Hurricane Irma–Florida: Sept. 15, 2017

Heat, Lack of Electricity Plague Residents Amid Recovery

In Highlands County, Florida, where the power went out for almost everyone, the days after Hurricane Irma are full of anguish.

“It’s just hot. I mean it’s been miserable for everyone,” resident Adam Keene said.

For the fourth straight day, people in this south-central Florida county faced sweltering heat without power. “It’s been hell. Especially with my kids,” Barbara Campbell said. “One of my daughters, she’s like 2 years old. She has heat rash all over her body.”

Motorists waited for up to three hours at one gas station, while people stood in line for hours hoping to buy a generator at a Lowe’s store in Sebring, CNN affiliate WFTS reported.

“It’s kind of a low-income area anyway and they’re not even looking at the price,” a Lowe’s manager, Krzysztof Rogowski, told WFTS about the customers’ desperation for generators.

After the storm, 99 percent of power customers had no electricity. That has improved to about 76 percent.

A small army of utility crews—about 1,000 people—from states as far as Texas were working around the clock in this county of 100,000 residents.

There is hope that many more people will get their service restored in three days.

In other areas, days after Irma, a major hurricane, tore through Florida, residents are slowly returning to find ruins in some of the hardest-hit neighborhoods.

Recovery is only getting started, and some areas remain flooded. Utility companies are working to restore power to the battered Florida Keys as frustrated evacuees emerge from shelters ready to go home.

About 2.1 million utility customers still were without power in the state on Thursday evening, officials said. Parts of central and southern Florida will be a sweltering 90 degrees for several days, with humidity making it feel like the mid-90s.

Relief may be days away. People on the west coast, where Hurricane Irma made landfall, will likely have power restored by Sept. 22, according to Florida Power & Light Co.

Customers who lost electricity on Florida’s eastern side will likely have it restored by the weekend because fewer electrical poles came down than in other parts of the state, the company said.

Hurricane Irma’s furious march through Florida not only darkened millions of homes, it also flooded roads and piled them with debris, blocking off access to neighborhoods.

Power outages hit other Southeastern states, including Georgia, where more than 125,000 homes and businesses did not have power Thursday.

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.
Transportation officials offered positive news for some Floridians looking to return home: Interstate 75, a major north-south artery, will not have to be closed in the Gainesville area as once feared.

Officials had worried that a rising Santa Fe River might flood a portion of the highway north of Gainesville, forcing detours that might have added hours to travel times. But the river has been receding, so the interstate will remain open, the Florida Department of Transportation said.

Some Keys residents have made the drive south, only to be turned back. Frustrations grew this week when some residents tried to go home along a two-lane stretch of highway through the Keys but couldn’t get through.

Monroe County Commissioner Heather Carruthers asked residents for patience Thursday, citing the high number of power outages.

“If folks don’t have power to boil water or don’t have fuel to boil water, we’re really concerned about health, which is part of why we’re not inviting everyone back yet” to part of the Keys, she said.


### To Get Help

**Florida**

United Way, Dial 2-1-1 or visit [http://www.referweb.net/211communityresources/](http://www.referweb.net/211communityresources/)

Florida Division of Emergency Management: 850.413.9969 or visit [http://www.floridadisaster.org/index.asp](http://www.floridadisaster.org/index.asp)

Red Cross North Florida Region: 800.733.2767 or visit [http://www.redcross.org/local/florida/north-florida](http://www.redcross.org/local/florida/north-florida)

### Shelter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter Name</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immokalee High School</td>
<td>Collier</td>
<td>701 Immokalee Rd.</td>
<td>Immokalee</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>34142</td>
<td>452</td>
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<td>Trenton Elementary School</td>
<td>Gilchrist</td>
<td>1350 Sw State Rd. 26</td>
<td>Trenton</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>32693</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Bell Elementary School</td>
<td>Gilchrist</td>
<td>2771 E. Bell Ave.</td>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<td>Labelle Civic Center</td>
<td>Hendry</td>
<td>400 Hickpochee Ave.</td>
<td>Labelle</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>33935</td>
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<td>Dunbar Middle School</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>4750 Winkler Ave. Ext.</td>
<td>Fort Myers</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<td>North Fort Myers Recreation Center</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>2000 N. Recreation Way</td>
<td>North Fort Myers</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<td>South Miami High School</td>
<td>Miami-Dade</td>
<td>6856 Sw 53rd St.</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<td>Dunedin Community Center</td>
<td>Pinellas</td>
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<td>Bartow Senior High School</td>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>1270 S. Broadway Ave.</td>
<td>Bartow</td>
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<td>Saint John's United Methodist Church</td>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>1800 Cypress Gardens Blvd.</td>
<td>Winter Haven</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<td>Interlachen Elementary School</td>
<td>Putnam</td>
<td>251 S County Rd. 315</td>
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<td>Browning - Pearce Elementary School</td>
<td>Putnam</td>
<td>100 Bear Blvd.</td>
<td>San Mateo</td>
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<td>Grace United Methodist Church</td>
<td>Sarasota</td>
<td>400 E. Field Ave.</td>
<td>Venice</td>
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## Guidance Resources

