



Gov. Scott Issues Updates on Tropical Storm Irma Response Efforts as Storm Continues to Impact Florida

On September 11, 2017, in [News Releases](#), by Staff

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – This morning, Governor Rick Scott received a full update from the State Emergency Operations Center as Tropical Storm Irma continues to move through Florida. Governor Scott is joining the U.S. Coast Guard for an aerial tour of Tropical Storm Irma impacts in the Florida Keys today.

Just hours after Governor Rick Scott's request, President Donald Trump yesterday approved a major disaster declaration, which authorizes federal funding to flow directly to Floridians impacted by Tropical Storm Irma and reimburses local communities and the state government to aid in response and recovery. The Governor will continue to be in constant communication with state and local emergency management officials, city and county leaders, and utility officials as Tropical Storm Irma moves out of the state and the full response and recovery process begins.

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS BY STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

WATCHES AND WARNING

- A Storm Surge Warning:
 - South Santee River southward to the Flagler/Volusia County line
 - Cape Sable northward to the Ochlockonee River
 - Tampa Bay
- Tropical Storm Warning:
 - Bonita Beach to the Okaloosa/Walton County Line
 - Jupiter Inlet to the South Santee River
 - Lake Okeechobee
- Click [HERE](#) to see the latest advisory from the National Hurricane Center (NHC).

EVACUATIONS

- Although the storm has passed some areas, everyone should continue to listen to local officials and stay off the roads unless necessary to keep areas cleared for search and rescue missions.
- For evacuation information by county, visit www.FloridaDisaster.org/info.

- The Department of Emergency Management estimates that 6.5 million Floridians have been ordered to evacuate.

SHELTERS

- More than 585 shelters are open throughout Florida with a total population of more than 200,000 individuals. More than 90 special needs shelters are open with a total population of more than 17,000 individuals. This number is being updated throughout the day. Visit floridadisaster.org/shelters/summary.aspx to find information on shelters in your area.
- To find information about available shelter information by county, visit floridadisaster.org/shelters.
- FEMA is also hosting shelter information on its mobile app which can be found at fema.gov/mobile-app.

POWER AND UTILITIES

- The current power outage as of 12 p.m. is more than 6.5 million accounts. For a full breakdown, click [HERE](#).
- More than 30,000 restoration personnel have been activated to help restore power as quickly as possible following the storm's impact.
- At the direction of Governor Scott, Florida Highway Patrol is actively escorting utility convoys to areas in need to help quickly restore power.

DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS

- The Big Bend is still actively receiving impacts from Tropical Storm Irma
- After conditions have improved, individual counties will start their initial damage assessment process.
- The state supports this initial impact assessment process through the State Emergency Response Team by providing personnel and resources towards "First 72 Hour" priorities of law enforcement security, search and rescue, and incident stabilization of Florida's impacted communities.

FEMA

- Residents who sustained losses can begin applying for assistance by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Residents are also encouraged to download the FEMA App to begin the registration process. Simply click on Disaster Resources.
- If you do not have access to the internet, you may register by calling 1-800-621-3362 or 1-800-621-FEMA.
- The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

