

# FEMA and Federal Partners Continue to Support Life Saving and Life Sustaining Efforts in the Caribbean

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**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues to coordinate the federal government's efforts to support Commonwealth, territorial, local, private sector, and non-profit partners, as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) continue response and recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Irma.

The top priority of the federal government, as we work together to support response efforts, is protecting the lives and safety of those in affected areas.

FEMA has Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Incident Support Team-Advance element and Virginia Task Force Two (VA-TF2), Virginia Task Force One (VA-TF1), on the ground in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico conducting operations. FEMA deployed additional US&R support including Canine Search and Logistics teams.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), including the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and National Guard Bureau in support of FEMA, are also conducting search and rescue operations in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The U.S. Navy is conducting medical evacuations for critical-care patients from St. Thomas to St. Croix, and performing damage assessments in support of the local government.

Teams are already staffing emergency shelters, providing meals, and offering comfort. To those affected by the storm, please visit the following sites for up-to-date information on the response and recovery to Hurricane Irma in the U.S. Virgin Islands:

- [Vlalert.gov](http://Vlalert.gov)
- [USVIupdate.com](http://USVIupdate.com)
- [InformationUSVI.com](http://InformationUSVI.com)



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- [InformUSVI.com](https://www.informusvi.com)
- [FEMA.gov/hurricane-irma](https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma)

The American Red Cross [Safe and Well website](#) is another resource available that provides a free public reunification tool that allows individuals and organizations to register and post messages to indicate that they are safe, or to search for loved ones. The site is always available and open to the public and available in Spanish. Registrations and searches can be done directly on the website.

**Registrations can also be completed by texting SAFE to 78876.** To speak with someone at the American Red Cross concerning a missing friend or relative, please contact **1-800 REDCROSS OR 1-800-733-2767, choose option 1.**

To talk to a professional who can help you cope with emotional distress from the storm: Call the [@disasterdistressline](#) at **(800) 985-5990** crisis support whose services are available **24/7**.

### ***Federal Efforts Underway as of September 11, 2017***

- The **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** is continuing efforts to identify communications specialists for deployment to impacted areas. Global Health Task Force has deployed staff to Haiti.
- **U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)**
  - The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** deployed a Temporary Roofing PRT Management Cell to the USVI. USACE received a FEMA mission assignment to provide coordination and execution of debris removal for St. Thomas. Five Debris subject matter experts are assisting Puerto Rico with the development of a debris removal plan and have reviewed USVI debris plan; debris recons have been initiated in northeast Puerto Rico.
  - The **U.S. National Guard Bureau (NGB)** is continuing the evacuation of U.S. citizens from St. Maarten - with support of the 106th Rescue Wing, 123rd Airlift Wing and 156th Airlift Wing, the National Guard has evacuated an estimated 1200 citizens. Evacuation operations are still ongoing. The North Carolina National Guard has activated 315 soldiers and airmen to support Hurricane Irma. They are already conducting medical evacuations and moving critical disaster personnel and equipment to the U.S. Virgin



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Islands.

- **U.S. Navy (USN)** and **U.S. Marine Corps (USMC)** aircraft continue to work in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, moving people and supplies to the islands. An MV-22 Osprey aircraft assisted in the movement of British Marines from St. Croix to the British Virgin Islands.
- **U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)** is working through FEMA to support authorities in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to provide life-saving and life-sustaining relief to those in affected areas. The USS Kearsarge and USS Oak Hill continue to work in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, moving people and supplies to the islands.
- The **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)** is airlifting technicians to St. Thomas and St. Croix to restore air traffic control systems. The agency is also in the process of deploying a mobile air traffic control tower to St. Thomas.
- The **General Services Administration (GSA)** completed delivery of more than 20 vehicles to the Tioga Marine Terminal in Philadelphia over the weekend that will be shipped via the SS Wright to St. Thomas Tuesday, September 12. GSA is identifying available space to lease for FEMA's Joint Field Offices on St. Thomas and St. Croix, a call center in San Juan, and a warehouse on St. Thomas.
- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** coordinated with USCG to deploy a 67-person Disaster Assistance Recovery Team (DART) for response and recovery in St. Thomas. CBP is supporting relief and recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and USVI; as of 3:30 p.m., September 10, 2017, 33 missions (9 rescue, 22 logistical, 5 other) were completed.
- The **U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA)** expects that most of their offices in Puerto Rico will reopen Monday, September 11, with the exception of the Fajardo office. In the Virgin Islands, the St. Croix office is expected to reopen Monday; however, the St. Thomas office will remain closed.
- The **U.S. Department of State (DOS)**, in coordination with the Department of Defense, continued air evacuation of U.S. citizens from Saint Maarten via



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military transport on Sunday, September 10. The Department of State is working with the Department of Defense to resume evacuation flights on September 11.

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*FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.*

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