

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lee County Government update – noon Thursday, post Hurricane Milton

Fort Myers, FL, Oct. 10, 2024 – Hurricane Milton brought damaging storm surge to coastal areas throughout Lee County and tornado and wind damage across the community.

Crews are continuing to assess impacted areas, including barrier islands and coastal communities, including:

- Sanibel, Captiva, Upper Captiva, Boca Grande.
- Fort Myers Beach, coastal Bonita Springs.
- Matlacha and Pine Island.
- Areas impacted by the possible tornadoes.

The county has mobilized Community Coordination Teams to work directly with impacted areas to immediately address issues and needs that arise. This approach was successful following Hurricane Ian.

Residents are reminded that island municipalities may have their own requirements for residents returning and they should check with their local city hall.

The county continues to ask residents to remain in place and avoid travel as much as possible. There are downed powerlines in the roadway, and some are potentially live. Debris is still being removed from the roadways. Power outages are also impacting traffic signals.

About 9,600 people stayed overnight in Lee County shelters and evacuees began leaving this morning. As of 11:30 a.m., 627 remained and that number is expected to vary today as people assess damage at home and may need to come to a shelter. LeeTran will begin offering fare-free trips to people leaving shelters at 1 p.m. today, and some shelters may be consolidated.

Additional updates

Electricity service

Lee County continues to work with partners at the EOC to make service restoration a high priority.

As of earlier today remaining outages were:

- LCEC – 129,000
- FPL – 111,000

Damage Assessments Teams

Staff from multiple county departments are in communities assessing damage. Residents are reminded to:

- Get a permit for work on your home fix storm damage, especially unincorporated residents in coastal areas and areas that typically flood.
 - Residents or businesses within the Special Flood Hazard Area with any damage to their homes or businesses, including water intrusion.
 - You must obtain a permit for all repairs.
- Email FIRMinfo@leegov.com or call 239 533-8948
- If you're in a municipality, contact the appropriate entity for permit assistance.

County offices

- County offices remain closed today and Friday, as previously announced.
- All Lee County libraries will remain closed through the weekend.
- All Lee County Parks & Recreation facilities are closed today – recreation centers, sports complexes, beach sites and boat ramps. Further updates will be provided Friday.

Department of Transportation

Signals

- More than half of the county's 453 traffic signals were not operating as of 8 a.m., due either to no electrical service or physical damage.
- Crews are assessing signals.
- Motorists should approach non-functioning signals with caution
 - If a signal is dark: After coming to a complete stop, proceed carefully through the intersection.
 - If it's flashing yellow: Proceed with caution.
 - If it's flashing red: Treat it as a stop sign.
 - If law enforcement is on-scene, follow the directions of deputies or officers

Bridges

- Bridge inspections began early this morning and the majority of our bridges have been assessed and are safe.
- The Sanibel Causeway remained passable to emergency vehicles this morning. The Florida Department of Transportation and its contractors are clearing the road and coordinating a reopening plan with the City of Sanibel.
- The approach to the Blind Pass Bridge is damaged on the Captiva side. A plan is in place to repair this damage by this afternoon, and the bridge itself is safe.

Operations

- Crews are working on the first pass of all road to clear debris, horticulture and over-washed sand.

Solid Waste

Storm debris

- Crews are assessing debris and checking debris management sites.
- The county is ready to mobilize its contracted debris vendor.
- Before Milton, Solid Waste and the vendor were able to collect about 90% of all Helene debris in Lee County.

Regular trash collections

- Lee County has extended the suspension of residential garbage collection through Friday, Oct. 11.
- Regular service will resume Monday, Oct. 14, following the regular schedule for all accessible routes within the county's franchise areas.
- Only put out trash. Recycling and yard waste collections are delayed until Oct. 21.

Natural Resources

- Water continues to recede.
- High tide has already occurred today.
- Despite the surge, this was not a heavy rainfall event. St. James City recorded 4 inches and the countywide average was 1.1 inches.
- Staff have been monitoring the watershed across the region to the north of Lee County. No sheet flow is anticipated from the north in the coming days.

Lee County Utilities

- Coordinating with Fort Myers Beach to resume water services asap
- All Lee County Utilities treatment facilities are fully operational.
- Water system pressures were maintained, so no broad Boil Water notices are anticipated.
- Check with your individual utility for any specific questions. There may be individual areas with necessary notices in the future.

Lee County Domestic Animal Services

- Animal Services has resumed field operations and is making emergency calls a priority.
- The Lost and Found Center will open Friday, Oct. 11, to reunite owners with lost pets and to take in any stray pets.
- Lee County residents who currently have a Milton foster pet from LCDAS can return them between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Friday but anyone able to foster through the weekend would be appreciated.

LeeTran

- LeeTran regular fixed route services remain suspended today it conducts Emergency Operation Center missions and provides fare-free trips from the shelters as well as life-sustaining paratransit trips.
- Regular fixed route service is expected to return no later than Saturday.

Economic Development

- People who own a business in Lee County are asked to take a moment to complete a brief survey from Lee County Economic Development.
- You can find it at [Business Impact Assessment Survey](#).

Reminders

- Continue to stay updated at leegov.com/storm and follow Lee County Government on Facebook, facebook.com/leecountyflbocc.
- The video from the noon update will be posted to the [county's YouTube channel](#).

To receive updates from Lee County Government, sign up for the newsletter here: www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters. Follow Lee County Government on Facebook, www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc.