

# Hernando County **FLOOD** **HANDBOOK**



*Prepared as a public service by*  
**Hernando County Emergency Management**  
[www.hernandocounty.us/em](http://www.hernandocounty.us/em)  
**352-754-4083**

2008 Edition

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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**HERNANDO COUNTY** is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico on the west and the Withlacoochee and Little Withlacoochee Rivers on the east. Along Florida's Gulf Coast we are subject to many natural weather events: hurricanes, tropical storms, tornados, high velocity winds, lightning, wildfires and floods. Flooding is the second most common type of disaster in the United States. Since 1978, the National Flood Insurance Program has paid \$28,817,652 to 1,491 flood claimants in Hernando County alone. That is an average of \$19,527 per claim. Just because you do not live near a body of water does not mean you cannot experience flooding. Having homeowner's insurance helps.

**Standard homeowner's insurance policies in Florida DO NOT cover damage from flooding. Flood insurance must be purchased separately.**

### **NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM**

In 1968, the United States Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to provide affordable flood insurance to people living in high risk flood areas, also known as Special Flood Hazard Areas. The NFIP is a self-sustaining program administered by a branch of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The program makes flood insurance available in communities that adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances and regulations to reduce future flood damage (NFIP Communities).

### **COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (CRS)**

Developed by the Federal Insurance Administration, CRS' objective is to reduce flood damage by providing financial incentives to NFIP communities that implement higher floodplain standards than the minimum NFIP requirements. CRS rewards the extra efforts of these communities by providing discounts on flood insurance premiums based on the level of compliance with published standards. Counties that perform only the minimum requirements (Class 10) receive no premium discounts. Hernando County currently has a Class 7 rating and residents enjoy a 15% premium discount on flood insurance policies. There were 5,123 flood insurance policies in force countywide as of March 31, 2008, a 20% increase over year-end 2006 (4,122 policies), over \$483,000 in savings are realized each year through the Class 7 rating. The program is coordinated by Hernando County Emergency Management and this handbook is part of the CRS requirement for public information activity to help enhance the County's CRS Rating. The County continues to target a Class 6 rating (20% discount) which will likely be achieved when the Flood Remapping Project is completed.

### **LOCAL HAZARDS**

This information is provided to help you protect property and reduce losses. It may be of special interest to Hernando County residents living within flood hazard areas and can be used as a reference in the event of a hurricane, tropical storm, or period of heavy rainfall. During these times, low lying areas of the

County are subject to flooding and since flooding is one of the most common natural disasters in Florida, it is important that all residents properly prepare themselves. Obtaining an appropriate amount of insurance coverage is one important way to reduce losses from a flood. NFIP Flood Insurance can be purchased regardless of the property location (high, moderate, or low-risk areas) and it is readily available to property owners, renters, and business owners.

### **FLOOD HAZARD**

In 1993, an unanticipated sub-tropical storm (“No-Name” Storm) with winds under 60 mph produced a 12-foot storm surge on Pine Island, causing damage, stranding residents, and requiring an evacuation. In 2003, heavy rains over a 60 day period saturated the ground and resulted in flooding and washout of roadways across the County. Overflowing in many retention ponds caused flooding of homes in the Berkeley Manor residential area of the County. In 2004, heavy rains from back-to-back hurricanes caused flooding in previously undocumented areas of the County. Isolated flooding was also seen in historically flood prone areas of the County in 2005 and 2006. Periodic flooding, both from storm surge and from inland pooling of water, may occur in all sections of Hernando County. Many areas of the County contain environmentally sensitive lands and wetlands. Dumping, polluting, or otherwise compromising these areas can place our water supply and natural areas at greater risk from flooding, which will impact our developed areas.

### **FLOOD ZONE REMAPPING PROJECT**

The Watershed Study currently underway will significantly alter the current flood maps. This project is a partnership between the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Hernando County. A comment period will be provided to the public when the maps are complete.