MILITARY SUPPORT

- Governor Scott activated the entire Florida Army and Air National Guard – 7,935 guard members – to support planning and logistical operations in preparation for impacts from Tropical Storm Irma.
- Throughout the day and across the state, guard members will be actively engaged in missions including search and rescue, law-enforcement support, humanitarian assistance and more. The first priorities after the storm passes will be conducting life-saving search and rescue missions, and security operations in affected communities. The Florida National Guard has 1,000 high water vehicles, 13 helicopters, 17 boats and more than 700 generators to support these efforts.
- The Guard is coordinating a multi-state response focused on planning and preparing thousands of forces. So far, soldiers have arrived from 23 other states to enhance security and support disaster relief.
- The Florida National Guard has coordinated 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 Tropical Storm Irma support, if needed. 10,000 of those troops are in the process of joining Florida Guard members for deployment following the storm.
- The U.S. Military has deployed aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and the two amphibious ships USS Iwo Jima and USS New York, which will support search and rescue operations as needed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- More than 200 FWC officers statewide, including partner agencies, are deployed in areas with resources such as trucks, coastal and river patrol boats, ATVs and shallow draft boats to respond to critical areas based on the storm's path. FWC Special Operations Group (SOG) officers, National Guard members and an Urban Search and Rescue Team began rescue operations in the Keys yesterday evening.
- FWC has more than 500 law enforcement vessels deployed throughout the state. FWC has three teams of 22 officers with 10 boats in route to Jacksonville areas where flooding is reported.
- FWC has sworn in more than 300 officers deployed from Georgia, Mississippi, Delaware, South Carolina, Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Texas.
- The entire Florida Highway Patrol, approximately 1,700 troopers, is on 12-hour shifts, with the primary mission to assist emergency response. In addition, a total of 330 troopers are assisting with recovery and road clearance efforts.
- As ports are actively working to reopen, FHP is staged to escort resupply trucks to gas stations once the roads are safe.
- Florida Incident Management Teams (IMT) have mobilized to provide overall statewide command and control for all Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) and lifesaving operations.
- Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) team members are deployed in multiple locations and identifying requests for search and rescue.

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS

- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has begun damage assessments, bridge inspections and debris clearance in the southern part of the state. FDOT bridge inspectors and maintenance crews have reached Marathon and are pushing down US 1 and into the Keys.
- FDOT continues to coordinate with Google’s emergency response team to “close” damaged roads in Google Maps in real time following damage assessments.
- FDOT’s cut and toss crews are working with utility crews across the state to clear road debris so power can be restored quickly. An FDOT and Florida Power and Light (FPL) convoy is currently in route in Southwest Florida after departing the BB&T Center staging area at sunrise.
- The State Emergency Response Team will prioritize clearing major roadways, addressing the needs of critical shelters and special-needs shelters, and distributing staged life-saving resources.
- FDOT is working on clearing US-1, Interstate 75, Interstate 95, Interstate 4, Florida’s Turnpike and Interstate 10. They will be followed closely by the United States National Guard and utility companies.
- As the FDOT works on the major interstate systems, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are clearing roads around shelters that are in critical condition or are special-needs shelters.
- FDOT is coordinating with other states to deploy additional resources to Florida. A number of other states have offered assistance. Maryland, Missouri and Delaware are currently deploying crews to Florida. FDOT continues to coordinate with other states.
- Around the state, FDOT has 13 traffic management centers where hundreds of DOT workers are monitoring traffic cameras 24/7. Real-time traffic information and evacuation routes are available at www.FL511.com
- Governor Scott directed the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to suspend tolls across the entire State of Florida in preparation for Tropical Storm Irma. Tolls will remain suspended for the duration of the storm’s impacts to Florida.
- FDOT is coordinating with county emergency operations centers directly to coordinate any necessary response actions, including damage assessments and road and bridge closures.
- Sustained winds over 40 miles per hour prompted the Florida Highway Patrol to close bridges. The state Emergency Operations Center is receiving regular wind status updates from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and continues to closely monitor the wind speeds across bridges.
- The following major airports are closed:

Airport Name	Status
Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport	Emergency Operations Only
Downtown Fort Lauderdale Heliport	Closed
Everglades Airpark	Closed
Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport	Closed

Immokalee Regional Airport	Closed
Key West International Airport	Closed
Marco Island Airport	Closed
Miami Executive Airport	Emergency Operations Only
Miami Homestead General Aviation Airport	Emergency Operations Only
Miami Seaplane Base	Closed
Naples Municipal Airport	Emergency Operations Only
North Perry Airport	Closed
Opa-Locka Executive Airport	Emergency Operations Only
Palm Beach International Airport	Commercial Service Terminated
Punta Gorda Airport	Closed
Southwest Florida International Airport	Commercial Service Terminated
St Pete-Clearwater International Airport	Closed
Tallahassee Commercial Airport	Closed
The Florida Keys Maraton International Airport	Closed
Vero Beach Municipal Airport	Commercial Service Terminated Emergency Operations Only

