



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: Friday, September 8, 2017

Contact: Janel Vasallo, Public Relations and Information Manager
Telephone: (863) 834-8219
Cell: (863) 860-9011
Fax: (863) 834-8222
Email: janel.vasallo@lakelandgov.net

Lakeland Fire Department's Hurricane Response

Lakeland, FL – The Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) is prepared for the impending arrival of Hurricane Irma. The department has activated its Emergency Response Hurricane Plan. Its leadership team has been meeting over the past three days, and will continue to do so through the storm, to ensure that the department is ready and able to respond to the needs of Lakeland's citizens.

The department would like to remind citizens that Hurricane Irma could potentially cause severe damage. Lakeland is anticipated to receive hurricane wind conditions at some point during Hurricane Irma's passing. **The department's Firefighters will respond to calls during the storm, however when wind speeds reach 50 miles per hour, large profile vehicles like the department's apparatuses, will no longer be able to run calls for safety reasons.** It is important that LFD's first responders remain safe during the storm so that they in turn can help those in need when wind speeds subside.

If and when winds speeds reach over 50 mph and LFD's Firefighters can no longer respond, 9-1-1 calls to the Lakeland Police Department's Public Safety Communications Center will be triaged and organized in order of priority. LFD Rescue Captains (trained Paramedics) will be on hand in the call center to assess callers needs so that when LFD's Firefighters can resume response, help will go to those that need it most. All 9-1-1 calls will be taken and organized for response but this serves as a good reminder that during Hurricane Irma 9-1-1 should only be used for true emergencies. The Public Safety Communications Center is expected to be overwhelmed with calls. This can be helped by only calling if help is truly needed. The department has added additional emergency response personnel as part of its Emergency Response Plan.

The department will be providing information about events as they unfold on its Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages (@LakelandFD) as well as at www.lakelandgov.net/LFD, conditions permitting. We encourage the public to follow the department on these social media platforms to stay informed about LFD's response.

The Lakeland Fire Department is committed to doing everything it can to provide medical care, rescue, and emergency response to those in need before, during, and after the storm. LFD strongly encourages everyone to be prepared for the storm. Helpful preparation and safety information is available at the City of Lakeland's hurricane updates webpage at www.lakelandgov.net/hurricane.

-END-

Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

701 E. Main Street Lakeland, FL 33801 | Phone (863)834-8200 | Fax (863)834-8295

WWW.LAKELANDGOV.NET/LFD



/LakelandFD



@LakelandFD



@lakelandfd