### **FLOOD INSURANCE**

Standard Homeowner’s Insurance and/or Windstorm Insurance policies do not cover damages from flood. Mortgage lenders typically require the purchaser to carry flood insurance on a property, based on its elevation as shown on a Flood Map produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. All properties securing a federally backed mortgage (FHA, VA, FNMA) located in high risk Flood Zones must carry flood insurance. If you do not have this mortgage requirement, or own the property outright, the purchase of Flood Insurance is still recommended to reduce your financial burden in case of a flood. Flood Insurance is available at any time from many licensed insurance agents; however, there is a 30-day waiting period before the policy becomes effective.

## **PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES**

To reduce future losses to your property, you may wish to learn how to permanently retrofit a building. This involves reducing the vulnerability of the structure from windborne debris, flooding from a hurricane or other storm. Options include: elevation, wet flood proofing, relocation, dry flood proofing, levees and floodwalls, and demolition. FEMA Publication 312, "*Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: Six Ways to Protect Your House from Flooding*" is available from the Hernando County Emergency Management Department at no charge. Call 352-754-4083 for more information.

## **FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMITS REQUIRED**

All building construction and most building repairs require approval from the Hernando County Development Department in the form of a permit. These permits must be obtained BEFORE beginning any work. Contact the Development Department BEFORE you build, alter, re-grade, or fill on your property. The office is located at 789 Providence Blvd., Brooksville FL 34601. For more information or if you see construction being done without the required posting of a permit, call 352-754-4050.

## **SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT RULES**

The Hernando County Building Code and the National Flood Insurance Program Regulations require that a structure must meet the same construction codes as a new building if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, repairs, additions, or other improvements is equal to or more than 50% of the existing structure's market value. This includes all floors of the structure. Buildings that are substantially damaged must also be brought up to the same codes and standards.

## **MAP DETERMINATIONS and ELEVATION CERTIFICATES**

The Hernando County Development Department can provide information from the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) to let you know if your property is in a flood hazard area. Elevation Certificates are available for most structures built after 1984, if they were built in a flood hazard area. For more information, contact the Hernando County Development Department at 352-754-4050.

## **SITE VISITS**

If you have experienced flooding or drainage problems, a representative from the Hernando County Development Department or Public Works Department can visit your property, upon request, to review flooding problems and to explain possible ways to prevent and/or reduce flood damage. This visit will not provide detailed engineering advice, which should be sought from an independent professional licensed in the field. Many of them are listed in area telephone books and on the Internet.

## **FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM**

The Hernando County Emergency Management Department monitors information from the National Weather Service (NWS), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The Weather Channel, the State of Florida Emergency Operations Center, and other sources. NWS often issues flood advisories six hours prior to expected heavy rainfall that could cause the drainage system to overflow and create inland flooding. Hernando County has in place a computerized telephone warning system to notify residents and businesses within the hazard areas. This system is capable of placing up to 60,000 calls per hour. In addition, information will be provided to area radio and TV stations, including: Hernando County Government Broadcasting (Brighthouse Cable Channel 622); WWJB-AM 1450; WMTX-FM 100.7; WMNF-FM 88.5. In some emergencies, police and fire vehicles may use sirens and public address systems for local warning. NOAA Weather Radios are a valuable warning tool and are recommended in every home. They may be purchased at electronics, home improvement and department stores, on the Internet, or through mail-order catalogs.

## **DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

Drainage along roads and in developed and undeveloped areas of Hernando County help reduce the risk of flooding by channeling water away from developed areas. The County Public Works Department is responsible for County roads and the Florida Department of Transportation is responsible for State and U.S. roads. Both departments periodically inspect the drainage system and remove blockages and make repairs as they are found or reported. It is against the law for direct or indirect entry of any solid, liquid, or gaseous matter to enter the drainage system. If you live near areas where water flows, you can help by keeping the banks clear of dead brush or debris. If you know of recurrent problem areas, or have seen anyone dumping into a river, canal, lake, stream, storm drain, the Gulf of Mexico, or onto the ground, please contact Hernando County Public Works Department immediately at 352-754-4060 or the Sheriff's Office at 352-754-6830 (24/7).

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Publications from FEMA are available at each of the four branches of the Hernando County Public Library and include information on prevention of flood losses to residential, manufactured, and non-residential structures; retrofitting residential properties; how to read and interpret FIRM maps; coastal engineering standards; etc. Copies of many of these publications are available at the Emergency Management Department, 18900 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville, FL 34601.

