



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOV. SCOTT: WE MUST PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE HURRICANE; EFFECTS COULD BE LIFE THREATENING

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, following a call with The National Hurricane Center, Governor Scott is urging all residents and visitors from Tampa Bay to Pensacola to get prepared now before Tropical Storm Hermine makes landfall. **Tropical Storm Hermine is expected to become a hurricane before landfall. Florida expects to start seeing severe affects in the state around 6:00pm and landfall is expected around 2:00am.** Hurricane and tropical storm warnings are ongoing along Florida's Gulf Coast from Charlotte County to Bay County.

Governor Rick Scott said, "This storm has the potential to be life-threatening if residents and visitors don't follow proper precautions to protect themselves and their loved ones. This storm will impact the majority of our state. Right now, we are concerned about storm surge in our coastal communities, wind, rain and tornadoes. We can expect storm surges beginning this afternoon along the Nature Coast and the Big Bend, wind speeds up to 75 mph, rainfall of up to 15 inches in some areas and tornados impacting Central and North Florida.

"Evacuations are occurring in many counties and if you live in an area where mandatory evacuations are occurring, you need to evacuate now. If you don't know your evacuation zone, please visit www.floridadisaster.org/publicmapping/ or call 850-921-0217. If you are directed to evacuate and don't, you're risking not only your life and your families' lives, but the lives of those who are there to save you.

"If you have a cell phone, charge it and keep it available all night. The National Weather Service sends out alerts for tornadoes, flash floods and hurricane alerts which can save your life. Do not ignore these messages and please stay alert to all warnings and pay attention to your local news.

"Anyone in the storm's path must have ready the resources your families need such as water, flashlights, batteries and medicine. Power could be out for days or even weeks. That is why you have to be prepared with all of these resources.

"I have been in constant communication with sheriffs and local officials to ensure they have everything they need to help keep their families and visitors safe. Our most

important goal is to protect our families, visitors and communities and we continue to hope for the best, even as we prepare for the worst. We will continue to monitor this storm and will keep Floridians updated on any developments.”

Counties who will be most affected by storm surge include Manatee, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Levy, Gilchrist, Dixie, Taylor, Wakulla, and Franklin counties. Currently, at least 20 counties have closed their schools. These lists continue to change and Florida families should watch their local news for updates. Tornado watches are expected to go into affect later this afternoon.

The following counties have areas with mandatory evacuations. Please call the local emergency operations center with any questions:

- Dixie County - Horseshoe Beach, Suwanee, Jena
 - Dixie Emergency Management Office - 352-498-1240
- Franklin County - Apalachicola, east Point, Carrabelle, Lanark, St. George Island, Alligator and Bald Point, Dog Island, Rio Visa
 - Franklin Emergency Management Office - 850-653-8977
- Taylor County - Steinhatchee, Keaton Beach, Cedar Island, Dark Island, Dekle, Spring Warrior, Nutall Rise, Ecofiania
 - Taylor Emergency Management Office - 850-838-3575
- Wakulla County - St. Marks, Panacea, Spring Medart
 - Wakulla Emergency Management Office - 850-745-7200
- Levy County - Cedar Key, Yankeetown, Fanning Springs, Fowlers Bluff, Otter Creek, Gulf Hammock, Rosewood and the West Side of Inglis
 - Levy Emergency Management Office - 352-486-5213

The following counties have areas with voluntary evacuations. Please call the local emergency operations center with any questions:

- Gulf - Port St. Joe, St. Joe Beach, Beacon Hill, Simmons Bayou, St. Joe Peninsula and Indian Pass
 - Gulf Emergency Management Office - 850-229-9110
- Walton - Santa Rosa Beach, Miramar Beach, Sand Destin, Grayton Beach, Inlet Beach
 - Walton Emergency Management Office - 850-892-8065
- Jefferson - Fanlew Community
 - Jefferson Emergency Management Office - 850-342-0211

The NHC has designated the system as Tropical Storm Hermine. Tropical Storm Hermine has sustained winds of 70 mph and is projected to make landfall in Florida late Thursday night. Additional strengthening of this storm is expected to occur throughout the day today. A hurricane warning is in effect for coastal and inland areas between Gulf

County and Dixie County. A tropical storm warning is in effect for 30 counties across North and Central Florida. A storm surge warning is in effect for coastal areas between Manatee County and Franklin County.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management is the state agency charged with preparing for all types of disasters in Florida. The Division is the state's disaster liaison with federal and local agencies, and is the lead consequence management agency for the State Emergency Response Team (SERT). The Division maintains the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee and the State Watch Office, the 24-hour communications and command center for response coordination. Follow the Division on social media at facebook.com/FloridaSERT or on Twitter @FLSERT.

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