

FEMA and Partners Warn of Potentially Catastrophic Impacts from Tropical Systems

WASHINGTON — Forecasters with the National Hurricane Center predict a life-threatening storm surge and flash flooding could occur along portions of North and South Carolina with Hurricane Florence's landfall.
By FEMA News Desk
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Several mandatory and voluntary evacuation orders were ordered Monday and Tuesday along the east coast.

"If you are told to evacuate and do not do so, you need to realize you are putting your life in danger," said FEMA Administrator Brock Long. "This storm is not to be taken lightly. The entire states of North and South Carolina could be heavily impacted by this storm. People do not live to tell the tale of surviving storm surge. It's the most deadly part of the hurricane that comes in and it causes the most destruction."

Additionally, Florence could produce inland flooding throughout many areas of the Carolinas and Virginia. It is crucial that residents and visitors in the areas that will be affected by Florence listen to and follow the instructions of local, state and tribal officials.

Federal Activities as of 5 a.m. Eastern

Safety and Security

- NOAA's Hurricane Hunters are flying to survey Hurricane Florence and better inform forecasts.
- FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams are in the Carolinas and Virginia. Additionally teams are also in place and responding to Tropical Storm Olivia in Hawaii, and Typhoon Mangkhut in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Additional teams are deployed to the St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands to provide support for Tropical Storm Isaac.
- Mobile Emergency Response Support assets are in place in the Carolinas, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawaii to provide emergency communications support for first responders.
- FEMA mobilized 25 of 28 Urban Search and Rescue Teams, including swift water rescue task forces, in support of hurricane response efforts from Hawaii to the Carolinas. Three teams are being held in reserve to support additional response needs.
- A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dam-safety experts are on standby in the Carolinas to advise state and local infrastructure experts. USACE is also coordinating with the U.S. Army Installation Command for installation dams.
- The is directing mariners to stay off the water – maritime search and rescue capabilities may be degraded or unavailable immediately before, during, and after the hurricane. Individuals are directed use VHF Channel 16, or call 911 for emergency needs; do not use social media to report emergencies.

Food, Water, Sheltering

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Health and Medical

- U.S. Health and Human Services(HHS) Secretary Alex M. Azar declared public health emergencies for North Carolina and South Carolina as Hurricane Florence continues its track toward the eastern seaboard. The declarations give healthcare providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs.
- HHS strategically pre-positioned approximately 230 medical personnel from the and their caches of medical equipment in North Carolina and Maryland so these assets are available quickly anywhere they are needed to help state and local authorities respond to communities' medical needs. HHS also activated the U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps' Rapid Deployment Force to assist if needed after the storm.
- Additional staff and ambulances are on standby to assist; 200 ambulances will be staged in Raleigh, N.C., to help quickly support needs as they are identified by states.

Energy (Power and Fuel)

- The Department of Energy's Energy Response Center is fully activated and staffed, and DOE responders have also deployed to FEMA coordination centers in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Atlanta, in addition to State Emergency Operations Centers in the Carolinas. They are prepared to deploy to other State Emergency Operations Centers as requested.
- Energy industry has engaged its mutual assistance networks, and utilities are ready to support power restoration efforts.
- The has deployed a Temporary Power Planning and Response team to North Carolina to help install generators at critical facilities like hospitals and nursing homes.

Communications

- The Federal Communications Commissionis prepared to provide emergency assistance to communications providers and has created a dedicated webpage for information about Hurricane Florence, including tips for communicating during an emergency.
- Individuals can monitor water levels and winds for Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Olivia with NOAA's Storm QuickLook. NOAA is also updating the Coastal Inundation Dashboard with information on coastal flooding risk and impacts.
- The National Weather Service has a "one-stop shop" posted onlineand shared on social media for forecast and public preparedness information related to Hurricane Florence.

Transportation

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- An Evacuation Liaison Team, a joint team made up of Department of Transportation, FEMA, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – has activated to help coordinate multistate evacuation efforts.
 - U.S. Department of Transportation's Crisis Management Center monitors on-going weather impacting Americans and will be fully staffed and activated today.
 - The Federal Aviation Administration is putting in place contingency plans for response to Hurricanes Florence, including:
 - All facilities have fuel tanks topped off to run auxiliary power generators if needed.
 - The Air Traffic Organization began contingency planning and coordination with potentially affected airlines and other operators in advance of Hurricane Florence.
 - Any Unmanned Aircraft System Special Governmental Interest authorizations will be posted at >www.FAA.gov<.
 - The Federal Highway Administration has staff in division offices in the Carolinas, Hawaii, and Virginia prepared to respond to Hurricanes Florence and Olivia.
 - U.S. Coast Guard Captains of the Port and their teams have been in close contact with the maritime sector over several days to manage maritime operations, maximizing the flow of cargo and supplies into states ahead of the storms while safeguarding the ports.
 - USCG is closing ports to inbound and outbound traffic and cargo operations as is necessary based on the storms' movement. Once the storm passes, they will begin port assessments and will begin reopening and reconstitution of ports once it is safe to do so.
 - USCG works with agency partners, state, and local authorizes to prioritize recovery efforts by first evaluating channel surveys then surveying aids to navigation and facilities.

Hazardous Waste

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting the necessary response planning to support any requests from response partners that are related to potential discharge and/or releases of oil or hazardous materials. In addition, the agency is prepared to assist the states and territories if help is requested.
- The Superfund Remedial program is compiling a list of National Priorities List sites within potentially impacted coastal zones. Vulnerability assessments for these sites are being reviewed.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure assessment subject matter experts are in place to help states analyze damage to wastewater facilities after Hurricane Florence.