

Highlands County Post Disaster Resource Listing

IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

- **Emergency Management**.....(863) 385-1112
- **Animal Control**.....(863) 655-6475
- **Glades Electrical Cooperative**.....(800) 226-4025
- **Progress Energy**.....(800) 228-8485
- **Sheriff**.....(863) 402-7200
- **Solid Waste**.....(863) 655-6483

- **Highlands County Service Center- Red Cross**...(863) 386-4440

Emergency Radio Stations:

AM Radio Stations

WONN AM 1230
Talk 1430, WLKF
Super Q 1300, WQBN
(Spanish language translation)

FM Radio Stations

Spirit FM 90.5
The New Magic 94-9
97X
97 Country, WPCV
98.3 The Rose, WWRZ
101-5, The Point
102-5, The Bone
The Dove, 105.5 WDUV
107-3, The Eagle

Shelters:

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

An asterisk (*) indicates a special-needs shelter.

Avon Park

Avon Elementary School, 705 W. Winthrop

Avon Park Recreation Center, 207 East State St.

South Florida Community College - University Center, 600 W. College Dr.

Lake Placid

Lake Placid High School, 202 Green Dragon Dr.

Sebring

Sebring High School, 3514 Kenilworth Blvd.

Fred Wilde Elementary School, 1910 S. Highlands Ave.

Woodlawn Elementary School, 718 Fielder Blvd.

***Agri-Civic Center , 4509 George Blvd. (Special Needs)**

PET SHELTERS: Avon Park Holiness Camp, 1001 West Lake Isis Avenue

Dog Designs by Dana, 701 Thunderbird Hill Road

Special Needs Shelter:

Agri-Civic Center
4509 George Blvd.
Sebring, Fl. 33875

May 15, 2005

After The Storm

AVOIDING DANGER

When is it safe to drive into an area?

It isn't safe if there's water flowing across the road or there are downed power lines. As little as 6 inches of water can cause loss of control of a vehicle; 2 feet of water can carry cars away. It's also easy to drive off the road into deeper water.

I evacuated. When can I go home?

It may be several days before emergency officials give the OK. You won't be allowed to return to an evacuated area until flooding goes down, roads are cleared of debris, and power to fallen lines is cut. Officials also must check for casualties and damage to roads and bridges.

Be sure you have identification. If not, authorities may not let you back into your neighborhood.

What precautions should I take when returning home?

Walk around the house before you go inside. If you see cracks in the foundation, have a home construction expert inspect it before entering.

Check the ceilings for signs they could cave in. A jammed door may signal a problem. If you smell gas - the scent of rotten eggs may mean a leak - or hear a hissing sound, leave immediately and call the fire department.

If you see sparks, broken or frayed wires, or smell hot insulation, call an electrician. You should have turned the power off at the circuit breaker before evacuating. Don't risk electrocution by turning it back on before inspecting the house.

If appliances seem to have been exposed to floodwater, have them checked by a professional before turning them on.

My children want to play in the water. Should I worry?

Stay out of the water. Even wading through invites trouble. Floodwater is often contaminated by sewage and chemicals. The water may be deeper than it looks or have strong undercurrents. It could be electrically charged by downed power lines.

What do I do if a snake or possum or another animal gets into my house?

Encourage it to escape by opening the doors. If it doesn't, call your animal control for people registered to trap such animals.

If a disoriented dog threatens me, what should I do?

Try to be calm and stand still. Don't scream and run. Stay still until the dog leaves, then slowly move away. Don't stare the dog in the eyes; it may interpret that as a challenge.

If a dog attacks, give it your jacket, purse, bike - anything it might bite instead of you. If you fall or are knocked down, curl into a ball, put your hands over your head and neck, and stay as quiet as you can.

What if I see a downed power line?

Assume it is dangerous. Avoid touching any object that comes in contact with the downed power line - fences, tree limbs, railroad tracks, sheds or floodwater.

If a tree has fallen on a power line, call the power company.

For Tampa Electric Co., Hillsborough County customers can call (813) 223-0800. Customers outside Hillsborough can call 1-888-223-0800 (toll-free).

