FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 28, 2024

MEDIA ADVISORY

*** Important Notice ***

Lithium Batteries (Cars, Bikes, Lawn Mowers)

Potential Fire Risk

Any items containing lithium batteries that were exposed to saltwater or submerged in any way from the storm surge such as Electric Vehicles, E-bikes, E-lawn mowers, E-scooters, etc. should **NOT** be kept inside your home, garage, or shed after Hurricane Helene. The effects of salt water from the storm surge on lithium batteries has caused several structure fires already. Salt water acts as a conductor for electricity and can lead to a fire that can rapidly spread inside a structure. If you have electric vehicle mounted chargers in your garage it is highly recommended to consult with an electrician to ensure there are not concerns with the equipment or the vehicle prior to charging them inside your garage. Please read below for additional information on lithium batteries and water exposure:

The dangers of lithium batteries and the effects they have when exposed to water can be detrimental. Prolonged exposure to high levels of moisture can lead to irreversible damage as water may penetrate the battery. The combined effects of electrolytes decomposition, lithium salt dissolution, electrode damage, and short circuits mean that lithium cells fail rapidly and cause fire when contaminated with water. Lithium-ion batteries can enter an uncontrollable, self-heating state, this can result in the release of gases, cause fires, and possible explosion. Salt water is a great conductor of electricity, if it penetrates the battery case, the water will create a direct path for the flow of electricity, potentially causing a short circuit this can lead to overheating, leakage, or even fire. Most common items with lithium-ion batteries include but are not limited to are: lawn mowers, edger's, weed eaters, tools, electric bikes, EV vehicles, scooters, phones, E-cigarettes, vapes, etc.

Please contact the Punta Gorda Fire Department if you have any questions (941) 575-5529.