

NEWS RELEASE



Fort Pierce Utilities Authority
206 South 6th Street
P.O. Box 3191 (34948)
Fort Pierce, FL 34950

CONTACT: Camille S. Yates
Acting Communications & Public Affairs Manager
(772) 466-1600, ext. 3071

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 28, 2005

Hurricane Tips From Fort Pierce Utilities

Be assured that your community utility is ready to help you through any power disruptions and to quickly repair damage that might be caused by a major storm. In the event of a hurricane, Fort Pierce Utilities offers the following advice for utility customers:

WATER/WASTEWATER

- * If you lose water service or experience a drop in water pressure during or after a storm, boil all tap water used for drinking or cooking until you are advised that it is safe to stop, or use bottled water.
- * Demand on the water system could be extremely high immediately before and after a storm. Please limit your water use during this critical time so that water will be available for emergency use (fire fighting, first aid, etc.).
- * Lift stations that move the wastewater out of the system to the plant do not work when there is no electricity. When the power is off, refrain from flushing your toilet to help prevent backups.

ELECTRIC

- * During a storm, turn off or unplug all electrical equipment.
- * Do not touch downed or low-hanging wires or anything they may be touching. Also, stay away from puddles where downed lines may have landed.
- * If you use a generator, be sure to turn your electricity off at the fuse box to prevent safety hazards for utility workers. Make sure your generator is in a well-ventilated location. Also, remember to turn the generator off before turning your electricity back on.
- * FPUA electric line crews will stop responding to service calls when high winds make it too dangerous. When hurricane force winds diminish, employees will begin restoration.

NATURAL GAS

- * FPUA may need to take precautionary measures and shut off natural gas service to mobile home parks for safety reasons. Gas service will be restored to these areas as soon as possible following the storm.

Call FPUA's emergency number, 466-7703, to report a power outage, damaged utility lines or poles, or broken sewer or water lines.

— more —

BEFORE A STORM

- * In preparation for a hurricane, FPUA may close its Customer Service Lobby, located at 206 S. 6th Street. FPUA customers are urged to stay tuned to local radio and television stations for storm-related information.
- * Store enough non-perishable foods, canned or powdered milk, bottled water, medicine, baby supplies, and pet food to last two weeks. Keep a first aid kit, insurance documents, flashlights, candles, matches, battery-operated radios, and extra batteries handy.
- * Make arrangements for persons with special medical needs or handicaps.
- * Get gas and cash before a storm. ATM's and gas pumps do not work without electricity.
- * Stow away small objects that could cause damage in high winds and anchor outdoor objects that cannot be brought inside.
- * If you evacuate, turn off water, gas, and electric utilities when leaving your home.
- * Several hours before the arrival of a storm, turn your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings and keep the doors closed. This will help keep food fresh longer.

AFTER A STORM

- * Keep telephone lines clear for police and other emergency services. Please call FPUA only to report downed power lines or to let us know if the power in your home is still off when power at homes around you is back on.
- * Do not block access to poles or downed equipment by placing debris around them.
- * When power is restored, turn electrical appliances back on in a staggered manner to prevent excessive loads on the electric distribution system.
- * When power is restored, appliances that have been turned off will be working hard to get back to normal, so electric consumption (and future bills) will be high. For example: refrigerators and freezers will have to get back to their cold settings, air conditioners will have to cool off hot homes, and water heaters will have to heat up again.
- * After a storm, check your home for damage that would cause consumption and make your utility bill higher. Appliances should be turned off before the storm. If they were not turned off and they have been damaged, turn them off. Check to see if water lines, spigots, or hoses have been damaged and have water running. Even if water is leaking, the customer will be charged for it — refunds are not given, because the water has been used.
- * Water usage can be higher before and after a storm due to filling containers up ahead of time and also by extra cleaning afterward.
- * FPUA does not issue refunds because power was out — when there is no electricity, your meter does not run, and you are only charged for what you use.
- * The City of Fort Pierce has the authorization to “red tag” buildings that they deem are not safe. When they do this, FPUA *cannot* turn on utility service to that building.
- * FPUA is responsible for equipment such as poles and lines leading up to buildings, but certain equipment, like weatherheads (or service risers) and meter cans, are the customer's responsibility. If this equipment is damaged, customers will have to contact their own electrician. After repairs are made, the City of Fort Pierce requires an inspection before FPUA can turn the service back on.

###