



Winter Weather

Snow and ice storms, coupled with cold temperatures, periodically threaten the Charleston area. Winter storms can result in flooding, storm surge, closed highways, blocked roads, downed power lines and hypothermia. If a winter storm watch or warning is issued:

- ✓ Consider ending your trip early if you can safely do so.
- ✓ Inquire with your hotel, bed & breakfast or rental home management regarding their winter storm policy.
- ✓ Stay indoors during the storm. If you must venture out, use extreme caution and dress in multiple layers of warm clothing.



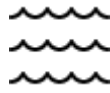
Keep Cool

In the summer, Charleston can be extremely hot. Our temperatures often exceed 90° F and we often experience very high humidity levels. To stay safe and healthy, observe the following precautions:

- ✓ Dress in lightweight, breathable, light color fabrics.
- ✓ Drink plenty of non-alcoholic liquids, particularly water.
- ✓ Slow down and take your "avoid strenuous activity, particularly in the middle of the day."
- ✓ Try to spend time in air-conditioned spaces during the hottest points of the day.
- ✓ Limit your direct exposure to the sun, especially during middle of the day.
- ✓ Wear and reapply sunscreen.
- ✓ Ask your physician for recommendations on how to best cope with hot weather, high humidity and strong sun, if you have special medical conditions.



Beware of heat stroke, the most serious form of heat injury. It is caused by prolonged exposure to high temperatures and is often accompanied by dehydration. Fainting may be the first sign. Other common symptoms include nausea, seizures, confusion, disorientation, and sometimes loss of consciousness. It is a medical emergency. If you suspect that someone has heat stroke call 911 immediately.



Enjoy the Water Safely

While you enjoy your time in the beautiful water that surrounds us, please use caution.

The ocean is never 100% safe, so always treat it with respect, watch your children and swim with a buddy.

At the beach, pay attention to warning flags.



The area between red over yellow flags is a designated lifeguarded swimming area.



A yellow flag alerts you to use extra caution due to rough water or potentially dangerous sea life.

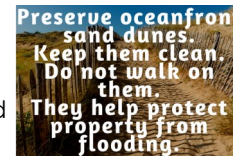


A red flag means NO swimming because of dangerous currents, severe storms, lightning or dangerous sea life.



A purple flag means there may be high numbers of dangerous animals (e.g. jellyfish, stingray, man-of-war) in the water. It is not intended to notify the public of sharks.

Beware of rip currents. When swimming in the ocean, be aware of the potential for rip currents. If you find yourself pulled out to sea by one, swim parallel to the shore to escape the current and then swim back to shore.



Use caution when boating. Follow all applicable rules and regulations. Monitor local weather. Never operate any size or type of watercraft while intoxicated.

Beware of alligators. Keep your distance and do not approach them. Do not swim in areas known to be inhabited by alligators. Take special care of children and pets when near water. Never feed alligators.

Helpful telephone numbers, websites & local media info for visitors

For emergencies dial 911

Charleston County Emergency Management
CharlestonCounty.org (843) 746-3800

South Carolina Emergency Management Division
SCEMD.org (803) 737-8500

Local television channels

CBS: Channel 5, live5news.com
NBC: Channel 2, counton2.com
ABC: Channel 4, abcnews4.com
Fox: Channel 24, foxcharleston.com

Local radio stations

WSC: 94.3 FM, 943wsc.iheart.com
WTMA: 1250 AM, wima.com
WSCI: 89.3 FM, eivradio.org
WMGL: 107.3 FM, magic1073fm.com

Staying Safe: a Guide for Visitors to Charleston



Charleston County Building Inspection Services
4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite A311
North Charleston, SC 29405
(843) 202-6930

BuildingServices@CharlestonCounty.org
www.CharlestonCounty.org



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Welcome to Charleston! We are glad you are here. We anticipate that you will be safe while you explore all that Charleston and the Lowcountry have to offer. If there is a weather emergency or other hazard, this brochure will provide you with some information on how to be safe.



Flooding

Floods are the most frequent and costly natural hazard in the United States.

The Lowcountry's elevation, coastal location and frequency of rain makes flooding a threat to everyone in the region.

3 fast FLOOD FACTS

- 1 Heavy rain can bring dangerous flash flooding.
- 2 6 inches of moving water can knock a person down.
- 3 2 feet of moving water can sweep a vehicle away.

If a Flood Watch is issued, conditions are right for flooding. Monitor local media for updates and alerts. Find out where you can quickly, and on foot, move to higher ground. Elevate personal belongings off of the floor. If evacuations are ordered, follow instructions and leave promptly.

