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Gov. Scott Issues Updates on Hurricane Irma Preparedness

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott received a full update on Hurricane Irma from the State Emergency Operations Center. The Governor traveled the state today to meet with local officials, ensure communities have all the resources they may need, and to encourage families and visitors to be fully prepared.

Hurricane and Storm Surge Watches are in effect for portions of South Florida and the Florida Keys. Additional watches should be expected. The Governor will continue to be in constant communication with state and local emergency management officials, city and county leaders, and utility officials who are also working to ensure the state is prepared to respond to any potential impacts from Hurricane Irma.

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS BY STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

WATCHES AND WARNING

- A Storm Surge Watch is in effect for the Jupiter Inlet southward around the Florida peninsula to Bonita Beach and the Florida Keys.
- A Hurricane Watch is in effect for the Jupiter Inlet southward around the Florida peninsula to Bonita Beach, the Florida Keys, Lake Okeechobee, and Florida Bay.

EVACUATIONS AND SHELTERS

- Based on recent forecasts, the US Army Corps has been reviewing how the federally operated Herbert Hoover Dike will be impacted. Governor Scott spoke to Col. Jason Kirk with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers today and the Corps. believes there will be additional impacts from excessive wind pushing some water over the Dike. While they have assured the Governor that the structural integrity of the Dike will not be compromised, Governor Scott has ordered voluntary evacuations beginning immediately in the cities surrounding the southern half of Lake Okeechobee from Lake Port to Canal Point in Hendry, Palm Beach and Glades counties. Mandatory evacuations will be put in place for these communities beginning tomorrow morning. Information regarding transportation and sheltering will be released tomorrow morning. This decision was made due to Governor Scott's sole focus on life safety as Hurricane Irma approaches Florida. The seven cities affected by these orders are as follows:

- South Bay
- Lake Harbor
- Pahokee
- Moore Haven
- Clewiston
- Belle Glade
- Canal Point
- Brevard – mandatory evacuations for Zone A, Merritt Island, barrier islands, and some low-lying mainland areas along Indian River Lagoon beginning Friday
- Broward - voluntary evacuations mobile homes and low-lying areas; mandatory East of Federal Highway including barrier islands beginning Thursday
- Collier - mandatory evacuations for Goodland, Everglades City, Chokoloskee, all mobile homes beginning on Friday
- Flagler - mandatory evacuations for nursing homes, all varieties of assisted living facilities, and community residential group homes within coastal and Intracoastal areas and voluntary for zones A, B, C, F beginning on Thursday; mandatory for Zones A,B,C,F, and substandard housing beginning on Saturday
- Hendry - voluntary evacuations for low-lying areas, non-slab-built homes, mobile home and RVs beginning on Thursday
- Lee - mandatory evacuations for barrier islands - Bonita Beach, Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel, Captiva, and Pine Island beginning on Friday AM
- Manatee - voluntary evacuations for Zone A
- Martin - voluntary evacuations for mandatory for barrier islands, manufactured homes, and low-lying areas beginning Saturday
- Miami-Dade - mandatory evacuations for all of Zone A, all of Zone B, and portions of Zone C. Miami Dade residents can find their zones by clicking [HERE](#).
- Monroe - mandatory evacuations for visitors and residents. A dedicated transportation hotline is available specifically for individuals in the Keys at 305-517-2480
- Palm Beach - mandatory evacuations for Zone A and B, voluntary for Zone C
- Pinellas - mandatory evacuations all mobile home and Zone A
- St. Lucie - voluntary evacuations
- School buses are available for transportation needs in Monroe, Miami-Dade and Broward counties. At this time, Monroe has accepted 10 buses to help with evacuations, Miami-Dade Counties are using these services to help evacuate those with special needs and Broward has buses on stand-by.
- Additional evacuations are expected throughout the state. All Floridians should pay close attention to local alerts and follow the directions of local officials.
- Shelters are continuing to open, including shelters for people with special needs, pets and general populations. DOH is coordinating the set up and staffing for special needs shelters. A list of all open shelters will be available at floridadisaster.org/shelters.
- The state is working with the American Red Cross to identify shelter capacity both during and following the storm.

MILITARY SUPPORT

- Governor Scott has activated a total of 4,000 members of the Florida Army and Air National Guard to support with planning, and logistics operations in preparation for potential impacts from Hurricane Irma. These members are stationing across the state and actively assisting with preparation efforts.
- At the direction of Governor Scott, all remaining National Guard members will be reporting for duty tomorrow morning. Additional guard members will continue to be activated this week as needed.

