



# The Town of Ocean Ridge Police Department

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— Emergency 911 — Business (561) 732-8331 — Fax (561) 732-8676 —

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6450 N. Ocean Blvd.  
Ocean Ridge, FL 33435-5297

Hal C. Hutchins  
Chief of Police

## **HURRICANE SEASON 2020**

Dear Resident:

Effective June 1st, the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season officially began. Collectively, we will prepare and remain on alert until the season's end on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Like you, the members of the Police Department are hoping that no storm impacts our area. However, we are ready to perform our duty to protect and serve should the need arise. To that end, all Town employees have been instructed to have a plan in place to safeguard their families and secure their homes and possessions so they can devote their full attention to their duties. It is equally important that they practice that plan and have a backup plan should the need arise. Likewise, we hope that you have done the same.

It is worthy to note that some experts are predicting a busy storm season. Though this may not seem concerning to some, it only takes one storm in our area to have a devastating impact. In the interest of providing up-to-date information to our residents, allow me to advise you of the conditions that may be present in and around Ocean Ridge in the event of a Hurricane or Tropical Storm:

### **TERMS:**

- A HURRICANE /TROPICAL STORM WATCH will now be issued 48 hours in advance.
- A HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM WARNING will be issued 36 hours in advance.

These Watches and Warnings provide detailed information regarding specific threats, such as flash floods, storm surge, wind speeds, and tornados.

Since Ocean Ridge is situated on a barrier island, it is in one of the most vulnerable locations. There is always the possibility of a storm surge from the east forcing a wall of water over the dunes and/or the waters of the Intracoastal Waterway rising and causing flooding from the west. Despite the fact that Palm Beach County Department of Emergency Management has eliminated the mandate to evacuate for Category 1 storms, it is strongly recommended that you evacuate to the mainland when any HURRICANE WARNING is announced.

Arrangements should be made well in advance of a storm to stay with friends or relatives on the mainland - west of I-95 - if you plan on remaining in the area. As an alternative, you should consider lodging in a sturdy hotel/motel. If the latter is your choice, a reservation should be made in advance of

a HURRICANE WATCH, even though it would be several hours before you would be ready to evacuate. There will be a large number of people seeking lodging and you may be unable to find accommodations if you wait until the time of evacuation. Likewise, advanced preparation and registration needs to be made for those persons with special care needs and for your pets.

Three potential public shelters, as designated by the Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management and the Red Cross, are listed here. It is highly recommended that if you are going to use a shelter that you listen to local radio and television to determine which of the shelters are open. The conditions at a shelter will not be ideal and you are expected to bring your own supplies to make your stay as comfortable as possible. Again, you should make arrangements to stay with friends or at a hotel/motel well outside the area and to only use a shelter as a last resort.

The 3 closest designated shelters are:

Park Vista High School  
7900 Jog Road  
Boynton Beach, FL

Atlantic High School  
2455 West Atlantic Avenue  
Delray Beach, FL

Boynton Beach High School  
4975 Park Ridge Blvd.  
Boynton Beach, FL

MANDATORY SHELTER RESTRICTIONS: Pets, alcohol, weapons and smoking are not allowed in public hurricane shelters.

SPECIAL NEEDS: Residents requiring special medical needs should pre-register with the County Emergency Operations Center at 561-712-6400 and have physician authorization. This Special Needs Program is maintained by Palm Beach County and is limited and based on need and established criteria.

A pet-friendly shelter is available for Palm Beach County residents who reside in an evacuation zone or in a mobile home. Pre-registration with Animal Care and Control is required. Call 561-233-1200.

On line registration and additional information regarding pets can be found at:

<http://www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/animalcare/>

WHEN EVACUATING: Take blankets, pillows, food, water, flashlights, rain gear, several changes of clothing, medicine and prescription drugs, a portable radio, photo ID/passport for all family members, photocopies of important documents (insurance policies, etc. in a waterproof container) and reading material. You should plan to be away from home for 3 – 7 days.

Storm shutters should be in place and all loose objects secured well in advance of the evacuation. Residents should shut off propane gas tanks, main electrical breakers, and all sprinkler systems.

There are two evacuation routes, one via the Woolbright Road Bridge and the other over the Ocean Avenue Bridge. You should use the one nearest your residence.

ATTENTION BOAT OWNERS: The bridges will be raised and lowered as required for the flow of boat traffic until the wind reaches 35 mph, and then they will be secured in a closed position and bridge tenders will not be present during the storm. If you intend on relocating your boat, you should do so at the first Hurricane Watch notice of the storm while the bridges are still operable.

TOWN HALL CLOSED: Although the Town Hall/Police Department complex was built to withstand a Category 3 storm, it is not a shelter and, if the order is given to evacuate the island, no employees will remain in the building. All telephones will be forwarded to a remote location.

All Police Officers will be scheduled to remain on patrol in Town until wind conditions or flooding requires them to seek shelter. The officers shall return to patrol immediately following the storm and rigid surveillance will be implemented to prevent sightseers and looting until residents are authorized and able to return. Tight security will be maintained with checkpoints being established at bridges and Town limits by our officers. Make certain that you have identification with you, as no one will be permitted to return to the island following the storm unless they are residents.

While we are hopeful there will never be another hurricane, we feel that it is necessary for you to be informed in order to protect yourselves and your possessions as much as possible.

Additional hurricane information is available on the Town's website at:

[http://www.oceanridgeflorida.com/Hurricane/hurricane\\_information.htm](http://www.oceanridgeflorida.com/Hurricane/hurricane_information.htm) You may also check for a recorded message at the "Ocean Ridge Information Line" at 561-738-ORFL (6735). For those who have registered their email address with Town Hall, information will be sent out via blast emails as well as on the Nextdoor.com application.

Another resource is the Palm Beach County Hurricane Survival Guide which is available on the Department of Emergency Management website:

[http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/dem/hurricane/pdf/hurricane\\_guide.pdf](http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/dem/hurricane/pdf/hurricane_guide.pdf)

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation,

Hal C. Hutchins,  
Chief of Police