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ZIP Code</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herron Creek Middle School</td>
<td>Sarasota</td>
<td>6501 W. Price Blvd.</td>
<td>North Port</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>34291</td>
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<td>Northland Church</td>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>530 Dog Track Rd.</td>
<td>Longwood</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>32750</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>Suwannee Coliseum Complex</td>
<td>Suwannee</td>
<td>1302 11th St. Sw</td>
<td>Live Oak</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>32064</td>
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</table>


## Road Conditions

Call 511: The Department of Transportation offers its free 511 service for travel information and roadway conditions, including road and bridge closures, toll suspensions and major evacuation routes.

### Florida Department of Transportation
- 866.374.3368 or visit [https://fl511.com/](https://fl511.com/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Last Updated</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>DeSoto County: SR 72 is closed just west of SR 70 due to flooding. Seek alternate route.</td>
<td>Sep 13 2017, 2:55 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Alachua</td>
<td>Gainesville: SR-20 at CR-2082, all westbound lanes are closed due to standing waters. Use caution and seek an alternate route</td>
<td>Sep 14 2017, 5:37 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Palm Beach and Martin County: SR 15 / US-441 has restricted access between SR 700 (Old Connors Highway) and the Okeechobee County line due to debris. Please use caution in the area.</td>
<td>Sep 12 2017, 6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>Hardee</td>
<td>Hardee County: US 17 northbound at Sweetwater Road is open to local traffic only. Seek alternate route.</td>
<td>Sep 14 2017, 8:07 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panhandle</td>
<td>Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Bay, Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Franklin, Liberty, Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson</td>
<td>A dense fog advisory is in effect for counties in Northwest Florida. Motorists are advised to use caution.</td>
<td>Sep 15 2017, 4:05 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Charlotte County: SR-31 is closed in both directions from CR-74 to Cook Brown Road due to flooding. Seek alternate route.</td>
<td>Sep 12 2017, 7:11 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Duval</td>
<td>Jacksonville: SR 105/ Heckscher Dr. is closed at Brown's Creek Bridge East of I-295. Use SR200 as an alternate route.</td>
<td>Sep 12 2017, 11:38 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Madison, Taylor, Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Levy, Gilchrist, Columbia, Baker, Union, Alachua, Putnam, St Johns, Clay, Bradford, Duval, Nassau</td>
<td>Due to post hurricane re-entry traffic, expect abnormal congestion on I-75 SB and approaching roadways.</td>
<td>Sep 12 2017, 6:09 PM</td>
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<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Palm Beach</td>
<td>Palm Beach and Martin County: SR 15 / US-441 has restricted access between SR 700 (Old Connors Highway) and the Okeechobee County line due to debris. Please use caution in the area.</td>
<td>Sep 12 2017, 6:32 PM</td>
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Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.
Southwest DeSoto DeSoto County: SR 72 is closed just west of SR 70 due to flooding. Seek alternate route. Sep 13 2017, 2:55 PM

Source: https://fl511.com/List/Alerts

**Power Outage**

Utility workers were rapidly restoring power to battered Florida on Wednesday, but parts of the Florida Keys may not be turning their lights on for a month, a power company said. On Wednesday, the Florida Division of Emergency Management said the power was on for 67 percent of state’s accounts.

Florida Power & Light, which provides power to almost half the state, said it hoped to complete power restoration on the east coast of the state by Sunday and across the state by Sept. 22. Tampa Electric said on Twitter that “Our goal is to restore service to all customers by Sunday.”


