



## LEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

[www.LeeEOC.com](http://www.LeeEOC.com)

### STAY OFF BRIDGES WHEN WINDS REACH 40 MPH

#### **Q: Does Lee County Close Bridges During Tropical Storms and Hurricanes?**

**A:** Lee County cannot literally “close” bridges during tropical storms or hurricanes. However, we strongly advise drivers to stay off of 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.

#### **Q: Why Doesn't Lee County Barricade Bridges?**

**A:** Lee County does not “close” bridges with barricades, cones, gates or signs because they can easily blow away, becoming ineffective and hazardous. We do not post law enforcement or other officials to manually restrict bridge access. If injured from blowing debris, those officials will be unable to respond when needed after the storm.

#### **Q: Why Do Emergency Vehicles Stop Responding?**

**A:** Drivers who ignore the warning to stay off bridges face additional hazards if involved in a traffic accident because all emergency responders – fire, police, ambulance, tow trucks – cannot respond during tropical storm force winds. Any accident, or even an inconvenience like a flat tire or mechanical problem, will become a life-threatening event when exposed to a tropical storm or hurricane’s high winds, rain, flooded roadways and poor visibility.

Although Emergency Management cannot close bridges in the traditional sense of the word, our message is clear: **Stay off of the bridges – and the roads leading to them – when sustained winds reach 40 mph.** It is not coincidence that evacuations cease and first responders seek shelter in those conditions. **It is simply too dangerous to travel.** And if something does go wrong, help will not be coming. Safe and prudent people do not need cones, signs or barricades. You simply need good information.

Thank You