



Clewiston Police Department



AFTER ACTION REPORT

TYPE OF INCIDENT:

Hurricane Milton

INCIDENT NO.:

Not applicable

DATE OF INCIDENT:

October 9, 2024

INCIDENT LOCATION:

The City of Clewiston, Hendry County, Florida

SYNOPSIS/SUMMARY:

Sometime on or before October 5, 2024, the Clewiston Police Department was notified that a storm, designated at the time as a tropical disturbance, was poised to develop into a significant tropical system. Hendry County Emergency Management began to send regular emails to update the progress on this storm as well as others in the Atlantic.

On October 6, 2024, we were notified that the storm, now labeled Tropical Storm Milton by the National Hurricane Center remained on a projected path to possibly affect the Southwest Florida area. Later in the day, the Florida Governor's Office issued Executive Order Number [24-215](#) (amending 24-214) declaring a state of emergency existed on the Florida peninsula for 51 counties to include Hendry County.

On October 6, 2024, Commander Dan Brophy attending a planning meeting with the University of Florida College of Veterinarian Medicine (State ESF17) related to relocating the animal shelter's population to a location not anticipated to be impacted by the storm.

On October 6, Police Department employees were notified of the anticipated need to work during the storm and urged to begin to implement their home plan and prepare their homes. On October 7, 2024, a home preparation document was shared with all City Department Directors

On October 6, 2024, Hendry County government issued a local State of Emergency. On October 7, 2024, City of Clewiston government issued a local State of Emergency by resolution 2024-074.

On October 6, 2024, department personnel started communications with our SLERS provider, L3Harris and obtained contact information should we have radio communications issues during or after the storm.

On October 7, 2024, Hendry County Emergency Management began coordinating needed storm updates, meetings with elected officials, and operation briefing meetings with affected partners. Communications and information was shared to City officials, employees, and the public through emails, social media, text messages, etc.

On October 7, 2024, police employees were given specific tasks related to debris removal near the police facility, securing of needed supplies to operate the Emergency Operations Center (water, food, toiletries, sleeping cots, etc.).

On October 7, 2024, police supervisors were tasked with completing line inspections on patrol vehicles to ensure needed supplies were present and non-expired. Patrol was also tasked with additional patrol activities to include locating homeless and offering sheltering options.

On October 7, 2024, staff completed a function test on all EOC computers, web-based connections and access, VHF two-way radio communications (back-up system), etc. In addition, specific scheduling: Alpha/Bravo rotation, increased staffing in dispatch and animal services, was established and provided to affected employees. FEMA forms 200-208 were completed and employees were provided instruction on completing the needed ICS214 forms.

On October 7, 2024, Commander Brophy was assigned as the police department's EOC liaison and on October 8, 2024, he was assigned additionally as the City's EOC liaison.

On October 8, 2024, Chief Lewis attended a City Department Director's planning meeting.

On October 9, 2024, Hendry County Emergency Management, in cooperation with Hendry County Schools opened two shelters, one being Clewiston High School. A police officer and an animal control officer (as the shelter was pet friendly) stayed at the shelter to assist citizens until its closing on October 10, 2024.

On October 9, 2024, Hurricane Milton made landfall as a Category 3 storm in Sarasota County (Siesta Key area). On October 9, 2024, multiple tornadoes touched down in and around the city of Clewiston. Afterward, patrol officers conducted a preliminary damage assessment of the city to determine if any significant damage that would threaten life was present, such as damaged structures (residential, commercial, and government buildings), downed power lines, damaged vehicles, or any other sign of a storm-related impact or hazard. That assessment did not reveal any significant/life threatening damage. A memorandum detailing the damage observed was completed.

Throughout October 9, 2024 into the morning of October 10, 2024, Clewiston experienced the effects of Hurricane Milton. At approximately 12:15am (due to sustained wind speeds), a recommendation from Hendry County Emergency Management was made to cease normal public safety operations and have staff shelter in place at the police department. Due to a downed traffic signal at US27 and Berner Road (a major intersection), an officer remained in his patrol car in the intersection to alert any oncoming traffic of the hazard. During the cessation of normal operations, dispatchers were ordered to log any all calls not responded to and to coordinate with the on-duty Sergeant for a decision on any emergency calls. At 4:00am, with the recommendation of Hendry County Emergency Management, a decision was reached to resume normal operations. At that point, officers were dispatched to all pending calls for service.

On October 10, 2024, at daybreak, patrol officers conducted another damage/hazards assessment in the city. These findings were documented in a memorandum with accompanying photos. In addition, staff conducted individual assessment of public facilities and those findings were documented separately with accompanying photos. A work order was placed with Facilities Maintenance.

On October 10, 2024 at 8:30am, the City EOC was officially deactivated and all police operations resumed to normal.

On October 11, 2024, Commander Brophy made another ESF17 mission request for the relocation of animals from our shelter.

DEBRIEFING:

The debriefing took place at the Hendry County Emergency Management Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on October 24, 2024 at 12:30 p.m. A debriefing report was prepared by Hendry County Emergency Management Director Robert Pastula. The phases of our department storm response were discussed; pre-hurricane preparation and communication, during the storm, and post-storm recovery.

DEBRIEFING CRITIQUE

1. Difficult to prepare for tornadoes of that magnitude and size - unpredictable
2. Traffic congestion on US27 from people attempting to evacuate was not as prominent as past storms, but southbound (east) was backed up for many miles as people fled south.
3. Power Outages – communication was good but access to the system would be more efficient.

Recommendation(s):

1. Review and update the City's Emergency Management Plan
2. Provide power grid computer access to Hendry County Emergency Management and the City EOC – approved by the City Manager.

COMMAND STAFF REVIEW

On October 29, 2024, a final command staff review of this After Action Report was conducted. In attendance was Chief Lewis, Acting Commander Nieves, and Commander Levins.

REPORT COMPLETED BY:

Chief Thomas Lewis

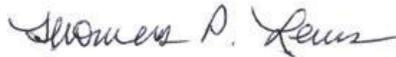
DATE:

October 29, 2024

ATTACHMENTS: 1

Hendry County Emergency Management Debriefing Report

APPROVED:



Chief Thomas Lewis

DATE:

October 29, 2024

Copy to Accreditation