

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lee County Emergency Operations Center and partners increase monitoring of Tropical Storm Idalia

Fort Myers, FL, Aug. 28, 2023 – The Lee County Emergency Operations Center has shifted to heightened monitoring and more regularly scheduled briefings with our partners such as the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service, as well as our local EOC partners.

Lee County is included in the Governor's Executive Order, and the county is now under a State of Local Emergency. This SOLE has been signed and issued in an abundance of caution. It's a necessary step to ensure the county can recovery any costs, should damage occur. Each storm needs its own SOLE for this purpose.

Lee County Government offices will be closed for regular business Tuesday, Aug. 29. Announcements about Wednesday operations will be made at a later point. For any additional operational adjustments or forthcoming announcements, check www.leegov.com/storm. The planned Lee Board of County Commissioners work session for 1:30 p.m. Tuesday has been canceled.

The National Hurricane Center forecast is for the storm to stay off the Lee County coast, with indirect impacts such as tropical storm force winds across communities that are trying to recover from Ian. The storm is moving fast and is expected to have a short duration. Lee County is prepared to address the community's needs.

No evacuation orders are in place at this time. We do not anticipate any to be issued based on the forecast. Lee County recognizes that post-Hurricane Ian, some residents could be more susceptible to impacts than a typical tropical event. The county is planning to assist as necessary and is prepared to respond operationally.

Lee County will be opening two "safe havens" this evening. These are not shelters. They are a safe place for anyone who does not feel secure in their housing situation, such as people living in an Ian-damaged home or a trailer or motorhome. Lee County will announce the locations and opening times of these sites during a 5:30 p.m. [livestream](#) and on www.leegov.com/storm.

This afternoon, residents should take steps to prepare for this storm event:

- Have a look at your Family Emergency Plan and Emergency Supply Kit.
- Identify where you will go if you don't feel safe in your home, such as a friend's or family member's home.
- Your Family Emergency Plan should include securing loose items in your yard.

The Florida Department of Transportation projects on the Sanibel Causeway and 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.

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