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## STEPS TO REDUCE FLOOD & WATER DAMAGE

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This checklist may help to reduce the severity of flood damages to your home.

- **Move valuables to higher locations.** Move items such as irreplaceable family photo albums, high school yearbooks, personal videotapes, tax records, insurance policies, household inventories and expensive collectables and memorabilia off the bottom shelves on the ground level of your home. Put them on the kitchen table or counter tops at least 36 inches off the floor.
- **Plug drains with removable stoppers.** A flexible rubber ball about 1¼ times the inside diameter of the drainpipe can be wedged into an open drain to create a tight seal. The pressure might be quite high so brace the ball securely with a 2x4 against the ceiling. Hold a flat board or piece of plywood on the ceiling and slide the 2x4 against the bottom of the board to avoid damaging plaster or plasterboard ceilings. For a suspended tile ceiling, remove ceiling tiles to get access to the ceiling joists. Span a 2x4 across the two joists and wedge the vertical 2x4 between it and the ball. Some hardware stores sell a plug that has a rubber center that expands to fill the pipe when the top and bottom metal plates are squeezed.
- **Cover floor drains with temporary stoppers.** Place a partially inflated inner tube around the drain and top it with a square or two of 1/2 or ¾ inch plywood (not particle board). The plywood must be larger across than the inner tube it covers. Brace the plywood in place just as with the ball on the drain. Be prepared for some seepage.
- **Reduce flooding from other drains.** Unbolt toilets from the floor and plug the outlet pipe using the same procedure as for floor drains. Shower drains can be plugged this way too. Most washing machines and wash sinks have their drain connections about 3 feet above the floor so they may not overflow if the water doesn't get that high. If necessary, these drains may be disconnected and capped or plugged with braced rubber balls.
- **Adjust downspout extensions to carry water far away from the house.**
- **Prepare appliances for flooding.** Shut off appliances at the fuse box or breaker panel. Place freezers, washer, dryers and other appliances up on wood or cement blocks to keep the motors above the water level. If high water is imminent and large appliances cannot be moved, wrap them in plastic film (including the bottom), and tie the film in place with cord or rope. The water may still get in, but most of the silt will be kept out so cleanup will be easier. The hot water heater should be at least 36 inches above the floor. If not, wrap with plastic only after the gas or electric has been turned off to the hot water heater. Make sure the plastic is fully removed before turning the unit back on.

- **Shut off electricity to areas of the home that might flood.** Even if floodwaters are not reaching electrical outlets, the risk of electrical shock to someone in the home is high. Remember that there may be electric motors in the heater, freezer, washer, dryer and other appliances such as floor lamps. Manually shut off electrical circuit breakers or remove fuses. Do not stand in water when turning off electrical breakers or removing fuses. If this must be done, use a piece of dry wood or a plastic or rubber pole to do the switching, and stand out of the water on a block of wood or a plastic crate that does not conduct electricity.

If floodwater may get close to the electrical entrance box, contact the power company immediately and have the electrical supply to the house disconnected. If the floor is damp but not really flooded, ground the fault circuit interrupters between the top and bottom outlets. They can be installed by a qualified electrician to turn off the power if there's danger of water affecting the circuit. If in doubt, shut off the main circuit breaker for the entire house.

- **Move hazardous materials to higher locations.** This includes paint, oil, cleaning supplies, pool supplies, pest control supplies, gardening supplies, propane tanks, and other hazardous materials in various forms and containers.
- **Plan an escape route** if certain roads or streets are known to flood easily. Where would you go if your home flooded or was damaged? Pre-plan your route to, a family member, a friend's house or to a local shelter.
- **Plan for pets.** Pets are not allowed in shelters due to health regulations. If left behind, pets can damage your house, and their lives may be at risk. If you cannot take your pet to your destination, arrange with County Animal Services, your veterinarian, or a friend for emergency pet boarding. Keep pet records and shots up-to-date and available in case you must evacuate quickly. Do NOT let pets loose or tie them outside.
- **Relocate vehicles.** Motor vehicles (cars, trucks, recreational vehicles, boats) should be moved to higher ground so they are accessible during and after the event and to prevent petroleum, oils, and lubricants from being dumped onto the surface of the water. Vehicles are not waterproof for long and do not float.
- **Assemble supplies in case the electricity goes off.** Prepare an inventory of: bottled water, food that requires no refrigeration or cooking, a non-electric can opener, paper plates/cups and plastic utensils, a battery-powered weather radio and flashlight, extra batteries, insect repellent, a disposable camera to photograph possible damages to your property, sufficient cash to pay for necessities while away from home. Remember that gasoline pumps and ATM machines operate on electricity, which may be shut off

