

UNITED STATES CONSULATE GENERAL MERIDA

U.S. Citizen Hurricane FAQs: 2017

What is the Department of State's role during a crisis overseas? Do you always evacuate U.S. citizens during a crisis overseas?

- The actions we take depend on the nature of the crisis. In some instances, we may only need to provide information on conditions in the country, such as warning about areas of unrest, how and where to seek help, and other useful advice. In more serious situations, we may recommend that U.S. citizens leave the foreign country, and, if commercial transportation is not available, provide departure assistance, as our resources permit.

What hurricane alert system is used by local authorities?

- The national Mexican warning system is called the “Early Warning System for Tropical Cyclones” (SIAT – CT). Please see summary graphic below, as well as the more detailed description of warning levels attached. Alerts should be transmitted in English and Spanish during a crisis.

TROPICAL CYCLONE APPROACHING...What to do?

Identify the five **ALERT LEVELS** when a tropical cyclone approaches our territory.

In the fourth region comprising the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico the cyclonic season is from June to November.

Remember that any color of SIAT, important rainfalls could occur.

Early Warning System Tropical Cyclones SIAT - CT

1 Minimum hazard
The presence of a tropical cyclone moving towards our shores is detected.
Stay tuned to weather information.

2 Low hazard
Prune trees that obstruct electrical cables and others dangerous situations.
Protect windows with adhesive tape in cross shape and secure objects that may be thrown away by the wind.
Clean up the roofs, drains, channels and floor drains. Avoid littering.

3 Moderate hazard
Identify the nearest temporary refuge and the route to get over quickly.
Store food, drinking water and handy emergency supplies.
Keep important documents in plastic bags.

4 High hazard
If your home is not safe, leave and get to a shelter.
If you live near a river or pond, keep watch on the water level.
Close doors and windows, shut off the gas and electricity supplies.

5 Maximum hazard
Stay away from windows to prevent injury if they break.
Remain at home or shelter until authorities report that the hazard is over.
Remain calm and keep yourself informed.

Learn more
National System of Civil Protection www.proteccioncivil.gob.mx
National Meteorological Service www.smn.gob.mx
National Center for Disaster Prevention www.cenapred.gob.mx
Source: National Center for Disaster Prevention

proteccioncivil.qroo.gob.mx [Coordinación Estatal de Protección Civil](https://www.facebook.com/Coordinacion-Estatal-de-Proteccion-Civil) [@ProtCivil_Qroo](https://twitter.com/ProtCivil_Qroo)

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Where can U.S. citizens find news, before, during, and after the storm?

- The US National Hurricane Center (<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>)
- The US Embassy Mexico City Travel Alert Website (<https://mx.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/>)
- The US Embassy Mexico City Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/mexico.usembassy/>)
- The Mexican National Hurricane Center (<http://smn.conagua.gob.mx/es/pronosticos/avisos/aviso-de-ciclón-tropical-en-el-oceano-atlantico>)

Cancun <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Protection Cancun (https://www.facebook.com/Protecci%C3%B3n-Civil-Canc%C3%BAn-259218067560706/) (Spanish)• City Hall Radio (Radio Ayuntamiento): FM 105.9 (Spanish)
Playa Del Carmen <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Riviera FM- SQCS: 98.1 FM (Spanish)• Riviera FM Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/Rivierafm98.1)• Civil Protection of Quintana Roo (http://proteccioncivil.qroo.gob.mx/portal/) (Click “Alertas” on the left for specific storm advisories) (Spanish)
Chetumal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Protection of Quintana Roo (http://proteccioncivil.qroo.gob.mx/portal/) (Click “Alertas” on the left for specific storm advisories) (Spanish)
Merida <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Merida’s Department of Civil Protection (http://www.merida.gob.mx/proteccioncivil/) (Spanish)—Includes list of all local emergency telephone numbers, including hospitals.• Local SIPSE TV and Radio (http://sipse.com/milenio/merida/) (Spanish)

What departure assistance does the U.S. government provide? Will the U.S. helicopters and military assist with the evacuation? Why does the U.S. government tell U.S. citizens they should depart, but not offer transportation?

- The State Department uses the resources that are most expedient and appropriate to the situation. Regularly scheduled commercial flights or transportation are always the best option when local communications and transportation infrastructure are intact and operating normally, even if we have advised all U.S. citizens to leave. Our efforts are devoted to keeping the local U.S. citizen community informed of developments and travel options.
- Expectations of rescue by helicopters, the U.S. military, and U.S. government-provided transportation with armed escorts reflect a Hollywood script more than reality. While some evacuations involve U.S. military or other U.S. government assets, the vast majority rely on commercial transportation and local infrastructure.

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Where should U.S. citizens go during an evacuation? How? When?

