

# WATCHES AND WARNINGS

- A **watch** means that hurricane conditions are expected to reach Mississippi within 36 hours. Your student should begin preliminary preparations to protect his/her life and property.
- A **warning** means that a hurricane is expected in our region within 24 hours. All preparations should be completed at this time.
- If a major storm is expected, Category III or higher, USM will be evacuated for your student's safety. This means ALL campus housing facilities will close, and residents must leave campus.

The key to successfully preparing for a hurricane is to stay informed and ensure that your family has a plan in place. The following links may offer helpful information regarding hurricanes:

[weather.gov/safety/hurricane](https://www.weather.gov/safety/hurricane)  
[msema.org](https://www.msema.org)  
[weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)



# Hurricane Evacuation Guide for Parents



The University of Southern Mississippi  
Department of Housing and Residence Life

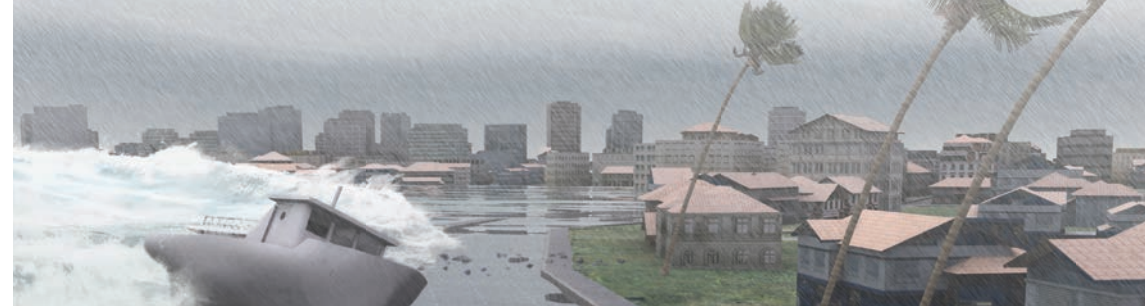
118 College Drive #5064, Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
P: 601.266.4783 | [usm.edu/housing](https://usm.edu/housing)





## BEFORE THE HURRICANE: WHAT YOUR STUDENT SHOULD DO

- Check The University of Southern Mississippi's (USM) website at **SouthernMiss.info**. The most immediate release of information regarding the hurricane and related procedures will come from the University's website.
- To receive time-sensitive emergency messages (via text, phone and email), your student should log into Eagle Alert and make sure her/his contact information is up to date in the system at **usm.edu/safety/eagle-alert**.
- Call your student to determine a meeting point and make sure he/she plans to go home early. Know where she/he will be going, whether it is home, to a friend's house or to a designated shelter. *Parents, you may NOT relocate to USM. Refer to Red Cross shelters in the area. The University is not an emergency shelter and cannot accommodate a large number of additional people.*
- Students with disabilities will be contacted by Housing and Residence Life personnel to help with filling out the online form.
- Students with disabilities and/or emotional support animals will be contacted by Housing and Residence Life personnel to receive specific evacuation plans. In the meantime, he/she should begin making plans according to the student version of this guide.
- Ensure your student fills out the Hurricane Evacuation Form in the Student Housing Portal (**rmsweb.usm.edu/Page/HurricaneEvacForm**) to let University officials know what their evacuation plan is, and to give them important information related to their destination. Your student must electronically submit this form before the evacuation is announced.



- Your student will need to pack an emergency bag. Items he/she may want to include in the bag are as follows:
  - o University ID and driver's license or appropriate identification documents
  - o Important papers
  - o Textbooks and coursework
  - o Basic toiletries (i.e. soap, wash cloth, towel, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste and other personal hygiene supplies)
  - o Small first-aid kit and medicine supply
  - o Several changes of clothing and a bag to store dirty or used clothing
  - o Charged cell phone
  - o Cash
  - o Pillow, blanket, sleeping bag
  - o Non-perishable food/snacks and dining supplies (i.e. napkins, plastic forks/spoons, can opener)
  - o Water (plan on one gallon per person, per day)
  - o Flashlights with batteries
  - o Back up electronic devices or portable drives and take with her/him
  - o Personal valuables
- Your student needs to remove his/her car from campus. If your student must leave a car on campus during evacuation, he/she will need to park it in the Parking Garage on W. Fourth Street. Understand that the University is not liable for storm damage to vehicles.
- Your student needs to move his/her bicycle. We recommend that he/she bring the bike into his/her individual rooms. Bikes CANNOT be stored in a stairwell, lobby or handicap-accessible area.
- Your student needs to prepare his/her room by doing the following:
  - o Move items away from the window.
  - o Remove electronics from the floor and place on a shelf or somewhere off the floor in the room.
  - o Cover important items with a plastic trash can liner.
  - o Remove perishable food from the refrigerator.
  - o Take an inventory of the personal items left in the room (take a picture).

*Understand that the University is not responsible for water damage to personal property due to the storm.*

## EVACUATION PLAN

### USM requires evacuation for Category III (or higher) storms.

- Your student must notify the front desk of their residence hall of their evacuation and submit the Hurricane Evacuation Form in the Student Housing Portal.
- Students will be expected to take ALL valuables with them.
- They will be instructed to notify you that they will be evacuating. If a roommate and/or international student in the hall does not have a place to evacuate, please consider allowing your student to take her/him to your house.
- Ensure your student is prepared to receive specific evacuation instructions from the University.

## HURRICANE EVACUATION FORM IN STUDENT HOUSING PORTAL

- Your student must use their SOAR ID/password to login to the Student Housing Portal. It can be accessed via the homepage of the Housing and Residence Life website by clicking "Enter Housing Portal." Once they've logged in, they will click on the "forms" tab and select the "Hurricane Evacuation Form." They can also directly access the form by going to the following link: **rmsweb.usm.edu/Page/HurricaneEvacForm**
- Your student must complete and submit this online form prior to leaving campus.
- Make sure to remind your student to sign out with the hall staff at the desk and sign back in when they return.
- If your student has any questions or needs more information, they can contact the Desk Assistant (DA) or Resident Assistant (RA) in their residence hall.
- Encourage your student to continuously check for Eagle Alert messages from the University.

## DURING THE HURRICANE: WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

- Monitor the University website at **usm.edu** to find out when the University will reopen.
- Monitor the Department of Housing and Residence Life website at **usm.edu/housing-residence-life** for additional information about the reopening of campus housing.
- Communicate with your student on his/her whereabouts.
- DO NOT allow your student to return to campus before you hear or see an announcement to return to USM and campus housing.

## AFTER THE HURRICANE: WHAT YOUR STUDENT SHOULD DO UPON RETURNING TO CAMPUS

- Upon your student's return to campus, he/she must check in at the front desk of his/her residence hall.
  - o Village or fraternity house residents should check in at Scholarship Hall.
  - o Residents of Mississippi Hall should check in at Hattiesburg Hall.
- Your student should inspect his/her room and report any damage to the hall staff.

