

# Finalize Preparations for Hurricane Maria, Follow Directions of Local Officials

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WASHINGTON – As Hurricane Maria makes landfall today and tomorrow in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, residents should continue to ***heed the instructions of territorial, commonwealth, and local officials***.

Residents should be ready to take shelter, finish charging cell phones, and have emergency supplies readily available.

FEMA is ready to respond to the potential impact of Hurricane Maria. FEMA staff in headquarters and regional offices in Washington, D.C., New York, and the Puerto Rico Caribbean Area Office, in addition to critical staff on the ground in the U.S. Virgin Islands, will continue to closely monitor the track of the hurricane, and can ensure the pre-positioned assets and commodities are secured to weather the impacts from this storm.

FEMA recommends all residents and visitors in the path of Hurricane Maria review these tips:

- Ensure your [emergency kit](#) is ready, and test your [family communications plan](#).
- Plan to stay in a shelter, and not in a home damaged by the previous storm. Let friends, family or coworkers know where you are taking shelter.
- Stay vigilant and continue to monitor local radio or TV stations for local emergency management officials' guidance, and for updated weather and emergency information.
- The [FEMA App](#) (available in English and Spanish) provides National Weather Service alerts and directions to open shelters. Check this app every half hour to save your cell phone battery.
- Turn on your TV/radio, or check your city/county website every half hour to keep up with the latest weather updates.



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- Only use social media to check in with family, friends and/or co-workers. Do not use social media to record/photograph the storm to conserve your phone's battery.
- Close storm shutters, and stay away from the windows, as flying glass from the windows could injure you.
- Turn your refrigerator or freezer to the coldest setting and only open when necessary. If you lose power, this will ensure the food lasts longer.
- Remember, never run a generator inside and keep it away from windows, doors, and vents.
- If using candles, please use caution. If possible, use flashlights instead. If you must use candles, do not burn them on or near anything that can catch fire.
- Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to follow directions of local officials and to share safety messaging with employees in order to reduce risk.
- Remember, your life and family safety is key. Do not risk your life to attempt to save household possessions.

### ***Watches and Warnings***

Get to know the terms that are used to identify severe weather and discuss with your family.

For a tropical storm:

- A **Tropical Storm Watch** is issued when tropical cyclone containing winds of at least 39 MPH or higher poses a possible threat, generally within 48 hours.
- A **Tropical Storm Warning** is issued when sustained winds of 39 MPH or higher associated with a tropical cyclone are expected in 36 hours or less.

For a hurricane:

- 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 **Hurricane Warning** is issued when sustained winds of 74 MPH or higher associated with a tropical cyclone are expected in 36 hours or less. 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.



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For coastal flooding:

- A **Coastal Flood Watch** is issued when moderate to major coastal flooding is possible.
- A **Coastal Flood Warning** is issued when moderate to major coastal flooding is occurring or imminent.
- A **Coastal Flood Advisory** is issued when minor or nuisance coastal flooding is occurring or imminent.

**For more safety procedures and tips on what to do during and after a hurricane, visit [ready.gov/hurricanes](https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) or [listo.gov/es/hurricanes](https://www.listo.gov/es/hurricanes).**

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