- Know where to get dry ice or bags of regular ice to keep food in the refrigerator from spoiling if power goes off.
- **Discuss what to do in case of a flood.** Plan an evacuation route and practice evacuating. Talk to family members, friends, and relatives.
- **Establish an out-of-state family member or friend as your family contact.** If family members become separated during an evacuation, each should get in touch with that contact. Make sure that all family members have the contact's phone numbers.
- **Discuss utility shut-off procedures.** Teach adults and older children the location of electric panels or fuse boxes, water service shut-off valves and natural gas valves and how to turn them off if necessary. Once turned off, they must not be turned back on until the property has been inspected and found to be safe.
- **Discuss the situation with children honestly and openly.** Hiding the situation from them will probably be even more stressful.

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## SANDBAGGING FOR FLOOD PROTECTION

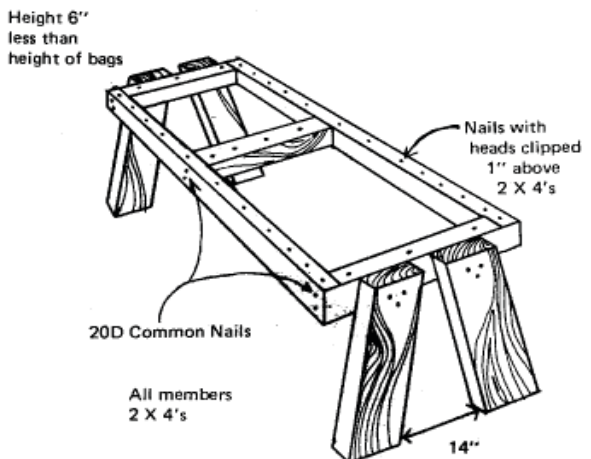
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A properly built sandbag dike can prevent or reduce flood damage.

### **Sandbags must be filled and placed properly to give the best protection.**

Any available material can be used to fill sandbags, but sand is easiest to handle. Silt and clay will form a good dike but are more difficult to work with. Different size bags are available, but bags are easier to handle if weight is limited to less than 35 pounds. This is particularly important when teenagers or older persons will be handling the bags.

A rack such as the one shown here can be quickly constructed to hold bags open for filling. Such a rack is easily moved and the bags can be filled with a ready-mix concrete truck, front-end loader, or an elevator with a bag-filling spout. As the bags are filled the rack can be moved to minimize handling filled bags.



Fill sandbags approximately half full. Do not tie.

The following shows the number of bags needed for 100 linear feet of dike:

800 bags for 1-foot-high dike

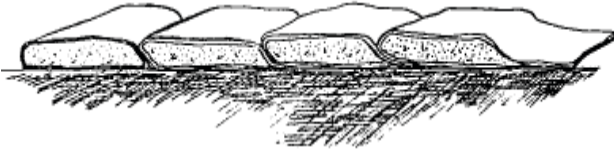
2,000 bags for 2-foot-high dike

3,400 bags for 3-foot-high dike

### **Site Selection**

Select the location for the dike taking advantage of natural land features that keep the dike as short and low as possible. Avoid any obstructions that would weaken the dike. Do not build the dike against a building wall. Leave approximately 8 feet to maneuver between the dike and buildings. If the dike is to be more than about 3 feet high, remove a strip of sod to provide better anchorage for the dike.

### **Stacking Sandbags**



Overlap the sandbags as shown at left placing the first layer of bags lengthwise to the dike and lapping the bags so

the filled portion of one bag lies on the unfilled portion of the next. The base of the dike should be three times as wide as the dike is high, as shown below. The second layer of bags should be perpendicular to the first layer, then alternating the direction of the bags to the top of the dike.

