

ADVERSE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

It is the time of year when snowbirds flock to the thawing north. They are so fortunate in that they are gone from Florida for most of the hurricane season (June 1st - November 30th) and they do not have to worry about what might occur if a hurricane strikes while they are gone. **Nothing could be farther from the truth.** Everyone who has a home in Florida MUST have a plan for hurricane season. Let's discuss this in full.

INSURANCE

There are several things all Tara Woods homeowners need to take very seriously. First of all, make sure your homeowners insurance is current and adequate. Please note that homeowners insurance and flood insurance are two separate things. Flood insurance is offered through FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), as well as through your insurance agent. To determine flood zone information you can call 239/533-8948 or find detailed information at www.leegov.com/dcd/flood.

SECURE YOUR HOME

Whether you are a part time or fulltime resident, your home must be secure during adverse weather conditions. Be aware of the age of your home. Building codes have changed over the years and homes built prior to 1994 may not be as secure as you think. Manufactured homes should always be tied down; it is the law in Florida. Tie-downs should be checked at least once a year. Florida law PROHIBITS the sale of windstorm insurance on manufactured homes not anchored in accordance with Florida law.

- Check for loose straps.
- Make sure straps are properly aligned and not on an angle.
- Check to be sure the proper number of tie-downs have been installed.
- Verify that ground anchors and stabilizer plates have been installed properly.
- Be sure support piers are in contact with the frame.
- Replace straps or ground anchors that show signs of corrosion or damage.
- For additional protection, you may want to consider installing a longitudinal tie-down system located at the front and rear of your home.

Protect your windows with storm shutters. Move patio furniture, grills and the loose objects inside. Items that are too large should be secured outside.

KNOW YOUR EVACUATION ZONE

Lee County has a shallow coastline and low land elevation making it vulnerable to storm surge. Zones are named A through E and designated according to the potential effect of storm surge. Flood zones and evacuation zones are two different things. Tara Woods is located in Evacuation Zone C.

EVACUATE

No matter how well you have secured your home, **evacuation is always the best.** Have a plan and be prepared to execute that plan. Know your risks and your personal needs. Plan now what needs to be done in the case of an emergency.

The Clubhouse at Tara Woods will NOT be available as a community shelter in the advent of a hurricane or other adverse weather conditions. The building does not meet Florida code standards and will be locked down. Should conditions warrant

evacuating your home, be prepared to leave the area all together or, as a last resort, find shelter in a Lee County approved shelter.

Evacuation times vary, so stay informed and leave the area at your earliest possible opportunity. Evacuation clearance times are fully explained on the leegov.com website. Click on “Plan & Prepare” then “Evacuation Times.” The following resources are available to help you determine the timing of the execution of your emergency plan:

Facebook www.facebook.com/LCEMFL
Twitter @LeeEOC, @LCEMFL
LeeEvac a free app for iPhones and androids
Code Red a free Lee County Service by which residents and businesses are notified by phone, text or email regarding emergencies

DEVELOP YOUR EVACUATION PLAN

Emergency management agencies recommend you arrange a "Host Home" outside the evacuation zone. This is the home of a friend or family member who has agreed to provide temporary shelter for you. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the family contact. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address and phone number of the contact person.

Become familiar with the evacuation routes. Be prepared to drive a minimum of 20 to 50 miles to reach a safe place. During hurricane season, it is a good idea to always keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full to avoid long lines at service stations.

BASIC EVACUATION CHECK LIST

Your check list may vary from that of your neighbor. Do you have pets or special needs i.g.: oxygen, diabetic concerns, not ambulatory. All of these details need to be addressed in your plan. Should you be unable to prepare your home by yourself, include employing someone to do the preparation for you in your plan.

- put shutters or plywood on all windows and openings
- move patio furniture, hanging plants and grills inside
- secure any loose items too large to be brought inside
- if your home is vulnerable to rising water, move valuables and furniture to a higher level
- put documents, family photos and keepsakes in an air-tight plastic container that is easy to carry
- turn off electricity at the main circuit breaker or fuse box
- do a final walk through of your home before leaving

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

Here are some suggestions for an emergency supply kit. A more detailed list can be found a www.leegov.com. Click on “Plan & Prepare,” then click the link “Emergency Supply Kit” located halfway down the page.

Check your list twice a year.

- Credit cards
- Cash
- Road maps
- Battery operated radio
- Flash light (extra batteries)
- NOAA Weather radio

- Some tools extra house and car keys
- First aid kit
- Extra prescription medications and copies of the prescriptions
- Eye glasses
- Hearing aids (extra batteries)
- 3 day supply of non-perishable food
- 1 gallon of water per person
- coolers
- disposable plates and utensils
- manual can opener
- toilet paper
- personal hygiene products
- cleaning supplies
- blankets (or sleeping bag)
- pillows
- extra clothing
- copies of important documents and records
- photo ID
- proof of residence
- account numbers
- insurance information

PUBLIC SHELTERS

If you have no safe place to go, plan to weather the storm at a public shelter. This should be your last resort in an evacuation. Remember that you will have no privacy, limited space and meal service may be delayed at a public shelter. Your temporary home will be the floor of a gymnasium or a public hallway and you must receive permission to leave from local officials once the emergency passes.

Investigate the shelter locations in Lee County now, so that there is no confusion should the need arise. Identify two shelters in the area, preferably in different directions.

SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

The Special Needs Program is available to all Lee County residents at no cost. It provides shelter from a tropical storm or hurricane for those who live in a home and/or area that is not safe from storm surge or wind and have no other safe place to go. It also provides transportation to a shelter for those residents who do not have a way to get there. **You must register to receive these services by completing the Special Needs Program application.** You must register every year. Your application is good for one calendar year only.

Registering with the Special Needs Program does not guarantee you will be assigned a space in the Special Medical Needs Shelter. Your application will be reviewed by the Department of Health and you will be assigned to a shelter where your needs can be managed. Do not wait to submit an application. Lee County stops processing applications when the five-day forecast cone of a storm is reached.

The application and detailed information about for this program can be found at www.leegov.com/public. Click on “Public Safety, Emergency Management, Shelters, Special Needs Program.”

Whether you are a part time or full time resident, be prepared for hurricane season and help your neighbors in the community to do the same.