flooding with precision that was not available until now. Empowered by this new information, residents of coastal Virginia will know more clearly whether they need to evacuate or shelter at home during a storm or other emergency.

The new zones will help citizens avoid unnecessary evacuation travel, thereby reducing highway congestion, easing overcrowding at local storm shelters and boosting public safety.

How were these new evacuation zones planned/designed?

The new evacuation zones were developed by Atkins, a global engineering firm with extensive experience designing hurricane evacuation plans for major metropolitan areas, in close cooperation with local emergency managers throughout Hampton Roads, Virginia's Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck and the Eastern Shore. Different hurricanes can cause vastly different impacts. The new zones take into account historic storm surge measurements combined with projected effects of storms of different intensity, path, speed, tides, and other meteorological factors.



Tiered Evacuation and Know Your Zone FAQs

How are the new evacuation zones being introduced to the public?

Residents in coastal Virginia communities must be aware of which tiered evacuation zone in which they live—zone A, B, C, or D. State and local officials are launching **Know Your Zone**, a public information campaign to promote the new zones and give residents a simple way to find out which zone they are in. This will allow emergency managers to give specific instructions and information to those residents most at risk of an approaching storm.

The **Know Your Zone** campaign will be coordinated with public and media outreach, education for local emergency responders and citizens, and other tools to give actionable and specific direction to those residents of zones at most risk of each particular storm as it approaches Virginia. VDEM is working with local emergency managers to deploy the most effective means of communicating the new zones to each impacted community, including using paid advertising, media outreach, social media and other educational tools.

How can people learn their storm evacuation zone?

The Know Your Zone campaign will encourage those who live, work or are visiting the region to go online to KnowYourZoneVA.org to view a detailed map that shows the new tiered evacuation zones.

The web site displays an interactive color-coded map showing the new evacuation zones. People can use the new map to view a big picture of the region, or zoom-in to their neighborhood to see which locations are vulnerable to flooding during different types of storms. In addition, users can enter their address to see their designated evacuation zone.

How many zones are designated?

There are four evacuation zones, designated A through D. In the event of a storm or other emergency, local emergency managers may direct residents of one or more zones to evacuate. Storms can produce dramatically different impacts, depending on tides, storm intensity, path, and other factors. The new zones use actual storm data and forecasted tracks to inform evacuation decisions.



Tiered Evacuation and Know Your Zone FAQs

The new zone map also will help local emergency managers provide residents with more precise and more useful evacuation guidance. Depending on the emergency, being safe might mean staying at home, or a short trip to higher ground, or traveling to a different region of the state.

Will this new interactive zone map also work on my smart phone?

Yes, KnowYourZoneVA.org is compatible with smart phones.

What about people without Internet access? How will they learn about Know Your Zone?

People without Internet access are urged to contact their local emergency managers or call 2-1-1 for assistance in determining their zone. Local officials and emergency management professionals throughout the region have been actively involved in the development of the new zones and can assist citizens in identifying their new evacuation zone.

Will the KnowYourZoneVA.org website tell residents when they need to evacuate, or where they need to go?

No. Knowyourzone.org will provide access to an interactive map that displays the new evacuation zones. When a storm or other emergency is imminent, emergency managers will use websites, social media, and will work with newspapers, radio and TV stations to provide instructions to residents of those zones most at risk.

If I go to KnowYourZoneVA.org and learn my home address is not located in any of the new evacuation zones, does that mean I never need to evacuate during a hurricane?

Not necessarily. Virginians are urged to remember that Hurricanes can strike throughout much of the year and storms can have varied impacts. All Virginians are urged to prepare for hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. To learn how to prepare your family and businesses for the hurricane threat, visit vaemergency.gov. State and local emergency managers will also work with local news sources such as radio, TV and newspapers before and during emergency to provide guidance and information about each approaching storm.



Tiered Evacuation and Know Your Zone FAQs

What about people in coastal Virginia who live in mobile homes?

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to storms with high winds, including hurricanes. So, residents of mobile homes should evacuate for any approaching storm with high winds, even if they are not located in one of the new storm evacuation zones.

What part of Virginia is covered by the new tiered evacuation zones and the Know Your Zone campaign?

The new evacuation zones and Know Your Zone campaign will serve the region of the state most vulnerable to hurricanes and other major storms. About 1.25 million people live in Hampton Roads, the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck, and the Eastern Shore.

Twenty-three localities are participating in the program. They are the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach; and the counties of Accomack, Essex, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, Richmond County, Surry, Westmoreland, and York, and the Town of Chincoteague.

Do these new zones replace existing evacuation plans for coastal Virginia?

No. The new tiered zones enhance the current evacuation routes already designated in coastal Virginia. The zones allow emergency managers to provide more detailed and targeted information to residents who may be impacted by particular storms.

The new evacuation zones and the Know Your Zone campaign will be an additional tool for public safety agencies to communicate with the public and to provide instructions to those most at risk.

Will local media outlets (newspapers, radio, TV stations) still play an important role in warning the public when there's a storm or other emergency?

Yes. When a serious storm is expected to impact Virginia's coastal area, state and local emergency managers will work with local news media outlets that will broadcast and publish evacuation directives to the public, as they have in the past.



Tiered Evacuation and Know Your Zone FAQs

Media outlets play a vital role in informing the public about emergencies, and the importance of emergency preparedness.

What about reversing lanes on Interstate-64...is that still part of the state evacuation plan for coastal Virginia?

Interstate 64 lane reversal is still a part of the region's overall evacuation tool box, but it is not the primary tool in evacuation due to challenges with its implementation and its limited impact in reducing the time it takes to evacuate those most at risk during hurricanes and other disasters.