- Port Updates:
- Key West: Port closed
- Miami: Port closed
- Port Everglades: Port closed (*FDOT has cleared road access to Port Everglades. Once Port reopens, FHP will begin escorting fuel trucks to resupply gas stations.*)
- Palm Beach: Port Closed
- Manatee: Port closed
- Petersburg: Port closed
- Canaveral: Port closed, two oil tankers waiting offshore to discharge oil once USCG reopens port
- Jacksonville: Port closed
- Fernandina: Port closed
- Tampa: Port closed (*FDOT has cleared road access to Port Tampa. Once Port reopens, FHP will begin escorting fuel trucks to resupply gas stations.*)
- Panama City: Port closed
- Pensacola: Open with restrictions

FUEL SUPPLY

- The state is working to identify potential routes for delivering fuel to first responders and to retail stations as soon as ports reopen.
- At the direction of Governor Scott, Florida Highway Patrol will resume escorting fuel delivery trucks as quickly as possible so they can quickly deliver fuel to gas stations.
- Governor Scott waived Florida's motor fuel import tax for five days to help bring more fuel to Florida for storm response and recovery. To see the order, click [HERE](#).
- 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, Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, and Administrator of the Small Business Administration Linda McMahon regarding 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. For more information, please click [HERE](#)
- The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services issued an order allowing for the sale of premium motor fuel at a lower cost.
- Vice President Pence announced 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.

FOOD AND WATER

- The state is working to ensure adequate food resources are available for Florida residents impacted by Tropical Storm Irma, prioritizing activity by areas where landfall first occurred and based upon urgency of need. Specific activities include the following:
 - Working with retail partners to obtain food resources for shelters in the most critical areas with the most critical needs.
 - Obtaining approval from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service to release The Emergency Assistance Food Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Service (CSFP) foods, which can be used by all counties as authorized by the Presidential Disaster Declaration.
 - Ensuring ice is available for shelters, canteens, kitchens and military support operations.

- Drawing down USDA Foods from the state inventory and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture inventory for meal preparation.
- Staging infant and toddler supplies that have been received in Pensacola for distribution for missions.

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

- Governor Rick Scott activated the [Florida Disaster Fund](#) to support individuals who are impacted by Tropical Storm 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.
- Florida needs 1,000 volunteer nurses to help at our special needs shelters. Nurses who can volunteer can email BPRCHDPreparedness@FLHealth.gov. Nurses can also email HelpFL@FLhealth.gov.
- Volunteer Florida is coordinating with volunteer organizations across the state and encouraging individuals to volunteer to help those in need. More than 30,000 volunteers have signed up to help Florida. To volunteer, go to volunteerflorida.org/irma or call 1-800-FL-Help-1.
- Volunteer Florida's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Collier County is ready with disaster kits and radios in preparation for rescue and recovery efforts once Tropical Storm Irma passes. For crisis support, call 2-1-1. If your call is dropped, text IRMA to 898211 to connect with an operator.
- The state is coordinating with Volunteer Florida and organizations across the state to monitor shelter status and prioritize delivery of life-sustaining commodities once weather permits.
- The American Red Cross has deployed more than 700 volunteers and has more than 100 tractor trailers with supplies for 55,000 people by the end of Saturday. Teams are coordinating staffing and feeding needs at shelters across the state. 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](#). Feeding Florida has received 36 truckloads of food and has 3,000 shelf stable meal boxes ready to distribute where needed when weather permits. Multiple organizations across Florida are also standing by with food, water and resources.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL

- Residents should be sure to follow the direction of local officials regarding boil water notices. County emergency management contacts, websites and citizen information lines can be found at <http://www.floridadisaster.org/info>.
- DOH is continuing to support special-needs shelters with personnel, supplies and equipment. They are also facilitating patient transport between facilities to ensure continuation of patient care.
- The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is coordinating with hospitals and healthcare facilities across Florida on evacuation needs. DOH has coordinated the evacuation of 30

hospitals, more than 60 nursing homes, and more than 330 non-hospital health care facilities thus far.

