



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

For Immediate Release
April 2008

Contact: Susan Smith
850-245-4111

****TROPICAL STORM/HURRICANE INFORMATION SHEET ****

TROPICAL STORMS/HURRICANES CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH SEWAGE SYSTEMS

TALLAHASSEE – Following the passage of the storm, you may be experiencing difficulties with your sewage system not functioning properly. If you have a septic system that operates by a dosing pump, it will not function without electricity. You should refrain from using water in your home as much as possible until electricity is restored. Without the pump working, the tanks will fill and may cause backups of sewage in your home. Additionally, the yard around your septic system may become saturated and prevent the system from draining normally. This also can cause the sewage to back up into your house. Having your septic tank pumped while the yard is saturated can cause the tank to float or collapse. It is likely that your septic system will function normally when the yard dries.

General precautions:

- Do not let children play in flood waters as these waters may be contaminated by sewage.
- If you live in a low-lying or flood-prone area, the ground in your area may be saturated from heavy rainfalls or flooding from the hurricane. You should use household water as little as possible to prevent backups of sewage into your home

What should I do if sewage backs up?

- If a sewage backup has occurred in your home, stay out of affected areas and keep children away. If your entire home has been saturated, abandon the home until all affected areas, including but not limited to carpets, rugs, sheetrock, drywall, and baseboards, have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- If sewage has overflowed in open areas or streets, etc., avoid these areas and keep children out of these areas.
- If you are having problems in areas served by sewer systems, please contact your utility company to insure they are aware of problems in your area.

For further information, please contact your local county health department or visit www.doh.state.fl.us or www.FloridaDisaster.org.

The Florida Emergency Information Line: 1-800-342-3557.

Public Information Emergency Support Function: (850)-921-0384.

###