- The Florida National Guard has coordinated with the North Carolina National Guard to utilize air assets to assist with ongoing evacuations in the Florida Keys.
- The Florida National Guard has coordinated with the New Jersey National Guard and approximately 130 soldiers and more than 50 vehicles are in route to provide transportation assets for movement of troops, supplies and equipment to aid mobilization efforts during Hurricane Irma operations.
- The Florida National Guard has coordinated with the Ohio National Guard and Pennsylvania National Guard to have teams standing by for Hurricane Irma support.
- The Florida National Guard has 1,000 high water vehicles, 13 helicopters, 17 boats and more than 700 generators on standby.
- The Florida National Guard is coordinating with the National Guard Bureau to identify approximately 30,000 troops, 4,000 trucks, 100 helicopters, and air evacuation crews that are standing by for Hurricane Irma support, if needed.
- The Florida National Guard Joint Operations Center at Camp Blanding has activated to Level 1 to facilitate Hurricane Irma mission command and coordination efforts.

LAW ENFORCEMENT;

- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has more than 200 officers standing by for the first wave of response based on potential storm impacts. Thirty teams with supporting resources such as trucks, coastal and river patrol boats, an ATV and two shallow draft boats are preparing for evacuation support, search and rescue missions, or any additional needs.
- FWC is also coordinating with partners in states such as Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana and Arkansas in case additional officers or resources are needed.
- FDLE is assisting with fuel escorts in impacted areas. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) established 18 emergency response teams for deployment to impacted areas and those teams will begin deploying tomorrow to pre-staging locations. Each FDLE region is operating its Regional Law Enforcement Coordination Team in advance of the storm to assist local law enforcement with any needs.
- The entire Florida Highway Patrol, approximately 1,700 troopers, is on 12-hour shifts, with the primary mission to assist emergency preparedness and response, including escorting fuel trucks.
- A total of 330 FHP troopers are currently on standby for deployments. A 33-member team is currently in route to the Fort Myers area for quick response efforts once storm track and potential impacts are determined. Additionally, equipment such as high water recovery vehicles have been prepared for quick deployment to assist with recovery and road clearance efforts.
- The Division of Motorist Services has its Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) mobiles on standby and will deploy them to impacted areas as needed.

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS

- Governor Scott directed the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to suspend tolls across the entire State of Florida in preparation for Hurricane Irma. Tolls will be suspended for the duration of the storm's impacts to Florida.
- Real-time traffic information and evacuation routes is available at www.FL511.com
- FDOT has increased the number of road rangers who are patrolling Florida's roadways 24/7 to assist motorists.
- Around the state, FDOT has 13 Traffic Management Centers where hundreds of DOT workers are monitoring traffic cameras 24/7 to ensure traffic flows continue and evacuations proceed without interruption.

- FDOT officials are also monitoring road cameras at the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee around the clock to help keep traffic moving.
- FDOT is coordinating with Google's emergency response team to prepare to 'close' roads in Google Maps in real time in the event that Hurricane Irma forces the closure of any roads in the aftermath of the storm. Google Maps are used for Uber and Waze among other directional applications.
- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has suspended construction contractor work and prepared key evacuation routes for possible shoulder use.
- FDOT is coordinating with county emergency operations centers directly to coordinate any necessary response actions, including activating traffic counters, providing local evacuation support and providing maintenance of traffic and other assistance.
- The state is monitoring conditions at all airports and seaports. Key West International Airport will be suspending operations this evening. All seaports are open and making preparations.