### **Sealing the Dike**

The finished sandbag dike should be sealed with a continuous sheet of plastic to improve water tightness. Spread a layer of dirt or sand 1 inch deep and about 1 foot wide along the bottom of the dike on the water side. Lay polyethylene plastic sheeting so the bottom extends 1 foot beyond the bottom edge of the dike over the loose dirt. The upper edge should extend over the top of the dike. The sheeting should be about 6 mils thick. It is generally available in 100-foot rolls from construction supply firms, lumberyards, home centers, and farm stores.

Lay the plastic sheeting down very loosely. The pressure of the water will then make the plastic conform to the sandbag surface. If the plastic is stretched too tightly the water force could puncture it. Place a row of sandbags on the bottom edge of the plastic to form a watertight seal along the water side. Place sandbags at about 6-foot intervals to hold down the top edge of the plastic. Place boards or dirt between the bags to prevent winds from disturbing the plastic. Avoid puncturing the plastic with sharp objects or by walking on it.

(Excerpted from North Dakota State University of Agriculture and Applied Science, NDSU Extension Service)

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## **FLOOD CLEANUP**

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### **Safety and salvage after flood damage.**

Safety FIRST! Before entering an area to begin cleanup, contact the electric company to be sure that downed electrical wires are not energized. Electricity can travel a great distance through water, and you could receive a deadly shock.

Contact your insurance company or agent and inform them of your situation and the status of your property. They may provide detailed information about their claims or clean-up requirements. (Document and take photos if possible.)

Hazardous materials in flood water may have an invisible sheen of oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, pesticides, or other harmful chemicals. Keep children and pets away from possibly contaminated areas.

Infectious diseases such as Salmonella, E. coli, Hepatitis A virus, and tetanus may be present in unseen but deadly quantities. Illness can be caused by eating, drinking, or even coming into contact with contaminated food or water. Be alert to the symptoms and seek medical care immediately if you have nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches, fever, or other unusual vital signs.

### **Personal Precautions**

Before re-entering a previously flooded area:

- Be sure your tetanus shot is current (within the last 10 years).
- Drink only bottled water from known sources until the public water supply is safe. Consume plenty of plain bottled water rather than soda or other drinks containing sugar.
- If water is still present, wear rubber boots and gloves to avoid skin contact with possibly polluted water.
- Consider bathing at a shelter or other location having a safe water supply.
- Do laundry at public establishments out of the affected area where the water is not affected.
- If you are working outside, be aware of weather conditions, especially approaching or departing storms.

**LIGHTNING CAN KILL and it DOES!**

### **Pets and Other Animals**

Many domestic and wild animals may have been traumatized by the flood water, and may attack without provocation. Some of these animals may have diseases that can be transmitted to humans and other animals. Rounding up dogs and cats

should be left to the professionals at Animal Services. Likewise, be aware that snakes, rodents, turtles, and alligators may be hidden in water or debris. Keep children and pets away from possibly contaminated areas and areas where harmful or desperate creatures may have taken refuge. Remember that flying and crawling insects may be a problem, so appropriate application of insect repellent is recommended. Likewise, obtaining the services of a licensed pest control company may be helpful to control unwanted animals and pests.

### **Tips for Clean up and Recovery of Items**

After the outdoor areas have been made safe, a County Building Inspector must check the structure for possible damage. Once the structure is safe, the cleanup of furniture, appliances, household goods, and personal effects may begin. Check that all utilities into the building are turned off from the outside, and open windows and doors to vent any gasses or odors that may have built up.

The first step is to take photographs of damaged areas and prepare a detailed list of damaged or destroyed items; this may be necessary to support future insurance claims.

Rugs and carpeting should be inspected. It must be determined whether the items can be dried out, sanitized and repaired, or discarded. Simply using a squeegee to remove the water is not a solution, as mold and mildew frequently grow within the carpet fibers and on the underside. Professional carpet cleaning is recommended if the carpet is not discarded.

Water soaked mattresses are usually not worth saving. However, if a new, good quality mattress is damaged, a mattress-renovating contractor may be helpful.