For Progress Energy, call 1-800-228-8485 (toll-free).

What if I smell natural gas or see a broken gas line?

Natural gas smells like rotten eggs. If you detect the odor, do not light matches, turn on light switches or use the telephone - any of those actions could ignite the gas and cause an explosion. Open a window or a door to ventilate the area, and leave the building. Call the gas company from another location.

The statewide, toll-free number for Peoples Gas customer service is 1-877-832-6747.

SURVIVING A POWER OUTAGE

How do I keep my food safe if there's no power?

Ice and freezer packs will cool down food in a cooler.

If you can get it, 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic foot freezer below 32 degrees for three or four days. Wear heavy, dry gloves when handling dry ice to avoid injury.

Open your refrigerator sparingly; the food will stay cold longer.

Food usually keeps 4 to 6 hours. However, if the room is quite warm, it can spoil faster.

Thawed food usually can be eaten if it is "refrigerator cold." Some thawed food can be refrozen if it still has ice crystals or has been kept at 40 degrees or below for no more than two days.

Thawed food and frozen dinners that are cold but have no ice crystals should be cooked immediately. Toss food if cooking brings out a questionable odor.

If the food's temperature is above 50 degrees, throw it away.

Once perishable food reaches room temperature, it's usually safe for only about two hours. Don't assume it's edible because it looks and smells OK.

What if my toilets stop working?

You can make chemical toilets.

Use 5-gallon buckets with tight-fitting lids for emergency toilets. Line each bucket with heavy-duty garbage bags. Add about 1/4-cup regular, unscented, liquid chlorine bleach to each bucket as a disinfectant and deodorizer.

Keep the buckets in a cool, dark place. Do not dispose of human waste through your regular trash pickup. When sewer services are restored, flush the waste down the toilet and clean and disinfect the buckets.

RECOVERING FROM PROPERTY DAMAGE

What if my house has storm damage?

Take photographs of the damage. Notify your homeowners insurance agent. Make emergency repairs to prevent more damage and keep receipts for anything you buy.

What if my car is damaged?

Notify your automobile insurance agent. If the engine has been flooded, don't turn it on: that could cause more damage. Note any items in the car that have been damaged.

What about roof damage?

If your neighbor's roof is missing shingles, yours probably is, too. If just a few are gone, try covering the area with a garbage bag. Slide one edge of the bag under the shingles about two rows above the affected portion and secure the other edge two rows below. Caulk the exposed nailheads; water gets in by running down the nails.

If a large area is damaged, cover it with a tarpaulin. Be sure not to cover the vent pipes of any natural gas appliance because that could cause a deadly accumulation of carbon monoxide in the house. Again, put caulk over any nails holding the tarp.

If you hire a roofer for repairs, be sure he has worker's compensation insurance - he should have a card showing the carrier - and a business license. If the roofer does not have insurance and gets injured on the job, you may be fined and held responsible for medical bills. Ask your local building department or major roofing suppliers about how to locate a roofer.

What about plumbing problems?

If water pipes are damaged, call the water department. Don't use water from the tap until the pipes have been repaired.

If you need to turn off the water, locate the meter, usually in the ground near the street, and remove the cover. You should see a valve you can turn with a wrench or water key. Shut-off valves for specific areas are near toilets and under sinks.

Flying debris can break exposed polyvinyl pipe. Check the pipes on well pumps and irrigation systems.

If sewage is backing into the shower or under the toilet, the whole system is backed up. Don't use other sinks or toilets either.

If you hire a plumber, expect to see a state or county license number on the vehicle. It's the law.

I still have questions. Who can I call?

Emergency management Web sites and phone numbers:

Hillsborough County: www.hillsboroughcounty.org; (813) 276-2385

Hardee County: <http://www.hardeecounty.net>; (863) 773-6373

Highlands County: <http://www.hceoc.org>; (863) 385-1112

Pinellas County: www.pinellascounty.org; (727) 464-3800

Polk County: www.polk-county.net; (863) 534-5600