

Government Agencies and Others Collaborate to Improve VI Hurricane Preparedness

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ST. CROIX, Virgin Islands – As we approach peak hurricane season, federal and territorial emergency response leaders continue to emphasize families prepare to sustain themselves in the immediate aftermath of a devastating storm. At the same time, government agencies have been closely collaborating and training to improve their readiness to meet residents' emergency needs.

In July, federal officials collaborated with the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), Red Cross, National Weather Service, and local departments and agencies during a four-day workshop to improve the territory's readiness. This forum provided territorial and federal partners an opportunity to identify any gaps and shortfalls, while collectively identifying solutions.

The 2018 hurricane season presents a new set of challenges as damage remains from hurricanes Irma and Maria. FEMA staff have been in the territory since last September and nearly 400 personnel remain on the ground in support of recovery operations.

"Last year's hurricane season required unprecedented support from emergency responders in the territory," said Federal Coordinating Officer William L. Vogel. "This year we've been working alongside our local partners to identify and improve our capabilities to better serve Virgin Islanders during future disaster operations."

The ability to effectively communicate during and immediately after a disaster is essential. FEMA has instituted regular operational checks of primary, secondary, and contingency communications systems to ensure our ability to execute emergency response activities. Additionally, VITEMA has transitioned to a new emergency notification system, Alert VI, which provides Virgin Islanders quick and reliable emergency notifications and public service announcements.



FEMA has pre-staged necessary commodities and generators across the territory, including a three-day supply of food and water. Generators have been identified and staged to support critical infrastructure facilities following any severe weather event. Through FEMA Headquarters additional commodities are maintained at strategically located distribution centers throughout the United States, including in Puerto Rico, where more than 5.4 million liters of water, 3.6 million meals, 600 generators, 10,000 blankets, 80,000 tarps and 30,000 rolls of plastic sheeting are stockpiled to serve Puerto Rico and the USVI.

Federal and local partners will continue to respond to the needs of survivors, helping rebuild stronger and more resilient communities.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after a disaster.

To sign up for emergency, weather related, public safety and service disruption alerts on the Virgin Islands, sign up for [Alert VI](#) . Follow us on social media at twitter.com/femaregion2 and www.facebook.com/FEMAUSVirginIslands.