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

- Volunteer Florida is coordinating with volunteer organizations across the state and has partnered with the American Red Cross to provide shelter operations training to volunteers and AmeriCorps grantees. To volunteer, go to volunteerflorida.org or call 1-800-FL-Help-1.
- Governor Scott has set a goal of 17,000 volunteers. So far, more than 1,500 state employees and more than 8,300 members of the public have signed up with Red Cross to take the volunteer sheltering training.
- Volunteer Florida is working with the Red Cross to identify staffing for host shelters in Sarasota, Alachua and Leon Counties.
- Volunteer Florida has 43 Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) on standby to deploy to areas of need. Many of these teams have begun to work in local call centers and prepare for sheltering assistance.
- American Red Cross teams are coordinating feeding at shelters and have staged 26 tractor trailers at the State Logistics Response Center, 150 trailers at the State Farmers Market, and 100 emergency response vehicles in North Florida.
- The Salvation Army has the capability to provide 100,000 meals a day. Salvation Army is on standby with 32 cooking units and two field kitchens stationed in Palm Beach and Miami. They are also coordinating additional supplies awaiting deployment from neighboring states.
- The Florida Baptist Convention has eight kitchens ready and the ability to feed 90,000 people immediately. Twenty-seven more kitchens are on standby ready to feed 35,000 meals a day.
- Feeding Florida has received nine truckloads of food from Kellogg's to assist in shelters with 16 additional trucks coming in. Feeding Florida currently has more than 4,000 food boxes on hand capable of sustaining a family of four for five days. Feeding Florida has 3,000 shelf stable meal boxes ready to distribute to staging areas in Miami and Orlando. Volunteers are compiling 20,000 food bags, which hold 20 pounds of food and can be distributed as needed. Feeding Florida also has baby food/formula kits available for distribution.
- Church World Service has hygiene kits and cleanup buckets on standby.
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida has showers and trailers available in Pensacola and Lakeland for deployment, as well as supplies such as chainsaws, shovels, safety equipment and 1,200 tarps.
- Church of Latter Day Saints has chainsaws, tarps, and water on standby.
- United Methodist Church has hygiene kits and flood buckets on standby.
- Angel Flight SE has 700 pilots based in the southeastern U.S. available to assist.
- Church of Scientology is activating volunteers for FL and receiving volunteers and donations in Clearwater.
- Church of Latter Day Saints is transporting material (primarily tarps, chainsaws, food and water) to Orlando, more on order from Atlanta Bishop's Storehouse

- Mission North American Disaster Relief is staging equipment in various locations across the state and have two shower trailers available.
- UMCOR has 2,500-3000 flood buckets on hand and 3,000 hygiene kits.
- United Way is arranging enhanced staffing for 211 to support and direct residents.

HUMAN SERVICES

- While the state is working with retail partners to fill grocery store shelves with water and other emergency resources as quickly as possible, it is important to be considerate of neighbors and take only what each family needs to be prepared.
- Governor Scott has requested federal resources such as disaster tarps, water, baby food supplies, supply trucks, search and rescue personnel and equipment and incident management teams.
- The state has established local points of contact with mass care organizations and volunteer agencies, including working with the American Red Cross to coordinate sheltering and feeding operations. The American Red Cross has also established a Disaster Relief Operation (DRO) in Orlando and is actively opening shelters.
- The state is staging mass care supplies such as meals, shelter support trailers and water at the State Logistic Response Center in Orlando for deployments as needed.
- The state is sending 120,000 dehydrated meals to The Salvation Army and The Florida Baptist for distribution as needed.
- Food Safety Response Teams are beginning to be placed on standby for recovery assessments.
- The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) has released September Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to current recipients who have not yet received them to assist with Hurricane Irma preparations.

VETERAN SERVICES

- The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) operates six skilled nursing facilities and one assisted living facility. All state veterans' homes are currently operational.
- For information on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) closures, please click [HERE](#).
- Veterans from storm-impacted areas who require immediate assistance may contact: VA Health Resource Center Disaster Hotline: 1-800-507-4571.

STATE OFFICE CLOSURES

- Governor Rick Scott has directed all state offices in all 67 Florida counties to close Friday, September 8 – Monday, September 11.
- In partnership with the American Red Cross, salaried, non-essential state employees can receive expedited volunteer certifications for disaster services so that they may assist in or operate shelters in response to Hurricane Irma impacts and preparation. Florida law allows Governor Scott to grant full-time, salaried state employees up to 15 days of administrative leave for emergency volunteer efforts through the American Red Cross. Employees can register [HERE](#).

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Governor Rick Scott has directed all public K-12 schools, state colleges, state universities to close Friday, September 8 – Monday, September 11.
- The Florida Department of Education is in contact with school districts, state colleges and universities as all continue to monitor Irma and her path. School closures are available at www.fldoe.org/irma.

- The Florida Department of Education is coordinating with school districts across the state to ensure they are working with local governments and emergency management officials to offer school busses transportation support if needed.
- Districts are preparing in the case that their facilities are needed for shelters. Colleges are making emergency preparations on their campuses and working with students who may need assistance with relocation.

FUELS

- For more information, please click [HERE](#)
- Vice President Pence announced today that the federal government has waived additional rules and regulations to allow more fuel to get to Florida fast.

Governor Scott has taken the following action to expedite fuel delivery:

- Governor Scott has directed state police to escort fuel delivery trucks so they can quickly deliver fuel to gas stations along evacuation routes. This includes the Florida Keys, where police evacuation escorts have been offered to identified gas station employees so gas stations can stay open as long as possible.
- Governor Scott has rescinded all weight and driver restrictions for highways so water, food, fuel and emergency supplies can be quickly brought to Florida.
- Following a request from Governor Scott, the same restrictions have been waived in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and North Carolina.
- Governor Scott has spoken with President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, FEMA administrator Brock Long, Department of Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, and Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao about waiving rules and regulations to get gas into Florida quickly.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved an emergency fuel waiver at the Governor's request which will allow more fuel to quickly enter the state.
- All Florida ports are operational and are prioritizing fuel shipments.

