



Gov. Scott Issues Updates on Hurricane Irma Preparedness

On September 8, 2017, in [News Releases](#), by Staff

TAMPA, Fla. – This evening, Governor Rick Scott received a full update on Hurricane Irma from the State Emergency Operations Center and a briefing on Lake Okeechobee impacts by the South Florida Water Management District. The Governor is continuing to travel 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. 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.

Governor Scott urged Floridians who live in an evacuation zone in the following South Florida counties to leave before midnight to avoid life threatening weather. After midnight, individuals in evacuation zones in these counties should not get on the road.

- Lee;
- Hendry;
- Palm Beach;
- Broward;
- Miami-Dade;
- Monroe; or
- Collier County

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS BY STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

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WATCHES AND WARNING –

- A Storm Surge Warning is in effect from Sebastian Inlet southward to Venice and the Florida Keys.
- A Storm Surge Watch is in effect for North of Sebastian Inlet to the Flagler/Volusia county line, North of Venice to Anclote River and Tampa Bay.
- A Hurricane Warning is in effect for Sebastian Inlet southward to Anna Maria Island, the Florida Keys, Lake Okeechobee and Florida Bay.

- A Hurricane Watch is in effect north of Sebastian Inlet to the Flagler/Volusia county line and north of Anna Maria Island to the Suwannee River.

EVACUATIONS AND SHELTERS

Though the below evacuation orders are current and in effect, everyone should check with their local emergency management office or website for the most up to date information regarding evacuation as they are constantly being updated.

- DEM estimates that 5.6 million Floridians have been ordered to evacuate.
- Based on recent forecasts, the U.S. 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 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 are in place for these communities beginning this 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
- Broward – mandatory East of Federal Highway including barrier islands
- Charlotte – voluntary evacuations for Don Pedro Island, Knight Island (Palm Island), Little Gasparilla Island, Manosota Key, all mobile homes
- Citrus – mandatory evacuations for residents west of Hwy 19, 1 and ½ miles east of Hwy 19 excluding Sugarmill Woods. This also includes all of the city of Crystal River, all low lying areas throughout the entire county and anyone residing in mobile homes, manufactured homes and all unsafe structures throughout the entire county
- Collier – mandatory evacuations for Goodland, Everglades City, Chokoloskee, all mobile homes
- Desoto- voluntary evacuations for people in low-lying/flood prone areas, residents living in mobile homes and RV parks

- 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; mandatory for Zones A,B,C,F, and substandard housing beginning on Saturday
- Glades – mandatory evacuations for areas around Lake Okeechobee (Lakeport, Moorehaven, Washington Park, Benbow and Uncle Joe’s Motel and Campground). Also mandatory for residents in Zone A and anyone in an RV park, mobile home or building constructed before 1992.
- Hardee – voluntary evacuations for low-lying areas, mobile homes, and port structures
- Hendry – voluntary evacuations for low-lying areas, non-slab-built homes, mobile homes, trailers and RVs, mandatory for areas near Lake Okeechobee (Clewiston, Hookers Point, Harlem, Flaghole, Montura Ranch Estates, Mid-County MSBU which includes Ladeca, Pioneer Plantation and Leon-Dennis Subdivision, Al Don Farming Road)
- Hernando – mandatory evacuations for Zones A and B and mobile homes
- Highlands – voluntary for low areas and mobile/manufactured homes
- Hillsborough – voluntary for special-needs residents in Evacuation Zone A.
- Indian River – voluntary evacuations for barrier islands, low-lying areas, mandatory for Saturday
- Lee – mandatory for Cape Coral west of Burnt Store Road and south of Cape Coral Parkway, east of Del Prado Boulevard to Viscaya Parkway, North Fort Myers south of Bay Shore Road from Moody Road to State Road 31 and areas south of North River Road from State Road 31 to Fichters Creek, areas of Iona south of Maple Drive, west of U.S. 41, San Carlos Park west of U.S. 41, Estero west of U.S. 41, north of the Estero River, Bonita Springs communities along Estero Bay and the Imperial River Basin, all of the barrier islands.
- Manatee – voluntary evacuations for Zone A and mobile homes.
- Martin – mandatory evacuations 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
- Pasco – mandatory evacuations for residents living west of U.S. 19. Also mandatory for residents living north of Fox Hollow Drive west of Little Rd. and south of Fox Hollow Drive west of Regency Park Blvd./Rowan Rd./Seven Springs Blvd. Special needs residents, and those living in manufactured homes, mobile homes, RV’s, and anyone living in a low-lying area or an area prone to flooding are also under mandatory evacuation. Voluntary evacuations for residents living south of Fox Hollow Drive to the south county line between Regency Park Blvd./Rowan Rd./Seven Springs Blvd. and Little Rd.
- Palm Beach – mandatory evacuations for Zone A and B, voluntary for Zone C and Lake Zone E (Canal Point, Belle Glade, and Pahokee)
- Pinellas – mandatory evacuations all mobile home and Zone A
- Sarasota – voluntary evacuations in Zone A (Longboat, Lido, Siesta, Casey Key, Manasota Key, Venice Island), all mobile homes

- St. Lucie – mandatory north and south Hutchinson Island, low-lying areas, manufactured homes
- 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 across the state, 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.
- FEMA is also hosting shelter information on its mobile app which can be found at fema.gov/mobile-app.
- The state is working with the American Red Cross to identify shelter capacity both during and following the storm.