To report an outage, call:

- **Florida**
  - 727.443.2641 – Pinellas
  - 407.629.1010 – Orlando
  - 800.700.8744 – Other
  - Florida Power and Light Company: 800.468.8243 or visit: https://www.fpl.com/account/report-outage.html#outage
  - TECO Energy: 877.588.1010 or visit http://www.tampaelectric.com/residential/outages/outagemap/
  - Gainesville Regional Utilities: 352.334.2871 or visit https://www.gru.com/StormCentral/PowerOutageMap.aspx

**Airport Closures**

Flight delay information: http://www.flightstats.com/go/Home/home.do

**School Closures**

- Seminole County: Closed through Wednesday
- Orange County: Through Thursday, then TBD
- Lake County: Closed through Friday
- Osceola County: Closed through Friday
- Brevard County: Through Wednesday, then TBD
- Volusia County: Closed through Friday

Source: http://mycentralfloridafamily.com/hurricane-irma-school-closings/

**Florida Evacuates Mobile App**

To make it even easier to locate a shelter with your mobile phone, please download either the Android, iPhone, or Blackberry mobile applications below. The FloridaEvacuates.com mobile app will provide an easy way to get to the FloridaEvacuates.com mobile website (http://floridaevacuates.com/mobile/)

- **Shelters Locator**
  - Locate a nearby emergency shelter by ZIP code and address. This tool may be used for planning and during an evacuation order.
**Guidance Resources**

**National Weather Service**
- View the latest satellite and radar images from the National Weather Service

**SERT**
- Link to Florida Division of Emergency Management website.

**Pets and Animals**

**Make a Plan**
Remember, during a disaster what’s good for you is good for your pet, so get them ready today.
If you leave your pets behind, they may be lost, injured or worse. Never leave a pet chained outdoors. Plan options include:

- Create a buddy system in case you’re not home. Ask a trusted neighbor to check on your animals.
- Identify shelters. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets.
  - Find pet friendly hotels along your evacuation route and keep a list in your pet’s emergency kit.
  - Locate boarding facilities or animal hospitals near your evacuation shelter.
  - Consider an out-of-town friend or relative
- Locate a veterinarian or animal hospital in the area where you may be seeking temporary shelter, in case your pet needs medical care. Add the contact information to your emergency kit.
- Have your pet is microchipped and make sure that you not only keep your address and phone number up-to-date, but that you also include contact info for an emergency contact outside of your immediate area.
- Call your local emergency management office, animal shelter or animal control office to get advice and information.
- If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Find out where pet boarding facilities are located.
- Most boarding kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need your pet’s medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current.
- If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take, but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in great danger!

**Tips for Large Animals**
If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before a disaster.

- Ensure all animals have some form of identification.
- Evacuate animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.
- Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers.
- Ensure destinations have food, water, veterinary care and handling equipment.
- If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals to shelter or turn them outside.

**Build a Kit**
Include basic survival items and items to keep your pet happy and comfortable. Start with this list, or download Preparing Makes Sense for Pet Owners - Emergency Preparedness Pet Kit List (PDF) to find out exactly what items your pet needs to be Ready.

- **Food.** At least a three day supply in an airtight, waterproof container.
- **Water.** At least three days of water specifically for your pets.
- **Medicines and medical records.**
- **Important documents.** Registration information, adoption papers and vaccination documents. Talk to your veterinarian about microchipping and enrolling your pet in a recovery database.
- **First aid kit.** Cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors; antibiotic ointment; flea and tick prevention; latex gloves, isopropyl alcohol and saline solution. Including a pet first aid reference book is a good idea too.
- **Collar or harness with ID tag, rabies tag and a leash.**

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.
**Guidance Resources**

- Crate or pet carrier. Have a sturdy, safe crate or carrier in case you need to evacuate. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down.
- Sanitation. Pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach.
- A picture of you and your pet together. If you become separated, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you. Add species, breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.
- Familiar items. Familiar items, such as treats, toys and bedding can help reduce stress for your pet.