Fuel Updates

- The state has worked with fuel suppliers to identify excess fuel in the Western Panhandle to potentially arrange escorts to ensure that there is fuel supply where needed for evacuations.
- Emergency fuel contractors have secured 1.5 million gallons of fuel for initial delivery and confirmed that additional fuel supply is on standby for future deliveries.
- The state is working to identify other fuel ships that can be diverted to Florida ports for fuel supply.
- There is currently a fuel ship in route from a refinery in Mississippi to the Port of Tampa for resupply. The Governor has directed the State Emergency Response Team to arrange a military escort into the port. This is in addition to a ship currently in Tampa that is unloading more than 300,000 barrels of fuel to resupply gas stations in the evacuation zones.

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, & ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) created an event in the Florida Virtual Business Emergency Operations Center (FLVBEOC) for Hurricane Irma and are currently updating with up-to-date storm information, situation reports and resources for the business community. FLVBEOC is available at www.flvbeoc.org.
- The state has activated the Private Sector Hotline at 850-815-4925. The hotline is available for business inquiries about the storm, preparedness information and post-impact information.
- The state is conducting daily Private Sector conference calls to provide situational awareness and to address concerns of private sector partners.
- DEO is continuing to coordinate with CareerSource Florida, local workforce boards, and other public-private partners.

- Major retailers are being contacted to provide the status of emergency supplies.

VISIT FLORIDA

- VISIT FLORIDA remains in contact with all destination marketing partners and emergency contacts and has activated the [Homepage Banner](#) and [Florida Now](#) page on visitflorida.com to advise consumers.
- Through VISIT FLORIDA's partnership with Expedia, Expedia.com/Florida has been activated to provide accommodations availability information for visitors, residents and first responders.
- VISIT FLORIDA is sending a targeted Facebook message to approximately 250,000 domestic and international visitors currently in Florida advising them of Hurricane Irma and urging them to take necessary precautions.
- VISIT FLORIDA's Welcome Centers have transitioned to emergency information centers to help direct evacuees with the most up to date information.
- VISIT FLORIDA's Welcome Center staff are all Red Cross Certified and stand ready to assist at shelters and other areas as needed.
- Airbnb today activated its Disaster Response Program to connect Floridians forced to evacuate from their homes due to Hurricane Irma and relief workers arriving to provide assistance with temporary housing through local Airbnb hosts free of charge.
- Airbnb hosts in the following Florida communities are eligible to take part in the program and list their homes for free to evacuees and emergency relief workers: Bay County, Escambia County, Leon County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Walton County, Holmes County, Washington County, Calhoun County, Franklin County, Jackson County, Liberty County, Gadsden County, Gulf County, Wakulla County, Madison County, Jefferson County, Taylor County. These free listings are available until September 28.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL

- Under a State of Emergency, individuals are able to refill prescriptions early. All health insurers, managed care organizations, and other entities that are licensed by the Office of Insurance Regulation and provide prescription medication coverage as part of a policy are required to waive time restrictions on prescription medication refills.
- The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is coordinating with hospitals and healthcare facilities across Florida on evacuation needs. DOH has coordinated the evacuation of 11 hospitals and 142 non-hospital health care facilities thus far.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has Disaster Medical Assistance Teams on standby for Florida. These rapid response teams aid in the provision of medical care to those who need it after the storm.
- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities' regional offices have contacted providers and waiver support coordinators to ensure APD customers have a hurricane plan in place and that communities for people with developmental disabilities are preparing for the storm. Two group homes in Monroe County have evacuated. Others are evacuating on Thursday. Many will be going to a special needs shelter at Florida International University. Five group homes in Miami-Dade County have evacuated. Five group homes in Brevard County have evacuated. One group home in Marion County has evacuated. Twelve group homes in Orange County have evacuated. One group home from Broward County has evacuated.

ELECTRIC & NATURAL GAS UTILITIES (Public Service Commission)

- Utility providers are working on staging and asset allocation so they can return power as quickly as possible following the storm and are prepared to start reporting outage and restoral information when notified to begin.
- Florida Power and Light has activated its emergency response plan and has thousands of workers preparing to respond to Irma. FPL is also working with out-of-state utilities and

electrical contracting companies to secure additional resources and has opened more than 20 staging sites throughout the state, where restoration crews, trucks and equipment are stationed.

