

Coordinated Federal Response to Dangerous Hurricane Irma Continues

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FEMA and federal partner actions are underway

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its federal partners are actively coordinating the federal response to Hurricane Irma, a catastrophic storm that moved through the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and Puerto Rico on Wednesday, and is potentially taking aim for the U.S. mainland later in the week.

Hurricane Irma, as one of the most powerful Atlantic Hurricanes ever observed, is extremely dangerous.

In Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, efforts are already underway to provide resources and relief to survivors. Teams who deployed to the Caribbean in anticipation of the storm, including urban search and rescue teams, medical assistance teams, and incident management assistance teams are already available for use by Commonwealth and territory officials.

President Trump issued a major disaster declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands as a result of Hurricane Irma, making federal funding available to affected individuals on the islands of St. John and St. Thomas. Federal funding is also available to territorial and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities for all areas in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

On September 5, President Trump issued federal emergency declarations in advance of Hurricane Irma's landfall for the territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the state of Florida. On September 7, President Trump issued a federal emergency declaration in advance of Hurricane Irma's landfall for all 46 South Carolina counties and the Catawba Indian Nation.



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Everyone still in the storm's potential path is urged to listen to local officials and take preparedness actions now. Destructive winds, heavy rainfall and flash flooding are possible, as well as potentially deadly storm surges.

Storm surge and inland flooding pose a significant threat for drowning and can occur before, during, or after the center of a storm passes through an area. Storm surge can cut off evacuation routes, so *do not delay leaving if an evacuation is ordered for your area.*

In Florida, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FEDM) is coordinating with volunteer organizations across the state and partnering with the American Red Cross (ARC) to provide shelter operations training to volunteers and AmeriCorps grantees. To volunteer, go to www.volunteerflorida.org or call 1-800-FL-Help-1.

Federal Efforts Underway as of September 7, 2017

The **American Red Cross (ARC)** has its operational focus on safety issues and preparing for Mass Care sheltering. The ARC is moving shelter supplies and feeding capacity to support its initial planning assumption of having to shelter up to 120,000 evacuees across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

The **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** stood up the Global Health task force and a Global Health Desk within the Joint Information Center.

The **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** deployed three teams of AmeriCorps members serving with FEMA Corps to support logistical preparations for Hurricane Irma with additional AmeriCorps and Senior Corps Disaster Response Teams on standby. CNCS is coordinating with Volunteer Florida and other local partners to ensure all local AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members are trained by the American Red Cross, so they can be tapped for shelter operations and other critical needs.

The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** is taking inventory of 22 Superfund sites in Southern Florida; reviewing drinking and waste water systems; and has staff at FEMA's Regional Response Coordination Center, and Florida's Emergency Operations Center. EPA conducted initial assessments at 23 Superfund and oil sites in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and has staff at



the EPA response center in Edison, New Jersey, and FEMA Region II Regional Response Coordination Center. The Region is ready to deploy additional assets to the islands.

The **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)** continues to pre-position technicians, emergency response equipment, and mobile air navigation aids to quickly restore air traffic control services to storm-affected regions. The agency also continues to impose airspace restrictions to allow first responder aircraft to safely navigate, and is issuing special waivers to drone operators for storm inspection and damage assessment.

The **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** is monitoring the status of communications networks in the areas affected by Hurricane Irma and has created a dedicated webpage (www.fcc.gov/irma) for reports, information, and resources related to the hurricane, including tips for communicating during an emergency.

General Services Administration (GSA) personnel are continuing to conduct damage assessments of their buildings and are determining status of leased space in the Caribbean. Statuses of GSA facility closures are maintained at www.gsa.gov/facilitystatus. GSA continues to work FEMA mission assignments for space, fleet vehicles, and mass feeding in the Caribbean.

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** has two medical teams in Puerto Rico and three additional teams pre-positioned in Georgia, to assist local response efforts to Hurricane Irma. HHS Secretary Tom Price, M.D., declared public health emergencies for Florida on Thursday and for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands on Wednesday, to help residents receive unimpeded care from local providers and healthcare facilities. Additionally, the Disaster Distress Helpline, a toll-free call center, continues to be available at 1-800-985-5990 to aid people in coping with the behavioral health effects of the storm and to help people in impacted areas connect with local behavioral health professionals.

The **Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)** continues to monitor the storm and the preparations being taken at two nuclear power plants in the expected path – Turkey Point and St. Lucie, both in Florida. The NRC is also in contact with other plants in other states that might be impacted by the storm later. NRC inspectors will provide on-site coverage at the two plants throughout the storm. Regional



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inspectors have been in contact with states and NRC license holders related to the proper management of radioactive materials in advance of the storm.

The **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** Disaster Field Operations Center East in Atlanta is reaching out to reserve staff in advance of deployment to the areas affected by the storm.

The **Social Security Administration (SSA)** offices in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are closed, due to Hurricane Irma. Due to the uncertainty of the hurricane's path, SSA closed many southern Florida offices as residents are either under mandatory evacuation orders or preparing to evacuate. To keep updated on service delivery in hurricane-affected areas, please visit the SSA [office closings](#) and [severe weather](#) pages on the Internet.

The **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)** is staging approximately 250 personnel so that they will be in position to deploy to Florida quickly, to assist with airport security when airports there reopen after Hurricane Irma moves through the region. Members of the Transportation Security Support Teams are being deployed from Boston Logan International (BOS), Bradley International Airport (BDL), Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW), John Glenn Columbus International Airport (CMH), Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Oakland International Airport (OAK), Norman Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC), Sacramento International Airport (SMF) and San Diego International Airport (SAN).

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** is leaning forward in partnership with local, state, and federal response in preparation for Hurricane Irma. USACE is deploying 3 Power Planning and Response Teams to assist with assessments and generator installations in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Florida. USACE Subject Matter Experts deployed or enroute to the Florida State Emergency Operations Center include Temporary Roofing, Temporary power, Debris, Infrastructure Assessment, Dam Safety and Water/Waste Water.

The **United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** has 16 offices (Field Offices and Applications Support Centers) closed in the affected areas of Miami, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, as a result of Hurricane Irma. Information on closures is available at www.usa.gov.



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The **United States Geological Survey (USGS)** is deploying storm-tide sensors to Florida, as announced in their press release: [USGS Installs Storm-Tide Sensors along Florida's Coasts prior to Hurricane Irma's Arrival](#). They are planning to deploy the same sensors to South Carolina and Georgia in the near future.

U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) is fully engaged with federal, state, territorial and international mission partners as the command continues its support to the planning, pre-positioning and initial Department of Defense (DoD) response efforts for Hurricane Irma. U.S. Transportation Command is providing a C-17 Globemaster aircraft and the USS WASP is providing two MH-60 helicopters to assist with the relocation of hospital patients from St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The amphibious ships USS Kearsarge and USS Oak Hill, along with the Marines of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, are positioned in the region and prepared to assist as needed. Embarked aboard ships, the Marine Corps has the ability to rapidly respond with air, ground, and logistics assets when assistance is requested.

USNORTHCOM is also providing urban search and rescue capabilities to the Caribbean to assist with life-saving and life-sustaining efforts such as route clearance and water purification teams, and medical support. DoD is also leaning forward to support states that may see a potential impact from Hurricane Irma. USNORTHCOM has identified incident support bases at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Warner Robbins Air Force Base, Georgia, to support response and recovery operations for the east coast.

The **United States Postal Service (USPS)** press releases and industry alerts are providing customers and the news media with updates on service changes which are also posted on the USPS Service Alerts page. They continue to use social media to provide emergency communications to customers and employees and are providing safety information to Postal Service employees through multiple channels.

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