

FEMA Continues to Support the U.S. Virgin Islands Response to Tropical Storm Ernesto

Release Date: 8? 15, 2024

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – In the aftermath Tropical Storm Ernesto, FEMA and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency remind Virgin Islands residents and visitors to stay safe, follow the advice of local officials, and be prepared for possible power outages. As always, community members should keep emergency supplies like flashlights and nonperishable food nearby. Take inventory of the items you need that rely on electricity and plan for alternative power sources like batteries, a portable power charger or power bank.

FEMA is ready to support. FEMA deployed Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs) and other FEMA personnel to the territory in advance of the storm. In the U.S. Virgin Islands - 112 FEMA personnel and 123 personnel from other federal agencies deployed to support the territory. FEMA's pre-staged resources across the territory will support life safety and life-sustaining response operations, as needed.

FEMA stands by to assist the USVI government and VITEMA as they continue to conduct damage assessments.

"I witnessed the storm firsthand and had the opportunity to see our strengthened partnership with VITEMA in action," said FEMA Region 2 Deputy Regional Administrator Andrew D'Amora. "Tropical Storm Ernesto is a reminder for Virgin Islanders to take hurricane preparedness seriously. Now is the time to replenish items in your emergency supply kit and take steps to ensure your loved ones are prepared for the aftermath of a hurricane or tropical storm."

1. FEMA encourages people to continue to follow these safety tips

- **If you are experiencing power outages** - Use only flashlights or battery-powered lanterns for emergency lighting. NEVER use candles during a blackout



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

or power outage due to extreme risk of fire. Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment or electronics. Power may return with momentary surges or spikes that can cause damage.

- **Use generators safely** - Always use generators outdoors and at least 20 feet from windows, doors and attached garages. Make sure to keep the generator dry and protected from rain or flooding.
- **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning** - Keep portable gas stoves, camp stoves, or charcoal grills outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Install carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup in central locations on every level of your home.
- **Heat safety** - Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Avoid high-energy activities or work outdoors, during midday heat, if possible. Check on family members, older adults and neighbors.
- **Power lines can be dangerous** - When clearing downed trees, do not touch, cut, remove or drive over downed or damaged lines as they may be live and operational. Do not pile debris on or near utility pedestals. It is faster to repair than to replace damaged lines.
- **Be careful during cleanup.** Wear protective clothing, use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning mold or other debris. People with asthma and other lung conditions and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled, even if these individuals are not allergic to mold. Children should not help with disaster cleanup work.
- **Have a plan** - Know how you will keep yourself, your family and your pets safe from flooding and power outages. Know how you'll contact one another and reconnect if you aren't together when flooding starts. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) or [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov) in Spanish for more information on how to stay safe before, during and after floods.
- **Stay Informed** - Sign up for Alert VI to receive real-time notifications for emergencies in the U.S. Virgin Islands at [VITEMA - Public - Sign In \(everbridge.net\)](https://www.vitema.gov/vitema-public-sign-in) . Weather updates and instructions might also be found on the [National Weather Service's San Juan Puerto Rico Facebook page](#).

“FEMA stands ready to support the territory with the resources they need to help its communities before, during and after a disaster,” said FEMA Region 2 Regional Administrator David Warrington. “Together with the Government of the Virgin Islands, FEMA remains committed to supporting recovery efforts for a more



FEMA

resilient future.”

Get additional information at www.ready.gov/hurricanes and www.fema.gov, which offer tools and resources to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