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER/ CONTACT INFORMATION

- The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated at a 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.

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MILITARY SUPPORT

- Governor Scott has activated the entire force of the Florida Army and Air National Guard – 7,000 guard members – 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.
- The Florida National Guard has coordinated with the Illinois National Guard to use aircraft to help move Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) from Cecil Field to Avon Park.
- The Florida National Guard has coordinated with the New Jersey National Guard and approximately 130 soldiers and more than 50 vehicles will 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.
- The Florida National Guard is currently engaged in more than 130 shelter missions across the state.

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, ATVs and shallow draft boats are preparing for evacuation support, search and rescue missions, or any additional needs.
- FWC has over 500 law enforcement vessels standing ready.
- FWC has reached out to partners in 10 other states to make plans in case additional resources are needed in response to Hurricane Irma. Texas Parks and Wildlife will join the response today with 60 officers and 20 boats. Other states that have already volunteered to help include Georgia, Mississippi, Delaware, South Carolina, Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas and Pennsylvania.
- FDLE established 18 emergency response teams for deployment to impacted areas and those teams are starting to deploy to prestaging locations. FDLE regions in impacted areas are operating Regional Law Enforcement Coordination Teams in advance of the storm to assist local law enforcement with any needs. FDLE agents continue to provide fuel escorts in impacted areas. Seven logistics teams have been established to assist with planning before and after the storm. FDLE regions are helping staff local emergency operations centers.
- The entire Florida Highway Patrol, approximately 1,700 troopers, is on 12-hour shifts, with the primary mission to assist emergency preparedness and response.
- FHP continues to conduct emergency missions, including numerous fuel truck escorts to various locations including Ft. Pierce, Wellington, Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville, Port Everglades and Ft. Myers. FHP is also escorting a DOH disaster response communications trailer and coordinating multiple requests from local sheriffs for assistance with evacuation efforts that are beyond their resources.
- In addition to these missions, all 10 FHP troops across Florida have a 33-person Quick Response Force (QRF) team, for a total of 330 troopers, on standby for response where needed. FHP is pre-deploying one team to the Ft. Myers area for quick response after landfall with follow up teams available once the storm track/landfall is determined.
- Additionally, all special equipment such as command posts and high water recovery vehicles have been prepared for quick deployment after landfall 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.
- Though state offices will be closed, DHSMV's Field Support Help Desk, Customer Service Call Center and Technical Assistance Center will be operational with limited staffing on Friday, September 8 to assist customers or tax collectors who need assistance as they prepare for the hurricane.

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS

Governor Scott has directed the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to work with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) to implement a limited Emergency Shoulder Use (ESU) plan for Hurricane Irma evacuations on I-75 at Wildwood to north of U.S. 90 in Columbia County. Motorists should only use the left shoulder when directed by law enforcement. This approach will increase traffic capacity during Hurricane Irma evacuations using existing paved shoulders.

- 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.
- FDOT is coordinating with utility companies to stage and fuel their crews at the department's Weigh Stations in Punta Gorda and Martin County. FDOT's cut and toss crews will also be working with utility crews to clear road debris so power can be restored once it is safe to send crews out.
- The state is monitoring conditions at all airports and seaports. Operations are suspended at the Key West International Airport. Port of Key West is closed and Port Everglades is expected to close at 8 PM this evening.

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

- Governor Rick Scott activated the [Florida Disaster Fund](#) to support individuals who are impacted by Hurricane Irma. The Florida Disaster Fund helps provide financial support to Florida's communities in times of disaster. To make a contribution, please visit www.FloridaDisasterFund.org or text DISASTER to 20222 to make a one-time donation of \$10.
- In anticipation of Hurricane Irma, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation have made a commitment to provide support for relief efforts through cash and product donations of at least \$1 million to organizations helping in response.
- 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.
- More than 17,000 Floridians have signed up to volunteer, exceeding Governor Scott's volunteer goal. Floridians are still encouraged to sign up.
- Volunteer Florida is working with the Red Cross to identify staffing for host shelters in Sarasota, Alachua, Leon Counties.
- Feeding Florida has 3,000 shelf stable meal boxes ready to distribute to staging areas in Miami and Orlando. Feeding Tampa Bay is putting together 1,000 reusable bags each with 20 pounds of food which will create approximately 20,000 meals. Feeding Florida also has baby food/formula kits available to distribute. Shipments from Kellogg's have begun arriving. 250 volunteers have deployed with Feeding Tampa Bay. They have secured 15,000 Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MREs) and three truckloads of water from Feeding America.
- Volunteer Florida Community Emergency Response Team members are working in Pinellas County to set up the EOC, provide Special Needs Evacuations support the Lealman Fire District, and provide evacuation notifications.
- American Red Cross teams are coordinating feeding at 27 shelters throughout the state; 1769 people have received snacks, clean up kits, and meals.
- The Salvation Army now has the capability to provide 100,000 meals a day. All 47 Salvation Army units – from Pensacola to south Florida – are on standby and eager to assist residents in need. For more info, please click [HERE](#).
- Eight of the Florida Baptist Convention kitchens have arrived. They have the ability to feed 90,000 people immediately and have requested food from USDA.
- AmeriCorps members from Volunteer Florida grantee Heart of Florida United Way is staffing the 211 Crisis Hotline in Central Florida
- 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 Florida 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

