**Local shelter issues**

**Public shelter space**  
A substantial shelter space deficit exists throughout Southwest Florida. If you have a safe place to go, plan to use that location instead of a public shelter. If you have no safe place to go, shel­ters will be open. Here are some impor­tant points to remember if you choose to go to a public shelter:

* When you arrive, register with shelter staff. If you leave the shelter, check out with the shelter staff. Accountability is important for your safety.
* Shelters are not able to provide any conveniences or luxuries. They are not hotels. Each person will be assigned to a particular space marked on the floor (20 square feet of space per Florida Statute) for you and your belongings. Other people will be lined up alongside you.
* Shelters are likely to be loud, crowded, and filled with people that are highly stressed awaiting the hurricane. There will be people of all ages, from infants and toddlers to the elderly that are not in the best of health. Everyone handles stress differently, but most people have a difficult time managing the stress of not knowing if your home will remain after the storm has passed. Be sure to bring your patience and understanding with you to the shelter.
* Food and water will be available, but there may be a slight delay in initial service. If you want or need special food items, or have food allergies, bring your food with you. Bring your family’s disaster survival kit to ensure proper provisions.

Below are some items you should consider bringing when going to a shelter:

* Drinking water (Initially)
* Snacks or special foods
* Lawn chair or bed roll
* Book or electronic entertainment item with headphones
* Change of clothing / personal hygiene items

Weapons, alcoholic bever­ages and smoking are not permitted in the shelters. Many of our shelters are located in schools, which are smoke-free campuses. Consider getting nicotine patches or gum to help manage the cravings.

Pets are not allowed in public shelters or special needs shelters. You must take them to the pet-friendly shelter.

Service animals are allowed in every facility. These animals are trained to perform a specific service or services for their owner. People with service animals know they must bring food, water, snacks and cleanup supplies to the shelter.

**Transportation**

LeeTran is Lee County's public transit system. When Lee County Emergency Management orders an evacuation, LeeTran's regular bus routes become the emergency evacuation bus routes, with a few exceptions.

* The bus route in South Fort Myers will NOT travel into Collier County. It will stop at the Bonita Springs Kmart;
* the bus route on Pine Island will be activated, transporting residents to the nearest Transfer Point or Shelter;
* a temporary bus route will be activated for Sanibel and Captiva Islands to assist with evacuating island residents and workers;
* Additional transfer points will be activated to shuttle riders from regular bus routes to shelters.

At the time the evacuation order is issued, bus fares will be suspended to ensure riders can access public shelters.

When winds reach a sustained 40 mph, Lee County will pull all emergency vehicles off the road, where they will stay until the storm has passed. This includes ambulances, fire trucks, police vehicles, and buses.

When the storm has passed and the shelters are closing, the buses will transport people from the shelter to bus stops.

The LeeTran Emergency Evacuation Bus Route Map can be found at www.LeeEOC.com.

**Pet-friendly shelter**

In a hurricane, pets are subject to the same hazards as people and have many of the same needs. Remember, public shelters do not permit pets. The best plan is to identify a safer location that allows pets, such as a friend’s home or hotel. That way, you can keep your pets with you when you evacuate. Check the Internet to locate hotels that accept pets.

If you cannot do that, Lee County's pet-friendly shelter is located at South Fort Myers High School on Plantation Road. You must take shelter at the school with your pet, though you will be located in different areas. You are responsible for feeding, exercising, walking, and cleaning up after your pets.

You should bring a supply kit for your pet that includes food, water, medications, collar and leash, and a cage or carrier. Be sure all vaccinations are current and bring those records with you, along with several photos.

LeeTran will transport you and your pet to the pet-friendly shelter provided your pet is in a cage or crate.

**Things to remember:**

* Never leave your pets outside during a storm;
* Never leave a cat with a dog, even if the two are friends;
* Confine and keep small pets (birds, hamsters, etc.) away from cats and dogs;
* Dangerous animals should be secured in special crates or cages;
* Any animals posing a danger will be at risk of being removed.

All animal facilities in the path of a hurricane are subject to some degree of damage or flooding. Keep in mind, boarding kennels may be without elec­tricity or potable water and have limited personnel and supplies for days or weeks following a disaster.