Clothing and household items should be rinsed and soaked in clear water to remove the majority of any residue, then washed in a heavy-duty detergent in hot water and bleach. Use an all-fabric, non-chlorine bleach for colored items, and liquid chlorine bleach for white and color-fast fabrics. A high-temperature clothes dryer will also help the sanitizing process.

All electrical wiring, breaker panels, fuse boxes, appliances, motors, and water heaters should be checked by a licensed professional electrician before any attempt is made to start them. Further damage or the danger of fire exists if motors, appliances, outlets, switches, etc. are energized without proper servicing. Television sets, stereo and radio equipment, satellite receivers, etc. that may have been exposed to water should be referred to qualified service personnel for evaluation prior to activation.

Walls, doors, and cabinets, should be washed from the bottom up, rinsed clean, then sprayed with a disinfectant available from janitorial or farm supply stores. This process may help resist mildew on the visible surfaces.

Cooking and eating utensils should be inspected. Those made of porous materials (such as wood, plastic, or rubber) and anything that is cracked or chipped should be discarded. Wash the remaining items in hot water with detergent, using a brush to remove dirt if necessary. If any items can be dismantled, take them apart and clean all pieces. Rinse in hot water then in a chlorine bleach solution (2 tablespoons of bleach to a gallon of water) to sanitize. Allow items to air dry before re-assembly or storage.

Once these basic steps have been performed, personal items such as books and photos may be assessed. These should be picked out of the water, drained, placed in plastic freezer bags, and frozen. At a later time, they can be removed from the freezer, washed, and then air-dried between clean towels under weights (bricks or cinder blocks) to prevent warping.

Depending on the amount of material to be discarded, you may need to make special arrangements with your trash hauler. Please contact them directly.

If the property has a well for drinking water it may have been affected by flood water. The water should be tested by a qualified water testing laboratory before consumption. This is the responsibility of the property owner. If the property has a septic system, the drain field may have been damaged. It should be checked by a licensed septic contractor to prevent sewage from reaching the ground surface and causing unsanitary and unhealthy conditions.

Be aware that after a disaster, the possibility exists that unlicensed contractors may offer their services sometimes at exorbitantly high or extremely low rates. All contractors working in Hernando County must be properly licensed and insured. Make sure you deal only with reputable contractors. If you have any questions about whether a contractor is properly licensed to do the work, contact:

Hernando County Building Department  
Contractor Licensing Section  
(352) 754-4050

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## **EMERGENCY WATER & SEWER INFORMATION**

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### **EMERGENCY WATER TIPS**

Following a disaster, if you are worried about the safety of your water supply, use it only for sanitation purposes - to clean your home or flush your toilet - until you know it is safe to drink.

If you are on a public water supply system, know the name of your water company. In Hernando County, public suppliers include the Hernando County Utilities Department and the City of Brooksville.

If there is a problem with the public water supply, announcements will be made on radio, TV, the County web site, and newspapers, and signs will be posted in the affected area to advise residents of the problem and what to do about it. If telephone service is available, call and ask your water company about the safety of your water.

If your drinking water comes from a private well that is covered by flood water, do not use the well water until the flood water completely recedes. When the flood water recedes, pump the well out until the well water runs clear. Once clear, you may use the well water for house cleaning and flushing. However, contact the Hernando County Health Department to have the water tested before drinking or cooking with the well water.

The American Red Cross recommends stocking a minimum three (3) days supply of water for emergencies, with at least one (1) gallon of water per person per day for drinking. If you live in a storm or flood prone area, you might be wise to store at least a seven (7) day supply of water, with three (3) gallons of water per person per day. This water should be used periodically during the year, and replaced to maintain a supply of relatively fresh water.

Until your water service is restored, you will have a limited supply of water for cooking, so stock emergency food items that need little or no water to prepare. Use paper plates and cups to save on dish-washing water.

Store water in clean, closed containers; plastic containers are ideal because they are lightweight and not easily broken. Avoid using metal containers, do not store in direct sun light.

In an emergency, bathtubs and sinks can be cleaned and used to store water. If there is no time to sanitize your tub, fill it with water anyway. Be sure to seal drains securely to prevent stored water from leaking down the drain. Water stored in a tub or sink can be used for bathing or flushing toilets, or disinfected for drinking.

