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## PRESS RELEASE

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Information: Training Officer Leigh Hollins at 941-737-4745

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### **Hurricane Preparedness Safety Issues**

Cedar Hammock Fire Rescue certainly wants all residents to properly prepare for any approaching storms. However, there are several fire & safety issues relating to proper hurricane preparedness that the general public may not be aware of. These “issues” affect both the public and the firefighters who may respond to their call for assistance. This press release aims to better educate the public on these safety related issues.

### **Hurricane Shutters**

While the many types of hurricane shutters, from electric roll down to plywood, offer protection during a storm, **shutters should only be installed upon a storm’s approach and should be promptly removed when a storm passes.** Consider these safety concerns if shutters are on a home and there is a fire in the home;

- The possible delay in a fire being reported, due to the shutters concealing smoke and flames.
- Fire companies arriving in the later stages of the fire.
- Increased difficulty for firefighters to determine the location of the seat of the fire (which is the key to fire extinguishment).
- Higher heat conditions for firefighters operating inside the home.
- Less visibility for firefighters and occupants inside the home.
- The inability of occupants to escape out windows.
- The inability of firefighters to rescue someone from a window.
- Less openings for firefighters to escape from.
- A huge burden on firefighting resources to remove the shutters.

### **Generators**

The use of emergency power generators has skyrocketed. Therefore, the fire department anticipates a record number of generators to be in use, should the power be out for any length of time after a storm. This too can cause many fire and safety related issues, such as; **carbon monoxide poisoning, electrocution hazards and fires.**

In order to avoid these hazards;

- strictly follow the manufacturers directions and safety precautions in the owners manual.
- NEVER run a generator in an enclosed area, including your garage....even with the garage door up.
- The generator needs to be outside, away from the house.
- Never stand in water when handling extension cords.
- Do not wire your generator into your fuse box or breaker panel. This can "backfeed" downed wires in the street.
- Use only extension cords in good condition that are rated for the type of device you are powering.
- Never refuel a generator while it is running or while it is hot.
- Store gasoline only in approved containers.

**Misc. Safety Issues**

In addition, there is an increased likelihood of candles and oil lamps being used for lighting if the power is out, neither of which are recommended. Use battery powered lighting if the power is out. Electrically powered (hard-wired) smoke detectors will not work when the power is out. Battery powered detectors should also be installed and tested. Some smoke detectors utilize both sources, hard-wired and a back-up battery.....make sure the battery is working. Do not sleep in a home without working smoke detectors.

Safety during the time of an emergency is everyone's concern and following these rules, in addition to having working smoke detectors at all times, will ensure your safety as well as that of your firefighters. If the public has any questions about such fire & safety issues, they should call their local fire department.

(3) Hurricane Protection Devices. The temporary installation or closure of storm shutters, panels, and other approved hurricane protection devices shall be permitted on emergency escape and rescue openings in residential occupancies during the threat of a storm. Such devices shall not be required to comply with with the operational constraints of 7.2.1.5. While such protection is provided, at least one means of escape from each occupied unit shall be within the first floor of the unit and shall not be located within a garage. Occupants in any part of the unit shall be able to access the means of escape without passing through a lockable door not under their control.