- 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 state has also requested from FEMA an additional 6.9 million shelf meals for post-landfall.
- 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.
- DCF is working closely with the community-based care lead agencies as they work directly with foster parents in their jurisdictions to make sure they have everything they need to be prepared and stay safe, including for applicable evacuations.
- DCF is also communicating with the Florida State Foster and Adoptive Parent Association to check for any unmet needs, which there are none at this time.
- The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is coordinating with Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) for solicitation of volunteers from the Florida Veterinary Corps and distribution of information to all FVMA members.
- Anheuser-Busch is sending 310,000 cans of drinking water to Sarasota, Ft. Pierce and Orlando.

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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 as 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](#)

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 Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia.
- 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.

Fuel Updates

- Yesterday, 8.4 million gallons of fuel was shipped into Port Everglades and more than 5 million gallons of fuel was shipped into Port Tampa Bay.
- Seaport Canaveral fuel storage terminal is supporting fuel requests from tractor trailers 24 hours per day.
- The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services issued an order allowing for the sale of premium motor fuel at a lower cost.
- All Florida ports are operational and are prioritizing fuel shipments. However, Port Everglades will close tonight at 8 PM. Once it closes for safety tonight, gas will not be resupplied into much of Southern Florida until after the storm.
- Gas stations in the Florida Keys are closed and employees were evacuated. Monroe County has been supplied 10 school buses to help people evacuate safely. A dedicated transportation hotline is available specifically for individuals in the Keys at 305-517-2480.
- Vice President Pence announced yesterday that the federal government has waived additional rules and regulations to allow more fuel to get to Florida fast.
- 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.

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.
- Additionally, Airbnb has expanded free listings for Florida evacuees to the Atlanta metro area. These free listings in Northwest Florida and Atlanta are available until September 28.
- Walt Disney World in Orlando will close on Saturday and remain closed through Monday.

- Universal Orlando will close at 7 p.m. Saturday and will remain closed through Monday.
- SeaWorld in Orlando and Busch Gardens in Tampa will close at 5 p.m. Saturday and remain closed through Monday.

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 17 hospitals and 204 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 is working with providers and partners to determine where available temporary housing that might be available for clients displaced by the storm
- Two large providers in Central Florida have offered APD the use of their vacant group homes if people with developmental disabilities are displaced by the hurricane. So far, 76 group homes have been evacuated in 13 counties.
- Regional Offices are contacting a few final customers in independent/supported living today. All waiver support coordinators and providers were contacted earlier to ensure everyone has an emergency plan for Hurricane Irma.

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.
- Duke Energy Florida is mobilizing approximately 7,000 lineworkers, tree professionals, damage assessment and support personnel to safe locations prepared to respond to outages once Hurricane Irma reaches Florida.
- 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.
- Approximately 24,000 restoration personnel have been activated to help restore power as quickly as possible following the storm's impact.

- The state is coordinating with utilities to identify potential fuel, equipment, lodging or resource needs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Free Xfinity WiFi hotspots are available 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.
- Today, Charter Communications opened all of their Spectrum WiFi hotspots across Florida to help those affected by Hurricane Irma get connected.
- The state continues coordination with telecommunications partners to pre-stage resources and refuel generators for Central Offices, tower sites, mobile response units and any other critical infrastructure.
- Telecommunications Partners are monitoring fuel levels for generators and back-up power supply for cell towers, mobile switching centers and central offices.
- The state is working with city, county and state entities to re-route phone lines, install emergency phone lines and coordinate back-up communications equipment and methods.
- 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 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services suspended restrictions to allow out-of-state gas dealers to assist with fueling generators that support the constant operation of cell phone towers in the event of loss of electricity.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff has completed 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.
- DEP has inspected to ensure the security of all of the 48 state-regulated hazardous waste cleanup sites statewide.
- More than 100 Florida State Parks are currently closed with additional closures expected. A full list of closures can be found at <https://floridastateparks.org/content/storm-information>.

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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 projects 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 pre-storm inspections of the Herbert Hoover Dike have been completed. The lake level is currently at 13.7 feet.
- The South Florida Water Management District continues 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 continue inspecting key parts of the flood control system and ensuring adequate supplies of fuel and equipment for pump stations.
- Pump stations will be staffed and operating around the clock during and after the storm.
- 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.