The water in the hot water heater is another source of drinking and cooking water in an emergency. If you need the water turn off the incoming water valve and the electric/gas supply to the water heater. Water may be drawn through the valve found at the bottom of the heater. Before restoring power or fuel to the heater, make sure your water service has been restored and the heater tank is refilled completely to prevent damage to heating element.

Should you lose water service for longer than two (2) hours and power remains on, turn off all appliances that draw water - such as ice makers, hot water heaters, heat pumps, etc. - to prevent damage. When water service is restored and you restart your ice maker, discard the first several trays of ice to ensure cubes do not contain sediment from surge water in pipes.

If you evacuate, turn off appliances which use water and close the main water valve into the house.

Any time you are not sure of the purity of your water supply and cannot verify its safety, take precautions and disinfect the water!

### **BOIL WATER NOTICE**

If a boil water notice is issued for your area, use either bottled water or disinfected tap water (see following directions) to drink, cook, shave, brush your teeth, rinse contact lenses, or for your pets' drinking water, until the notice is rescinded.

Showering or bathing with tap water is usually safe. However, do not swallow it or allow the water to enter your mouth, ears, or nose.

Do not use swimming pool water for drinking or preparing food. Do not drink or cook with water from any source that appears dark or tainted.

Under a boil water notice, you may use tap water to wash dishes by adding bleach to the rinse water - 15 drops of liquid bleach per quart of rinse water are recommended. Do not drink this water or allow contact with your eyes.

### **HOW TO DISINFECT WATER**

There are two ways to disinfect water - boiling and chemical treatment. The American Red Cross recommends doing both if conditions allow. If you cannot do both treatments, do one or the other: boiling or chemical treatment.

Filter the water through a clean cloth to remove as many solids as possible. You may use a sheet, cheesecloth, coffee filter, or other clean, porous material as a filter. Pour the water into a large pot for boiling.

Bring the water to a rolling boil and keep it boiling for at least 3-5 minutes.

Cool the water for at least 30 minutes. To speed cooling and to add air to the water for better taste, carefully pour the water back and forth between two clean metal or glass pots.

After the water has thoroughly cooled, add unscented, liquid chlorine bleach. The only ingredient in the bleach should be 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Use 8 drops of liquid bleach (unscented) per one (1) gallon of water. Let the water stand for 30 minutes. If it gives off a slight chlorine smell and looks clear, it's OK to use.

If you do not smell chlorine, or if the water is cloudy, add 8 more drops of liquid chlorine bleach and let it stand another 30 minutes. If you smell chlorine, it's

safe to use. If it doesn't smell of chlorine after the second dosage, discard it and find another source of water. (From the American Red Cross)

## **EMERGENCY SEWER TIPS**

If you are on a public sewer system, after a flood or storm, contact your utility company about the use of sewer lines in your area. If there has been an extraordinary amount of rainfall or flooding, sewer systems may be filled to capacity until they can be pumped out. You may be asked to reduce sewer use until the sewer system is stabilized and able to accept more sewage.

If your utility company informs you that the main sewer lines are clear, check your toilet (before using it) by flushing. If your toilet is clogged, you may need to clean the sewer line from your house to the main sewer line.

If you have a septic system, it will not work if flood water covers the drain field. Wait until the flood water recedes to use your sinks, tubs, toilets, or washing machines that drain into the septic tank.

If your toilet works, but you do not have running water, use pool water or other non-disinfected water for flushing. Carry the water to the toilet in a bucket and pour it into the toilet tank. Then flush the toilet as normal. Save your bottled or disinfected drinking water for drinking!

If your toilet does not work, use a portable toilet or line your toilet (or a bucket) with a large plastic trash bag. After use, tie the bags tightly and store in a secure container (such as a trash can with a tight lid) for later disposal.

A water outage or a sewage backup at any time is an emergency to the person experiencing it! If you are a customer of Hernando County Utilities, you can get help for water or sewer emergencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week call 352-754-4037.

## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<b>If you or someone you see is in IMMEDIATE DANGER, DIAL 9-1-1</b>	
<b>To report:</b>	
<b>ELECTRIC POWER LINES DOWN or POWER OUT</b>	
Withlacoochee River Electric Co-Op, Inc. (West Hernando)	352-596-4000
Withlacoochee River Electric Co-Op, Inc. (East Hernando)	352-588-5115
Progress Energy (Florida Power)	1-800-700-8744
Progress Energy (Florida Power TDD)	1-800-763-3324
Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (East Hernando County)	352-521-5788
<b>TELEPHONE SERVICE PROBLEMS - BellSouth</b>	<b>1-888-757-6500</b>
<b>ROAD PROBLEMS – Hernando County Public Works</b>	<b>352-754-4060</b>
<b>STRAY ANIMALS/WILDLIFE – Animal Control</b>	<b>352-796-5062</b>
<b>WATER or SEWER SERVICE Problems</b>	
Hernando County Utilities Department	352-754-4037
<b>For information about:</b>	
<b>DRINKING WATER / WELL WATER in Hernando County</b>	
Hernando County Health Department	352-754-4067
<b>ROAD CLOSURES - Hernando County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>352-754-6830</b>
<b>ROAD CONDITIONS - Hernando County Public Works</b>	<b>352-754-4060</b>
<b>MOSQUITO PROBLEMS in Hernando County</b>	<b>352-754-4060</b>
<b>SCHEDULING of COURT CASES in Hernando County</b>	
Hernando County Clerk of Circuit Court	352-754-4201
<b>PUBLIC SCHOOL CLOSING/OPENING Hernando County</b>	<b>352-797-7000</b>
<b>SHELTER LOCATIONS- Emergency Management Dept.</b>	<b>352-754-4083</b>
<b>GENERAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION</b>	
Hernando County Emergency Management	352-754-4083

Please remember that during a time of emergency, many people may be calling these telephone numbers. Your patience and cooperation will be appreciated by those trying to help you. Thank you.

## HELPFUL INTERNET LOCATIONS

Hernando County Emergency Management www.hernandocounty.us/em  
Emergency Notification to E-Mail or Pager www.emergencyemail.org  
Emergency Training Courses http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb  
Environmental Contractors www.enviroyellowpages.com  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov  
Florida Department of Emergency Management www.floridadisaster.org  
Florida Lightning Strike Tracker www.flamedia.com/lightning/light.htm  
National Hurricane Center www.nhc.noaa.gov/index.shtml  
NOAA Forecast Office for Tampa Bay Region www.srh.noaa.gov/tbw  
NOAA Interactive Weather Pages http://iwin.nws.noaa.gov  
NOAA Southeast River Forecast Center www.srh.noaa.gov/serfc  
Red Cross Disaster Services www.redcross.org/services/disaster  
Satellite Images http://maps.fsl.noaa.gov/goes/  
Southwest Florida Water Management District www.swfwmd.org

### To Volunteer for:

Amateur Radio Emergency Communications em@hernandocounty.us  
Community Crime Watch \_\_\_\_\_ Contact your neighborhood association  
Or \_\_\_\_\_ em@hernandocounty.us  
Community Emergency Response Team \_\_\_\_\_  
http://www.co.hernando.fl.us/em/CERT\_index.htm

# NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR

When a major disaster overwhelms a community's emergency resources, long response delays of hours or even days may occur. People with "basic skills training" should be able to immediately assist their neighbors who may be in distress.

Hernando County Emergency Management sponsors the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. This volunteer program allows the citizens to take part in their own recovery efforts and in those of their local community should a major disaster strike.



A Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a group of volunteers that receive limited training to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against a major emergency or disaster situation.

Anyone age 16 or older may sign up to attend the free training classes which are usually conducted one night a week from 6 pm to 9 pm for seven consecutive weeks. CERT volunteers receive training in disaster preparedness, personal and team safety, fire safety and small fire suppression, hazardous materials recognition, communications, disaster first aid and emergency medical operations, light search and rescue techniques, disaster psychology, terrorism, and team organization. Classes are taught with hands-on training and a simulated disaster drill during the last week of class.

For more information or to register for a class, contact the Hernando County CERT Program Manager at (352) 754-4083 or by email at [pamh@hernandocounty.us](mailto:pamh@hernandocounty.us).

**Hernando County Emergency Management**

**[em@co.hernando.fl.us](mailto:em@co.hernando.fl.us)**

**352-754-4083**