



CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE
UTILITY SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT
900 SE Ogden Lane
Port St. Lucie, FL 34983
(772) 873-6400 – TDD Accessible
(772) 873-6405 Fax

Jesus A. Merejo, Director

Q&A regarding Hurricane Prep & Recovery

1. Many of the City's wastewater (sewer) customers are served by low-pressure Grinder Pump or STEP (septic tank effluent pump) systems.

The system consists of a small electrical pump inside a fiberglass tank that is typically buried in the front yard of the customer's property.

2. What happens when the Grinder Pump or STEP tank is full of wastewater?

A float system will activate the electrical pump and the wastewater will be pumped through low-pressure sewer mains to one of the City's wastewater treatment plants.

3. What happens if there is a power failure such that a residence has no electricity?

If the electrical power is off, the Grinder or STEP system cannot operate. Therefore, all Grinder and STEP system customers must conserve water usage until their electric power is restored.

Keep in mind that a toilet typically uses between 1.5 – 2.5 gallons of water each time it is flushed; therefore, customers should flush toilets only when absolutely necessary. They should not take long showers or run water unnecessarily.

4. What will the Utility do if a customer does not have electrical power to their Grinder or STEP system?

The Utility will make every effort possible to pump out or pump down a customer's Grinder or STEP system during the recovery period after the storm or hurricane.

(continued)

5. Can customers connect their private generators to operate their residential Grinder or STEP systems?

Yes, customers may utilize portable generators to provide for the continuous use of the residential grinder systems provided the feed must be through the home's electrical panel utilizing equipment installed by a licensed electrician (e.g., a generator port, transfer switch, interlock, etc.).

Connecting a portable generator directly to the grinder system's control panel is prohibited.

A personal generator must be a minimum of 220 Volt / 6,500 Watts.

6. Is it safe to drink the City's water after a hurricane?

A precautionary boil water advisory will typically be in effect immediately following a severe hurricane until such time as the City can assure the integrity of its water distribution system and the quality of water in its system. If you are not able to boil the water, the St. Lucie County Health Dept. has recommended that you add 8 drops of unscented household bleach per gallon of water, stir it to mix, and then allow the water to sit for 10 minutes before consuming it.

7. Should other City water and sewer customers do anything special before, during, or after a hurricane?

Yes. Especially heavy rainfall can affect the overall operations of the Utility. Therefore, customers are always advised to conserve water use during and after any severe storm event or hurricane. Again, they should be especially conservative about toilet flushing, and they should not use dishwashers or washing machines. Customers should not take long showers or otherwise allow water to run for long periods of time.

8. Customers should call 873-6400 if they have questions. Our switchboard is staffed 24-7 by trained Utility personnel.