- NOTE: The toll road between Cancun and Merida is free only when a State of Disaster is declared by Mexican Authorities. Otherwise, the regular \$450 MXN peso toll applies (\$285 MXN Cancun-Valladolid plus \$165 MXN Valladolid-Merida) payable in **cash only**.

Cancun <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depending on the storm path, Quintana Roo Civil Protection suggests two evacuation routes: Highway 307 (Cancun-Chetumal), or Highway 180D (Cancun-Merida toll way).• U.S. citizens in the Cancun Hotel Zone's northern half, Kilometer 0-12, should evacuate through Bonampak Avenue (downtown) while U.S. citizens in the southern half, from Kilometer 12 south, through the Cancun Airport road.
Playa Del Carmen <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Protection in Playa del Carmen recommends taking Hwy 305D to Highway 180D (the Merida toll way).
Chetumal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depending on the storm's path, Civil Protection recommends evacuating up Highway 307 toward Cancun.• Civil Protection of Chetumal reports that Highway 186 (towards Escarcega) is particularly subject to flooding.• The alternate airports for Chetumal are Merida and Cancun, depending on the storm's path.
Merida <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Protection suggests foreigners evacuate at the yellow alert stage via air, and reports that it will not be possible to evacuate via land on orange alert until after the hurricane has passed.• The alternate airport for Merida is Cancun.

Where are the shelters? Is there one for foreigners?

Cancun <ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. citizens who do not have a shelter in their place of lodging are welcome to shelter at any of the 40 locations designated by Quintana Roo Civil Protection (see attached list and map of shelters in Cancun).
Playa Del Carmen <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hotels are considered shelters by the local government, but they are currently going through quality assurance process and an official list should be ready soon.• US Citizens who do not have a shelter in their place of lodging are also welcome to shelter at any of the locations designated by Civil Protection in Playa del Carmen (see attached list of shelters in Playa Del Carmen).
Chetumal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the state of Quintana Roo, there are 59 shelters designated for tourists and more than 800 shelters in total.• There are about 25 shelters in Chetumal, none of which are specifically designated for tourists although foreigners are welcome at any of them. See the extensive list attached for specific shelter locations.
Merida

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- The designated shelter for foreigners is **Centro de Convenciones Siglo XXI**. Address: Calle 60 Norte 299E, Revolucion, 97118 Mérida, Yuc., Mexico; Telephone: +52 999 942 1900. Limited Consular Services may be available at this location during an evacuation.
- For an up-to-date, detailed, interactive map of all other shelters in and around Merida, visit <http://www.merida.gob.mx/municipio/portal/pcivil/contenido/refugios.php>.
- See also the extensive attached list of shelters in the State of Yucatan.

What is necessary to bring to a shelter?

- Emergency cash, personal documents, medicines, changes of clothes, and personal hygiene items.
- Shelters are responsible for providing food and water, though people are also welcome to bring their own.

Chetumal

- Civil Protection recommends bringing food and water for 48 hours.

Merida

- Personal belongings are limited to one suitcase per person.

What should U.S. citizens do with their pets at the time of evacuation?

- The U.S. citizen would need to contact the shelter they intend to use to see if pets are permitted. No shelters list a designated pet area.
- Civil protection recommends organizing for pet protection beforehand, such as with a veterinarian or kennel. They also recommend having pet carriers ready in case the pet needs to be evacuated with you.

Merida

- Civil Protection is considering opening an area in the Siglo XXI shelter for foreigners with pets, but the matter has not yet been resolved.

What happens if a citizen does not want to evacuate the area?

- U.S. citizens should follow all local authorities' instructions with regards to evacuation.
- The Mexican Army and/or Navy could be called in to enforce an evacuation.

Quintana Roo

- Civil Protection states that in extreme life-and-death circumstances, U.S. citizens may be evacuated against their will.

Yucatan

- If the person chooses not to evacuate during an emergency, even after the Mexican Military and Navy attempt to enforce the evacuation, Civil Protection will respect the person's decision.

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How will U.S. citizens know when it is safe to return to the affected area?

- U.S. citizens should continue to monitor the news and information sites listed above.
- Mexico's hurricane warning system includes levels of alerts for after a storm passes as well. Please see pages 4-5 of the attached description for post-storm warning levels in English.

What resources are available for LPRs?

- During a crisis, the State Department's priority is assisting U.S. citizens. You should not expect to bring friends or relatives who are not U.S. citizens on U.S. government chartered or non-commercial transportation. Exceptions may be made to accommodate special family circumstances, such as when the spouse of a U.S. citizen is a legal permanent resident, or "green card" holder; however, it is the non-U.S. citizen's responsibility to be sure he or she has appropriate travel documentation for the destination location. Any services provided to non-U.S. citizens are on a space-available basis after U.S. citizens are accommodated.