If a Flood Warning is issued, flooding is occurring or about to occur. Monitor local media and websites such as CharlestonCounty.org and FEMA.gov for emergency notifications. If you are already inside, stay inside and move to a higher floor, if necessary. If you are outside, immediately get into a building or walk to higher ground. If you are driving, do not drive through flooded areas or any water. **Turn around, don't drown.** Do not touch downed power lines. Do not come into contact with or wade through floodwater as it may contain toxic materials and venomous animals and insects.

After a flood, remain inside until floodwaters subside. If you must go outside, avoid wading through water. Any person or thing touched by floodwater must be disinfected. If you smell gas, immediately contact emergency personnel.



Hurricanes & Tropical Storms

Our beautiful coastal location puts us at risk for hurricanes and tropical storms. Before you arrive in Charleston, and while you are here, follow local weather reports to see if a tropical storm or hurricane is in the forecast.



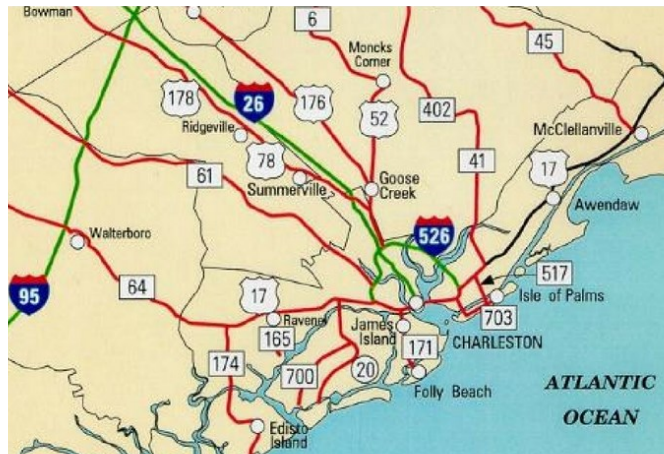
If a tropical storm or hurricane watch is issued, it is likely that a storm will make landfall within 48 hours. You should:

- ✓ Monitor local weather and news for the latest updates.
- ✓ Inquire with your hotel, bed & breakfast or rental home management regarding their evacuation policy and recommendations.
- ✓ If you are visiting by boat, contact your marina's dockmaster for more information.
- ✓ Consider ending your trip early. Airlines will often waive fees if there is an impending storm.
- ✓ Fill up your vehicle's gas tank so you will avoid long lines at gas stations in case of evacuation.
- ✓ Refer to the evacuation route map below or for detailed evacuation directions visit SCEMD.org.

Tropical Storm vs. Hurricane

a **Tropical Storm** is a tropical cyclone in which the sustained surface wind speed range is from 39 to 73 miles per hour

a **Hurricane** is a tropical cyclone in the northern hemisphere with sustained surface winds greater than 74 miles per hour



If a tropical storm or hurricane warning is issued, a storm is expected to make landfall within 36 hours. If a warning is issued you should consider:

- ✓ Ending your visit to Charleston early and evacuating immediately (but make plans to return soon)!
- ✓ Alerting a friend or family member of your location, if you stay. Ensure that you have at least a three-day supply of bottled water and non-perishable food, prescription medications, flashlight and battery-operated radio. Remain indoors in an interior room and away from windows and doors.



Tornadoes

If a tornado watch or warning is issued, or if you observe a dark greenish or yellowish sky or hear a loud roar, take cover indoors. The best place to shelter is in a small inner room without windows (e.g. bathroom or closet) or in an inner hallway, on a building's lowest level. Stay away from windows and get under a mattress or piece of sturdy furniture such as a heavy table and hold on to it.

If you are outside, get into the closest building. If that is not possible, crouch low or lie down next to a building or in a ditch or low-lying area. Protect your head and neck with your arms.

If you are in a vehicle, exit it immediately and take shelter in a nearby building or lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle. Never try to outride a tornado as they can change direction quickly and can easily toss a vehicle in the air.

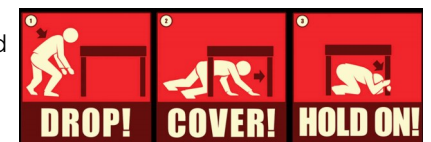


Earthquake

One of the strongest earthquakes to have ever hit the United States' east coast happened right here in Charleston in 1886.

Our region is prone to earthquakes and we could experience a major one at any time. In fact, this area experiences small earthquakes on a regular basis.

If you feel a sudden and rapid shaking, the best protection is to **"Drop! Cover! Hold On!"** Get on the floor and get under and hold on to a piece of heavy furniture such as a desk, table or bench. If you are outside, move away from buildings. Most earthquake-related injuries result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.



Tsunami

Even though uncommon in the Charleston area, there is still a threat of off-shore earthquakes which can trigger a tsunami. A tsunami is a series of large ocean waves generated by major earthquakes under the ocean floor. If a tsunami warning is issued, follow instructions. If you are at the beach or near the coast quickly move at least two miles inland and to higher ground.