

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lee County updates operations in preparation for the approach of Tropical Storm Helene**

Fort Myers, FL, Sept. 24, 2024 – Lee County Emergency Management is actively monitoring the tropics and working closely with state and federal partners, including the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the National Weather Service, and the National Hurricane Center.

Public safety and county staff are working to prepare county facilities and operations.

The Emergency Operations Center is expected to be activated to a Level 2 on Wednesday morning.

As previously announced, the Lee Board of County Commissioners will conduct an emergency meeting at 2:30 p.m. today in the Commission Chambers to discuss a State of Local Emergency for Tropical Storm Helene and to receive an update on storm-related issues.

The public is invited to attend the meeting or watch on LeeTV or Lee County social media channels.

County officials announced some operational updates at a noon press conference today. You can watch the press conference on the county's YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/SwKj6L12ICc>. The updates include:

**Department of Transportation**

Staff is:

- Securing various facilities and ongoing projects that cannot be completed before Thursday;
- Scheduling extra on-call personnel within Operations and Traffic divisions to work overnight on Wednesday and into Thursday;

Traffic

- Coordinating with FDOT on the temporary signals at the Little Pine Island Bridge, and staff will be prepared to check that alternating signal immediately after the weather clears;

Operations

- Inspecting drainage structures in lower-lying areas to make sure they are flowing freely;
- Coordinating with Department of Natural Resources on weir gate operations to provide space for water to stage, where appropriate;

**Natural Resources**

- Monitoring and evaluating hydrologic conditions from the network of sensors and gauges including groundwater levels, stream level and rainfall to assist in determining areas most vulnerable to flooding;
- Working with South Florida Water Management District to clean creeks and streams of exotic and obstructing vegetation, recognizing in many cases they serve as the major watercourses for flood relief;
- Documenting pre-storm conditions along our critically eroded beaches.

**Solid Waste**

Lee County Solid Waste urges residents to follow these important guidelines:

- Refrain from cutting trees, doing major yard work, or placing large amounts of bulk waste at the curb.
- Be aware that collection schedules may change as the storm approaches
- Visit [www.leegov.com](http://www.leegov.com) or [www.leegov.com/solidwaste](http://www.leegov.com/solidwaste) for updates.

### **Public Safety**

Members of the community should take action to stay informed:

- Monitor reputable local media outlets, the National Weather Service-Tampa, and the National Hurricane Center.
- Follow Lee County Government and Lee County Public Safety on social media, including Facebook, YouTube, X and LinkedIn.
- Sign up for AlertLee and download the LeePrepares app from Google Play or the App Store.

Have a plan and prepare for the effects of weather:

- Review your Family Emergency Plan and an Emergency Supply Kit.
- Prepare your home, secure loose items and ensure you have what you need on hand as you continue to monitor the tropics.

Know your home and your evacuation zone. Have a plan in place to evacuate, if need be, to a friend's or family member's house or a community outside the area.

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