- The state is monitoring the power grid for sufficient power and the natural gas infrastructure for any damages that can cause a loss of service to power plants.
- The state is coordinating with utilities to identify potential fuel, equipment or resource needs.
- Memos for several gas companies to have access to their facilities have been issued.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- The state has contacted telecommunications partners and activated protective action plans and procedures for Central Offices, tower sites, mobile response units and any other critical infrastructure.
- Comcast has opened more than 137,000 free Xfinity WiFi hotspots throughout the state for individuals in need, including non-Xfinity customers, to help residents and emergency personnel stay connected if Hurricane Irma makes anticipated landfall in Florida. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, which are located both indoors and outdoors in places such as shopping districts, parks and businesses, please visit [Xfinity.com/wifi](https://xfinity.com/wifi).
- Telecommunications Partners are monitoring fuel levels for generators and back-up power supply for cell towers.
- The state has finalized 24-hour staffing schedules and all Telecommunications remain on standby to respond if required. Additional resources are being identified and preparing for potential deployment.
- At this point, there are no out of ordinary reports of any major outages.
- Florida Public Radio Emergency Network (FPREN) has been sharing vital information about Hurricane Irma through their broadcast network, social media and station websites.
- FPREN is also reporting important news and information through the Florida Storms app and social media pages.
- The state is monitoring the State Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS), which is fully operational.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff is currently conducting baseline shoreline assessments to help evaluate beach impacts. DEP is also assisting in identifying and fortifying vulnerable areas of shoreline.
- DEP is reaching out to drinking, wastewater and hazardous waste facilities to help ensure preparation steps are being taken, and has issued an emergency final order to ensure recovery efforts are not hampered or delayed.
- 52 Florida State Parks are currently closed. DEP is preparing to close more than 40 additional parks tomorrow. A full list of closures can be found at <https://floridastateparks.org/content/storm-information>.

LAKE OKEECHOBEE

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District has begun a pre-storm drawdown that includes water releases from Lake Okeechobee. The Corps anticipates the releases will last a short time, with future water management decisions dependent on the water level in the lake after the storm passes.
- Routine inspections of the Herbert Hoover Dike are taking place and additional inspections will begin once the lake approaches 17 feet. The lake level is currently at 13.67 feet.
- The South Florida Water Management District has begun lowering water levels in canals and moving as much water as possible to tide and south through flood control structures throughout its flood control system in preparation for the storm.

- Field station staff are also inspecting key parts of the flood control system and ensuring adequate supplies of fuel and equipment for pump stations.
- The District is closely coordinating with local drainage districts and governments to help them prepare their local canal systems for stormwater runoff from the hurricane.

INSURANCE

- The Department of Financial Services and the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) has activated its internal Incident Management Team (IMT) for coordination of activities related to Hurricane Irma and is preparing to respond to deployments as needed, and prepared to order property insurers to submit claims information from Hurricane Irma.
- Additionally, in response to the Governor's Office Executive Order, OIR has notified all entities writing health insurance in the state of their statutory obligation to allow for early prescription refills. OIR is also coordinating with the Agency for Healthcare Administration and Department of Health.
- Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis is encouraging all Floridians to keep all insurance and banking information in one, easily-accessible place. Consumers can download a copy of the Department's free Emergency Financial Preparedness Toolkit. The Toolkit serves as a one-stop shop for all finance, emergency and insurance contact information. [Download and complete the toolkit today.](#)
- Consumers with questions about their policies and those who need help filing a claim should call the CFO's free Insurance Consumer Helpline at 1-877-693-5236.
- OIR has updated its "[Hurricane Season Resources](#)" webpage, which contains links to information provided by the Governor, Chief Financial Officer, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture, Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program, and contact information for Florida's property insurers.

State Emergency Operations Center/ Contact Information:

- The State Emergency Operations Center has been activated to level one, which is a full-scale, 24-hours-a-day activation.
- The Florida Emergency Information Line has been activated and is available 24/7 for families and victors at 1-800-342-3557.
- Floridians can text FLPREPARES to 888777 in order to receive text alerts from FDEM.
- The media line is 850-921-0217.
- Follow @FLSert or @FLGovScott on Twitter for live updates on Hurricane Irma.
- Visit <http://www.floridadisaster.org> to find information on shelters, road closures, and evacuation routes.
- On Monday, Governor Scott issued [Executive Order 17-235](#) declaring a state of emergency in all 67 counties within the State of Florida.
- On Tuesday, Governor Scott requested, and President Donald Trump approved, a pre-landfall emergency declaration for the State of Florida in preparation for Hurricane Irma which provided important preparation resources and assistance from the federal government.

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