

To All our Valued Lake Hamilton Residents

With Hurricane Season about to begin on June 1st, your town officials would like to review several items and procedures designed to assist you in preparing for and responding to any tropical storms or cyclones which may impact our area.

The procedures described herein are specific to all tree maintenance activities and waste disposal, whether under normal weather conditions or in preparation for or response to a major storm event.

Our main goals as always are the safety of our citizens, the safeguarding of their property, and the protection of our public infrastructure.

Regarding Tree Removal and Large Quantity Tree Maintenance

- When considering hiring a tree removal/maintenance company, if possible, you always seek out a company with I.S.A. (International Society of Arboriculture) licensed owners/employees. This procedure is strongly advised to all citizens regardless of weather conditions present at the time. These arborists are experienced, professionals who can provide you with the best advice and services available regarding any type of foliage maintenance specific to any type of foliage. Working with professional arborists is always the best way to maintain the safety of your property, the protection of the tree(s), as well as the protection of any public infrastructure adjacent to your home or business.
- Town officials would like to remind our residents that, when contracting services for tree removal or large maintenance projects that will result in large quantities of brush for subsequent disposal, residents should always seek to have such disposal done by the contractor as part of the overall service.

While the town has always offered and will continue to offer once a week brush pile removal for all our residents, our staff on average has at least 50-75 stops to make on any given removal day, and unusually large brush piles present at any one stop can result in inordinate time, fuel, labor, and landfill costs to all our citizens. Also, there are potential additional charges involved regarding larger quantities of brush.

This charge system was approved as an Ordinance Amendment to Section 24-24, Ordinance No. 2000-004, in May of 2019. Stated briefly, town staff will remove brush once per week from the right-of-way adjacent to any residence or business within town limits having such brush for removal. The service offered includes three (3) free grabs of brush; any additional grabs needed to complete the removal process are charged to the residence or business at a rate of \$5.00 per grab, which will appear on the customer's monthly water bill. Please keep this in mind when considering large scale maintenance or removal of trees and/or other types of foliage.

- In conjunction with the information outlined above, and with specific regard to preparing for hurricane season, town officials would like to offer a few general tips to our citizens designed to reduce the amount of damage from debris which can result from a large category storm.
 - First, selective or “reduction” pruning of smaller limbs on trees can significantly reduce potential storm damage. If possible, such pruning should be done when the tree is young to promote a healthier, balanced, more storm-resistant structure, but older, larger trees can also benefit from such pruning. Consult with a certified arborist prior to undertaking such pruning.
 - Second, maintaining a healthy and more wind-resistant “canopy” on your trees can significantly increase wind resistance.

There are specific methods to follow regarding canopy maintenance, and many times a tree canopy that looks balanced to the average citizen can be less storm resistant than it appears, so before undertaking this maintenance, consult with a certified arborist.

- **Third, examination of trees on your property for conditions which could be evidence for reduced wind resistance resulting in the loss of the tree and potential injury and/or property damage. Conditions such as an unbalanced canopy, “codominant” branches, splits in the main trunk, or “lion’s tailing” can be evidence that a tree requires maintenance or even removal prior to a large storm event. Always consult with a certified arborist to locate and diagnose such conditions prior to taking any action.**
- **Forth, when considering the planting of new trees, maintaining existing trees, or removing trees from your property, a valuable link to additional information can be found by clicking on the University of Florida IFAS Hillsborough County Extension Office at <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/treesandhurricanes/> There you’ll find more detailed information on preparing for and responding to hurricanes with regard to trees and other foliage, including details on the general information provided above. In addition, residents can avail themselves of information regarding the best tree species to cultivate in our area by accessing the Hillsborough County Tree Matrix through the Hillsborough County Website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org.**
- **Fifth and finally, regarding any household hazardous waste materials you may wish to dispose of, examples of which are: fuels (gasoline, diesel fuels, etc.), paints (latex, acrylic, enamel, alkyd, etc.) or paint additives (paint thinners, turpentine, mineral spirits), automotive additives (oils and lubricants of any kind, automotive coolants, transmission or brake fluids, etc.), televisions or other electronics, lighting fixtures and/or bulbs (fluorescent or otherwise), construction chemicals or additives**

(drywall compounds, roof coatings, chemical sealants, etc.), pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and/or any heavy-duty cleaners or degreasers, please **do not place these items at your residence or business for removal.**

Instead please contact the Polk County Waste and Recycling Division Household Hazardous Waste Facility regarding these items. **The list described here is not intended to encompass all materials classified by Polk County as household hazardous waste.**

SHOULD THE NOAA NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER ISSUE A TROPICAL STORM/TROPICAL CYCLONE WATCH OR WARNING FOR THIS AREA, IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPERATIVE THAT NEITHER RESIDENTS NOR BUSINESS OWNERS PLACE ANY HAZARDOUS WASTE CONTAINERS OF ANY KIND ON THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR PICK UP. SUCH CONTAINERS CAN POSE A SIGNIFICANT DANGER TO PERSONS AND/OR PROPERTY SHOULD HIGH WINDS OR HEAVY RAIN OCCUR DURING SUCH AN EVENT. RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS ARE ALSO ASKED NEVER TO PLACE ANY MATERIALS OUT WHATSOEVER THAT COULD BECOME DANGEROUS OR DEADLY PROJECTILES DURING HIGH WINDS. SUCH ITEMS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: GLASS, CERAMIC TILE, LUMBER, METALS, ALUMINUM, CONCRETE OR BRICK MATERIALS.

Contact information for the household hazardous waste facility is as follows:

Telephone: (863) 284-4319

Hazardous Waste Facility Director Michael Ferguson's Contact email: MichaelFerguson@polk-county.net

Should you have any questions specific to town brush removal services, or with any of the other topics mentioned herein, please contact Lake Hamilton Town Hall at (863) 439-1910, or email the Town Administrator at sara@townoflakehamilton.com

Hank Harrison, Town of Lake Hamilton Public Works Department