**Resources**

- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
- American Humane Association

Source: [https://www.ready.gov/animals](https://www.ready.gov/animals)

**Comcast opens free WiFi hotspots across Florida**

To help alleviate communication problems in South Florida, Comcast has opened its WiFi hotspots free of charge to anyone. Those who do not subscribe to Xfinity will be asked to sign a page that will allow them to access the service for two hours each use through Sept. 15. Users can sign back in to receive an additional two hours.
- Xfinity internet customers can sign in with their usernames and passwords and they will be automatically connected to Xfinity WiFi hotspots in the future.
- Select the “xfinitywifi” network when in range of one of hotspots.
- [CLICK HERE](https://www.ready.gov/animals) for hotspot locations
- Gov. Rick Scott announced that AT&T and Verizon are also helping set up hotspot WiFi locations.


**FEMA**

**FEMA Emergency App**

Download the App

You can also download the app via text messaging:
- If you have an Apple device: Text APPLE to 43362 (4FEMA)
- If you have an Android device: Text ANDROID to 43362 (4FEMA)
- If you use text messaging, standard message and data rates apply. Learn more about [our text messages](https://www.ready.gov/animals).

**Features in the App**

- Alerts from the National Weather Service: Receive severe weather alerts for up to five locations across the U.S. and see information about how to stay safe.
- **Disaster Reporter:** Upload and share photos of damage and recovery efforts.
- Maps of disaster resources: Locate and receive driving directions to open shelters and disaster recovery centers.
- Apply for assistance: Easily access DisasterAssistance.gov to apply for federal disaster assistance.
- Custom emergency safety information: Save a custom list of the items in your family’s emergency kit, as well as the places you will meet in case of an emergency.
- Safety tips: Receive safety and preparedness reminders and learn how to stay safe before, during, and after over 20 types of hazards, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes.
- Information in Spanish: Easily toggle between English and Spanish for all features of the app.

**FEMA Fraud Alert**

After a disaster scam artists, identity thieves and other criminals may attempt to prey on vulnerable survivors. The most common post-disaster fraud practices include phony housing inspectors, fraudulent building contractors, bogus pleas for

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disaster donations and fake offers of state or federal aid.

Survivors should keep in mind:

- FEMA does not authorize individual contractors to solicit on its behalf. Beware of any individual contractors contacting you directly on behalf of FEMA to sign you up for debris removal or remediation services.
- If you have any concerns about individuals representing themselves as FEMA or would like to report fraud, please contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud at 866.720.5721 or via email at disaster@leo.gov.
- Federal and state workers never ask for, or accept money, and always carry identification badges.
- There is no fee required to apply for or to get disaster assistance from FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration or the state.
- Scam attempts can be made over the phone, by mail or email, text or in person.

Price Gouging

Price gouging occurs when a supplier marks up the price of an item more than is justified by his actual costs. Survivors are particularly susceptible because their needs are immediate, and have few alternatives to choose from. If you find price gouging, contact you the Florida State Office of the Attorney General.

Report Price Gouging

- Call: 1.866.966.7226
- Price Gouging Complaint form

Dealing with Contractors:

Survivors should take steps to protect themselves and avoid fraud when hiring contractors to clean property, remove debris or make repairs.

Simple rules to avoid becoming a victim of fraud:

- Only use contractors licensed by your state.
- Get a written estimate and get more than one estimate.
- Demand and check references.
- Ask for proof of insurance, including liability and Workmen's Compensation.
- Insist on a written contract and refuse to sign a contract with blank spaces.
- Get any guarantees in writing.
- Make final payments only after the work is completed.
- Pay by check.
- The best way to avoid fraud is to arm yourself against it by having a checklist to remind you of what you need to demand when hiring a contractor.

Source: https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma

FEMA Assistance for Florida Residents

Survivors with losses due to Hurricane Irma in Charlotte, Collier, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Pinellas, and Sarasota Counties may now register for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to state and federal officials.

Individuals can register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or through the FEMA App.

Applicants will need the following to apply:

- Social Security Number
- Daytime telephone number

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- Current mailing address and address and ZIP code of the damaged property
- Private insurance information, if available

By registering for federal assistance on www.DisasterAssistance.gov
- You can look up your address to find out if it is in a disaster area declared for Individual Assistance
- Check the status of your application and get updates by SMS or email
- Upload documents to support your application

Another option for individuals, including those who use 711 relay or VRS, is to call 1.800.621.FEMA (3362) while those who use TTY can call 1.800.462.7585. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern seven days a week until further notice.

When an applicant registers, each receives a unique registration number. The registration number is important and should be written down and kept handy. Anyone who does not have a registration number is not yet registered.