- DOH is conducting healthcare facility assessments in areas of impact and supporting restoration of medical services at hospitals and other healthcare facilities.
- The state is deploying personnel, such as Special Needs Sheltering Teams, to provide assistance to counties affected by the storm.
- 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.
- 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.

STATE OFFICE CLOSURES

- State offices in all 67 counties are closed today. Until further notice, state office closures will continue to follow the direction of county officials. As of now, offices in Alachua, Bradford, Collier, Lee, Leon and Miami Dade will be closed on Tuesday.
- 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 Tropical Storm 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 directed all public K-12 schools, state colleges, state universities to close Friday, September 8 – Monday, September 11.
- School districts, state colleges and universities continue to coordinate with the Florida Department of Education and many have issued extended closure notices. School closures are available at www.fldoe.org/irma.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- DEP has issued an emergency order to ensure recovery efforts are not hampered or delayed. DEP has expanded that order for power plants to cover the entire state to assist any facility recovering from the storm and a new order to waive certain rules for fuel facilities impacted by the storm statewide. Both orders apply only to impacted facilities and have provisions to guard the environment while assisting in quick recovery of critical infrastructure.
- DEP has established a mutual aid system to coordinate responses between utilities, the department, and other responders. This system is active and continues to coordinate and respond to the needs of drinking and waste water facilities throughout Florida.

- DEP is standing up Beach Response Teams and participating with assistance of USACE in efforts to expedite recovery of Florida beaches.
- DEP along with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, Division of Emergency Management, Florida Fish and Wildlife, and FEMA are participating in a state-wide debris removal workgroup, to expedite recovery efforts post landfall.
- DEP is evaluating State Parks for re-opening status. A full list of closures can be found at <https://floridastateparks.org/content/storm-information>
- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is deploying to mobilize Hazardous Assessment and Response Team (HART) with the EPA.

LAKE OKEECHOBEE

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to closely monitor the lake level, which is currently at 14.29 feet.
- Initial assessments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is that lake infrastructure is safe and they will continue to monitor.
- The mandatory evacuation orders for Glades and Hendry Counties have been lifted.

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. 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.
- Charter Communications opened all of their Spectrum WiFi hotspots across Florida to help those affected by Tropical Storm Irma get connected.
- 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 and is assessing outages.

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, & ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

- The Florida Virtual Business Emergency Operations Center business damage assessment surveying tool has been activated for businesses to report damages resulting from Tropical Storm Irma. Businesses are encouraged to visit <http://flvbeoc.org/index.php>. Click on Tropical Storm Irma.
- A private sector hotline is available at (850) 410-1403 to respond to calls from businesses and private sector support organizations.
- The Department of Economic Opportunity is readying the Disaster Unemployment Assistance Program to provide temporary income support to eligible individuals in counties approved for FEMA Individual Assistance.

- The state is working to identify the “open/close” status of businesses. This information is being posted to the SERT Tropical Storm Irma web page: <http://www.floridadisaster.org/info/>.
- The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association members are working directly with local Salvation Army Staff to provide meals for shelter evacuees.
- The Florida Retail Federation is assisting in coordinating information to Florida Retailers regarding restocking of emergency supplies, readying mobile pharmacies, and the transportation of fuel.
- The Florida Small Business Development Center Network is working with federal officials to identify additional staffing and financial resources to support business response activities.
- The Florida Chamber of Commerce is coordinating with their members and local chambers to determine post-storm recovery needs and identifying resources available to be sent to the affected areas.

INSURANCE

- In the wake of Tropical Storm Irma, Floridians affected by the storm must now begin the process of surveying damages to their property and belongings. If you need help finding your Florida’s property insurance company’s website and contact information, click [HERE](#). For a list of licensed insurance agents in Florida, click [HERE](#).
- 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.
- It is important to document all damaged property and belongings. A free smartphone app developed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners called “[MyHome Scr.APP.book](#)” is available to assist with photo documentation.
- 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.

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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.
- Airbnb today activated its Disaster Response Program to connect Floridians forced to evacuate from their homes due to Tropical Storm 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.

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 visitors 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 Tropical Storm 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.