



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOV. SCOTT: CAT 4 MATTHEW APPROACHING FLORIDA; STAY ALERT TO POSSIBLE LIFE-SAVING EVACUATIONS

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – Governor Rick Scott today visited the City of Marathon and Volusia County to meet with emergency management officials as the state prepares for Hurricane Matthew, a life-threatening category four storm. Governor Scott will also be in Nassau County today visiting with emergency management officials. Florida is now under both tropical storm and hurricane watches. The tropical storm watch extends from the Seven Mile Bridge in the Florida Keys to Deerfield Beach in Palm Beach County and includes Lake Okeechobee. The hurricane watch extends from Deerfield Beach to the Brevard-Volusia county line.

Governor Scott said, "Hurricane Matthew is a deadly storm and has already killed multiple people. Our number one priority is to protect life and we will continue to communicate with all 67 Florida counties to ensure critical needs are met. At this time, we cannot focus on the exact track of this storm. We know that it will be very close to our state and any small deviation from its track could mean a catastrophic change along Florida's east coast. That is why everyone in our state must prepare today for a direct hit.

"As Matthew continues to approach Florida, evacuations may be ordered today. If you are on Florida's east coast, you should know today where you will go if you have to evacuate. If you are able to leave early and go now, before there is traffic, please go. No one should take any risks. Many coastal counties are also preparing to open shelters within the next 24 hours if needed and contacting special needs populations. Again, if an evacuation is ordered for your area, leave immediately. First responders cannot rescue you once the storm hits.

"The Florida Department of Transportation is making sure roads are clear for possible evacuations. The Florida Highway Patrol has made contact with local troops in preparation for supporting evacuations in the major corridors so people can be moved to safety. The state has been in contact with fuel industry partners and at this time, there are no reported supply, distribution or retail fuel shortages.

“This morning, our National Guard has activated 200 members. We also have more than 6,000 guardsmen ready to be deployed if needed. I have been in contact with the utilities across the state and many utilities have reported that they have already begun to preposition resources so they can respond quickly to power outages.

“Again, everyone in our state must take this seriously now. We want to protect all life and it is critical that all residents and visitors take appropriate life saving measures now.”

The National Hurricane Center reports that Hurricane Matthew is a major category four hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 145 miles per hour. Today, the NHC issued both tropical storm and hurricane watches for parts of the state. The tropical storm watch extends from the Seven Mile Bridge in the Florida Keys to Deerfield Beach in Palm Beach County and includes Lake Okeechobee. The hurricane watch extends from Deerfield Beach to the Brevard-Volusia county line. Although the NHC official forecast continues to show a track slightly east of Florida, Governor Rick Scott and the Florida Division of Emergency Management continue to actively monitor Hurricane Matthew and urge everyone in Florida to remain vigilant and take all necessary precautions as it moves through the Caribbean. Based on the current forecast, the state’s entire east coast from Monroe to Nassau counties could experience tropical storm or hurricane force winds, beach erosion, rip currents and heavy rain. This is a slow moving storm and could impact Florida as early as Wednesday and last through the weekend. Yesterday, Governor Scott signed an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency in every Florida county to ensure resources for evacuations, sheltering and other logistical needs across our state are readily available.

State Coordinating Officer Bryan Koon said, “With each new forecast, Hurricane Matthew is predicted to move closer and closer to our state. Residents should know their zone and prepare now for a serious and catastrophic storm to impact Florida. As always, we stand ready to respond to any potential impacts this storm may have on Florida communities and continue to encourage residents to visit Floridadisaster.org to create an emergency plan.”

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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