

From the office of

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COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 7, 2017

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## GOV. SCOTT ISSUES UPDATES ON CONTINUED HURRICANE NATE PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS

**NAPLES, Fla.** –Today, Governor Rick Scott received a full update on Hurricane Nate from the State Emergency Operations Center. Evacuation orders have been issued in Escambia and Santa Rosa county (more information below). 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 Nate. Thursday, Governor Scott declared a state of emergency in 29 counties within the State of Florida in response to Hurricane Nate.

Governor Scott said, "With Nate now reaching hurricane strength, it is absolutely critical that every family in Northwest Florida is fully prepared for potential impacts. Evacuation orders have been issued in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties and shelters are available. It is incredibly important for everyone to listen to their local officials and follow these orders. This is a fast moving storm and this is not the time to be complacent- do not risk your life or the life of your loved ones. Hurricane Nate is expected to bring life-threatening storm surges, strong winds and tornados that could reach across the Panhandle. Even if your home is not in the direct path of this hurricane, everyone in the Panhandle should be ready to follow your emergency plan and stay vigilant to weather alerts and updates from local officials. We will continue to monitor the path of Hurricane Nate and do everything we can to make sure our state is fully prepared to keep families safe."

See below for more information on what the State of Florida is doing to support Hurricane Nate preparedness efforts:

### **EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS BY STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM WATCHES AND WARNINGS**

- Hurricane Watch is in effect for:
  - East of the Alabama/Florida border to the Okaloosa/Walton County Line
- Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for:
  - East of the Alabama/Florida border to Indian Pass Florida
- Storm Surge Watch is in effect for:
  - East of the Okaloosa/Walton County border to Indian Pass Florida
- Storm Surge Warning in effect for:
  - East of the Alabama/Florida border to Okaloosa/Walton County border

### **EVACUATIONS**

- Escambia County has ordered evacuations for Zones A and B in preparation for potentially dangerous storm surge.
- Santa Rosa County has recommended evacuations for Zone A in preparation for potentially dangerous storm surge. This affects all mobile homes, campgrounds, RV parks, and those living in low-lying areas.

- Click [HERE](#) to find your evacuation zone.
- These evacuations affect roughly 100,000 people.

#### **SHELTERS**

- Ten shelters have opened in the Florida Panhandle – in Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. Updated shelter information can be found [here](#).
- The American Red Cross is positioning movements and activities for staff, equipment and Emergency Response Vehicles to support local communities in the North Florida area, if needed.
- The state is working to inventory food and water resources in state contracted warehouses (SCWs) and is preparing to coordinate with the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army on potential feeding needs. Salvation Army has 32 canteens and two field kitchens on standby in Florida.

#### **MILITARY SUPPORT**

- Right now, approximately 120 National guard members are actively preparing for disaster operations and support of local Emergency Operations Centers.
- The Florida National Guard has 7,000 guard members available for deployment if needed.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) continues to monitor traffic and is coordinating with FDOT and local emergency operations centers regarding any potential evacuations.
- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is monitoring the storm and ready to respond as needed with a variety of specialized equipment, including shallow draft bots, ATVs, airboats and four wheel drive vehicles.

#### **TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS**

- Ports update:
  - Pensacola: Port Closed
  - Panama City: Port Closed
- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is monitoring the storm and holding teleconferences with theregional FDOT district offices to ensure local communities are prepared.
- FDOT has suspended interstate and highway construction in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties until Monday, Oct. 9 to allow for the possible increase in traffic as motorists evacuate from the Florida Panhandle coastline area.
- FDOT will assist first responders with traffic control, detours or road closures, as long as weather permits.
- For the latest closures and updates, travelers can access Florida's 511 service from cell phones, landlines and online at [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com).
- FDOT district offices are placing emergency crews on standby and reaching out to construction vendors to have them remove any materials that block roads to facilitate potential evacuations and checking on fuel supplies. FDOT is also actively monitoring for roadway flooding in areas already impacted by Hurricane Irma and stands ready to respond as needed.
- FDOT asset maintenance contractors have been contacted to support potential activities.
- FDOT will continue to reach out to 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. Traffic counters are activated from the Florida Alabama line to Tallahassee.

#### **POWER AND UTILITIES**

- Utilities have initiated mutual aid personnel to assist in potential recovery efforts with more than 900 restoration personnel ready to assist.
- The state has contacted utilities to put them on notice to start reporting outage and restoration information if needed.
- The state is monitoring the power grid for sufficient power in the state.
- The state is monitoring the natural gas infrastructure for any damages that can cause a loss of service to power plants.

#### **FUEL**

- The state is contacting fuel industry partners, such as the Florida Petroleum Council, Florida Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, to prepare for potential storm impacts.

- The state is currently monitoring for fuel assistance requests. At this time, there are no reported supply, distribution or retail fuel shortages or issues.
- The state has also contacted emergency fuel and equipment provider for status of emergency fuel supply and equipment.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL**

- The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) will join Governor Scott on tropical storm preparedness calls with Florida hospitals, assisted living facilities and nursing homes later today.
- DOH is standing by to assist with potential needs of healthcare facilities and special needs shelters.
- DOH AND AHCA have requested hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities (ALFs) in regions 1 and 2 to report their facility status daily at 10AM and upon any status change through the FLHealthSTAT database.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) is working with Health and Medical Services to identify all nursing homes and ALFs that could be affected by possible electric outages.
- APD region office service the west coast and Panhandle counties of Florida are reaching out to waiver support coordinators, individuals in independent living, and providers to ensure they are prepared.

#### **EDUCATION**

- The University of West Florida will be closed from Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> through Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS**

- Water Management Districts are monitoring waterways and water levels, preparing staff and vehicles, and are prepared to adjust flows as necessary.
- Lake Okeechobee is currently at 17.00 feet and is being continuously monitored by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which manages Lake Okeechobee water levels. The Army Corps will continue releases from Lake Okeechobee until further notice.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

- FWC is removing derelict vessels from state waters.

#### **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY**

- VISIT FLORIDA and Expedia will keep the [www.expedia.com/florida](http://www.expedia.com/florida) site activated to provide available lodging information to evacuees and visitors.
- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) are working to provide updates to private sector partners. Information is available at [www.flvbeoc.org](http://www.flvbeoc.org).
- The state has activated the Private Sector Hotline at 850-410-1403, which is available for business inquiries about storm preparedness and response.

#### **VOLUNTEER EFFORTS**

- Volunteer Florida is hosting teleconferences with the Florida Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and emergency management partners to ensure local communities are prepared for the storm.
- Florida Southern Baptists have two mobile kitchens on standby and are researching other state partners for additional resources. Twelve staging sites have been identified in three counties in the Panhandle.
- Feeding Florida is relocating assets and has food staged at Escambia and Big Bend of Tallahassee, including meals ready to eat, meal boxes, and snacks.

#### **CONTACTS**

- The State Assistance Information Line (SAIL) contact number is 1-800-342-3557.
- The State Emergency Operations Center Media Line: 850-921-0217.
- Follow @FLSERT or @FLGovScott on Twitter for live updates on Hurricane Nate.
- Visit <http://www.floridadisaster.org> to find information on shelters, road closures, and evacuation routes.

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