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Lee County Government garners a win for residents of apartments, condominiums and trailer parks impacted by Hurricane Milton

Fort Myers, FL, Nov. 8, 2024 – Lee County Government has garnered a win for residents in unincorporated areas with commercial properties impacted by Hurricane Milton.

The county until now was prevented from collecting storm debris from commercial property sites such as apartments, condominiums and trailer parks. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rules state that those property owners are expected to work with their insurance providers to cover the cost of debris removal.

That means that so far to date, the county's contracted debris hauler has not collected debris from the right of way (ROW) in front of those sites in unincorporated Lee County. Doing so would have resulted in non-reimbursable expenses. In short, FEMA would not authorize funds for that activity, so local taxpayers' dollars would have to be used.

However, county officials in partnership with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) have now received a waiver from FEMA. The county is grateful to FDEM for its assistance.

The waiver states that the county's hauler can make only one pass for the debris placed at the ROW. That means:

- The county's hauler will begin collecting this weekend and will continue until the single pass is complete. This may take several weeks.
- Any additional debris placed in front of condominiums, apartments and trailer parks after the county's hauler completes its single collection will not be picked up by the county.
- Debris set out after the waiver-approved single pass will have to be handled by the owners of the condos, apartment buildings and trailer parks using their insurance providers and private haulers.
- Condominiums, apartment complexes and trailer parks that are gated must take one additional step prior to their debris being picked up.
 - A Right of Entry (ROE) and Indemnification form must be filed with the county to allow the county's contractor to access their gated property.
 - Lee County has an easy, online process for professional property managers and residential homeowners' association (HOA) presidents to submit the necessary paperwork.
 - Forms are available on the [ROE Communities](#) page for communities located within unincorporated Lee County. The link to the form is also at www.leegov.com/solidwaste/hurricane. Scroll down to "Gated communities."

It's typical that receiving such a waiver takes some time after a storm makes landfall. With Hurricane Ian in 2022, the county received its waiver to collect in front of trailer parks, condominiums and other commercial sites a full month after landfall. The waiver for Hurricane Milton comes just shy of one-month post landfall.

Residents with questions can call Lee County Solid Waste customer service at 239-533-8000. Although the customer service center will be closed along with other county offices on Monday in observance of Veterans Day, debris-hauling operations will continue. Additional information is available at www.leegov.com/storm.

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