

# Understand the Difference Between a Hurricane Watch and a Hurricane Warning

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ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands – Alerts received at the right time can keep you safe during an emergency. Get to know the terms used to identify severe weather and discuss with your family what to do if a hurricane watch or warning is issued.

A hurricane watch is issued when a tropical cyclone containing winds of at least 74 MPH poses a possible threat, generally within 48 hours. A watch does not mean hurricane conditions will occur, only that these conditions are possible. Hurricane force winds may also be accompanied by storm surge, coastal flooding, and/or river flooding.

In the event of a hurricane watch, Virgin Islanders should ensure their preparedness by updating their emergency kits with fresh batteries, nonperishable food, water, medications and up-to-date important documents. With the presence of COVID-19, additional items should be included in your emergency kit. Soap, hand sanitizer, cloth face coverings and disinfecting supplies may become necessary.

Stay informed about conditions by paying attention to local news and government advisories, check your emergency supplies, and gather any items you may need if you lose power.



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A *hurricane warning* is issued when hurricane-force winds are expected within 24 hours. A hurricane warning can remain in effect when dangerously high water or a combination of dangerously high water and exceptionally high waves continue, even though winds may be less than hurricane force.

In the event of a hurricane warning, secure your home and bring in outdoor furniture. Charge your cellphone and complete your storm preparation. Listen for emergency information and alerts, if directed to do so by local officials immediately leave the threatened area.

For more tips on how to prepare your family for a disaster, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

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