

Florida Department of Health

Pinellas County License Board Emergency Regulations/State of Emergency Hurricanes Helene and Milton

**Florida
HEALTH**

November 13, 2024

Emergency Regulations / State of Emergency Hurricanes Helene and Milton



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Pinellas County License Board (PCLB)

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As Department of Health (DOH) Employees, Pinellas County License Board (PCLB) Staff are required to serve in Special Needs Shelters.



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To ensure the continuation of child care operations throughout the county, three PCLB staff have been assigned to assist child care programs with issues that arise following a weather-related event.

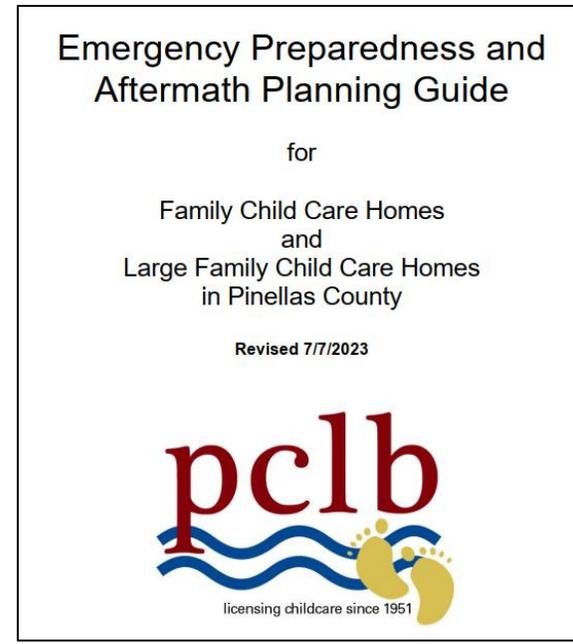
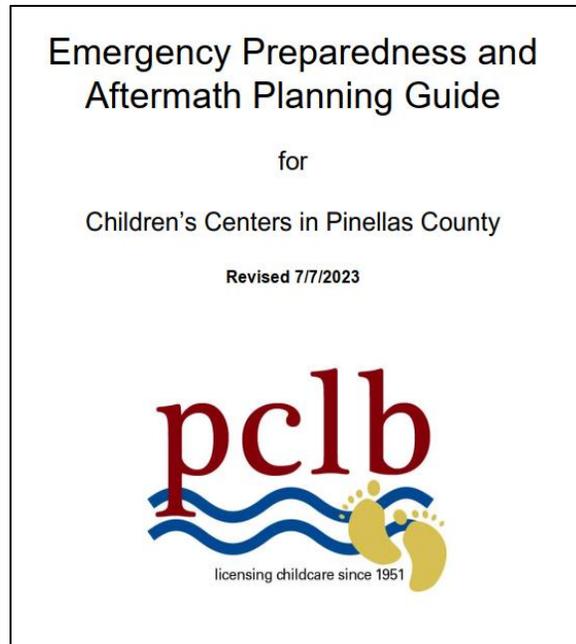
Post Storm Team:

1 Supervisor and 2 Licensing Specialists



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An Emergency Preparation Guide that includes the Emergency Regulations are sent to all licensed Children's Centers and Family Child Care Homes at the beginning of hurricane season, then again just before a storm event when possible.



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Emergency Regulations are used when there is State of Emergency in Pinellas County that affects the normal operations of Children's Centers and/or Family Child Care Homes.

Examples Include:

- Broad Power or Utility Outages
- Terrorist or Man-Made Events
- Natural Disasters such as Tropical Storms or Hurricanes



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Once the local Pinellas County State of Emergency has ceased, the PCLB Executive Director can choose to allow an extension of the Emergency Regulations on a case-by-case basis to continue safe operations of Children's Centers and Homes.

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In the event a Children's Center is unable to use their current licensed space due to damage, an extended field trip plan may be implemented. This allows programs to use an alternate location under the same license number.

Benefit:

- No additional license processing time or fees incurred
- Keeps funding streams in place for programs and families
- No need to seek student transfers from the Early Learning Coalition (ELC)

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Current Status

Children's Centers

17 Total Closed:

- 1 - Drop-in or as-needed status
- 1 - Closed permanently
- 5 - Relocated to other sites
- 10 - Permanent field trips

Multiple sites- playground closures

Family Child Care Homes

- 7 - Closed temporarily
- 0 - Closed permanently

Multiple sites- playground closures

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PCLB Post Storm Update:

The DOH Mid-County Building sustained damage that caused it to be closed one day longer than other DOH buildings in Pinellas.

3 staff had flood damage to their homes.

DOH granted additional emergency time off to those employees who had damage to their homes.



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Lessons Learned:

We need to collect emergency contact and phone number for children's centers in the event the building is closed.

Due to lack of power and internet connections, providers were not able to contact PCLB which affected our ability to report status to DCF and DOH.

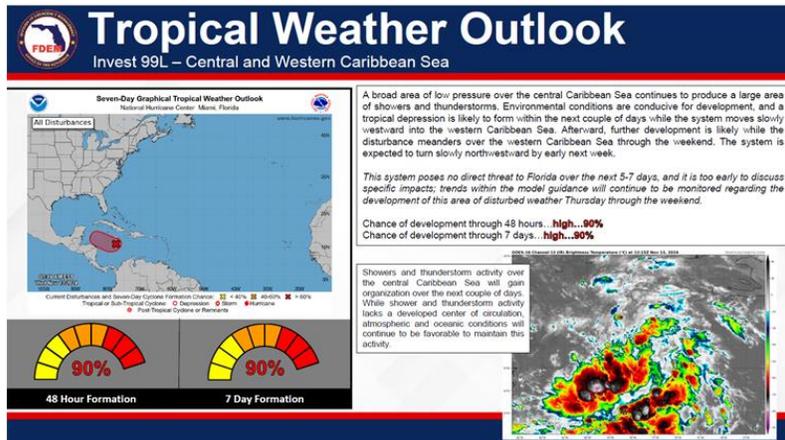
Not all providers reported their status or the need to continue the use of emergency regulations after they ceased.

Phone lines with voice mail service was cumbersome and not an efficient way to collect necessary data from providers.

Providers will still call and / or email their licensing specialists instead of calling the emergency number.

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After this Hurricane Season is over on November 30th, PCLB Staff will revisit the Emergency Preparedness Plans focusing on:



- The collection of emergency contacts for centers in the event of closure.
- More efficient ways for providers to report their operational status to PCLB.
- Ensuring the required communication from providers through the proper channels to include both short-term and long-term statuses.
- A better way of tracking providers status for recording purposes.

Contact Information



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