

## TUESDAY MORNING UPDATE FROM LEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT – Tropical Storm Elsa

Fort Myers, FL, July 6, 2021 – Lee County Public Safety-Emergency Management today continues to monitor Tropical Storm Elsa and its rainfall as well as potential wind and tidal impacts.

The county asks motorists to drive with caution today.

Lee County Natural Resources and the Lee County Department of Transportation prepare year-round for excessive rain events, particularly during the traditional hurricane season.

DOT's maintenance on drainage ditches, for example, has helped prepare the county's roads for necessary drainage during rainfall events. Expect minor intersection and road flooding. During heavy rainfall, it will take the infrastructure time to drain.

The county asks the public to report blocked ditches, swales, canals and areas of local flooding:

- First, to find out if your road is maintained by Lee County DOT, visit <http://leegis.leegov.com/RoadLookup/>. If it is not maintained by Lee County, find your municipal contact by visiting [www.leegov.com/dcd/flood](http://www.leegov.com/dcd/flood).
- Second, put in a Request for Action (RFA) to improve surface water drainage along your county-maintained road by contacting the Request for Action Hotline at 239-533-9400 or [www.leegov.com/dot/requestforaction](http://www.leegov.com/dot/requestforaction).
- People can use the same phone number and website to also report blocked creeks and streams (example: downed trees, collected debris). The reported information will be directed to Lee County Natural Resources.

The county is monitoring low-lying areas, where residents should prepare their homes and yards for potential localized flooding. County crews will be monitoring locations such as the Sanibel Causeway islands and roads on barrier islands, Estero Boulevard on Fort Myers Beach, the Fort Myers neighborhoods of Whiskey Creek and Island Park, as well as Bonita Springs and the Matlacha Pass area. They will also monitor Alva/Buckingham and North Fort Myers.

Lee County Natural Resources reports that the county's water levels remain average to below average, which is typical for early in the rainy season and should help throughout today's anticipated weather.

Natural Resource crews will be out monitoring creeks and streams, watching for and – where feasible – mitigating any impediments.

County crews will monitor any potential storm surge that would coincide with today's high tides. Crews will respond accordingly.

The county will continue to coordinate with its municipal partners as well as with the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

Lee County Government departmental facilities and operations today are normal. The 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit is closed. For individuals experiencing homelessness, the Salvation Army Homeless Resource Day Center is open today.

Residents should monitor local meteorologists' reports, visit [www.leegov.com/storm](http://www.leegov.com/storm) and follow Lee County Government on Facebook.

Given the forecasted wind speeds, no shelters are open at this time. Emergency Management is prepared to open shelters, if necessary. LeeTran is prepared to help with transportation, should sheltering become necessary.

Regarding bridges: 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 today’s event around and near bridges. Follow the directions given.

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*Note to media: It’s still to be determined whether we will plan a press conference today.*