

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lee County Emergency Operations Center and partners monitoring Hurricane Idalia**

Fort Myers, FL, Aug. 29, 2023 – Lee County continues to encourage residents to monitor local forecasts as well as the National Hurricane Center and National Weather Service. Forecasters are calling for rapid intensification as the storm passes to the west of Lee County, and even after the storm passes, conditions will demand that residents use common sense and caution.

There is also a lot of storm activity on the south side of this hurricane. That will continue into the evening and overnight. Be vigilant and smart.

- Don't go the beach to watch waves or recreate.
- Don't let children play in the rain and standing water.
- Stay indoors during the height of the wind.
- Don't drive through flooded water.
- Stay indoors this evening and overnight. Avoid unnecessary trips.

The Lee County Emergency Operations Center continues to operate at a Level 1 activation and is holding regularly scheduled briefings with partners such as the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service, as well as local EOC partners.

**UPDATE ON SAFE HAVENS:**

The county reminds residents that there are no evacuation orders in place and none are anticipated.

To help residents from coastal areas who may be in housing still recovering from Hurricane Ian damage, the county opened two Safe Havens Monday night. Locations are:

- North Fort Myers Recreation Center, 2000 N. Recreation Park Way, North Fort Myers
- Estero Recreation Center, 9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd., Estero

The Safe Havens remain open today. Pets are welcome; Lee County Domestic Animal Services staff members are on site.

LeeTran's free shuttles to both Safe Havens will continue this morning. Last pickup on places such as Pine Island is at 12:30 p.m. today. Find details at [www.leegov.com/storm](http://www.leegov.com/storm).

Residents who want to take advantage of a Safe Haven are asked to arrive by lunchtime in advance of the anticipated deteriorating weather conditions.

**REMINDERS:**

Lee County Government is closed today.

Regular curbside trash collection is continuing. Trucks deployed today as early as possible and Solid Waste reports no problems.

**WHAT'S NEXT:**

Lee County EOC will continue to monitor throughout the day, especially the squall lines.

EOC is staffed with county employees and local partners who are well positioned to implement any response activities needed throughout the duration of the storm.

Lee County is committed to providing the community regular updates.

Announcements related to county operations for Wednesday will be forthcoming.

### **Reminder about bridges**

The Florida Department of Transportation projects on the Sanibel Causeway and the Matlacha area are secured. Contractors are mobilized and will be monitoring the sites and will immediately inspect the sites after the storm passes.

Lee County does not literally “close” bridges during tropical storms or hurricanes with barricades, cones, gates or signs because they can easily blow away, becoming ineffective and hazardous.

Lee DOT strongly advises motorists to stay off bridges – and the roads leading to them— when sustained winds reach 40 mph (tropical storm force). At those speeds, wind gusts can already be much higher. Winds also become stronger at higher elevations, so dangers increase on higher bridges and elevated roadways.

Motorists may encounter law enforcement officers during weather events around and near bridges. Follow the directions given.

### **Why the State of Local Emergency**

Lee County is included in the Governor’s Executive Order, and the county is under a State of Local Emergency. This SOLE is a necessary step to ensure the county can recovery any costs, should damage occur. Each storm needs its own SOLE for this purpose.

### **United Way 211**

For questions regarding preparation for Tropical Storm Idalia, contact United Way 211, which is a program that provides free information and referral to human/social service agencies within Lee, Hendry and Glades counties. United Way 211 is a partner with Lee County Emergency Operations. Dial dial 2-1-1 or call (239) 433-3900.

### **Stay updated**

Lee County will continue updates via [livestream](#) and on [www.leegov.com/storm](http://www.leegov.com/storm). Follow Lee County Government on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc](http://www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc).

To watch the Tuesday morning update, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iX7A24YCwBM>.