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**Contact:** Governor's Press Office, (850) 717-9282, [Communications@eog.myflorida.com](mailto:Communications@eog.myflorida.com)

## **Governor Ron DeSantis Issues Updates on State Preparedness for Hurricane Ian**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** — This morning, Governor Ron DeSantis issued updates on Hurricane Ian at the State Emergency Operations Center and the Sarasota County Emergency Operations Center with Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie.

Ian became a Category 3 hurricane early this morning and continues to rapidly intensify as it emerges over the southeastern Gulf of Mexico later this morning. Hurricane Ian will pass west of the Florida Keys later today, and approach the West Coast of Florida on Wednesday.

Mandatory Evacuation Orders have been issued for select areas, including coastal communities, mobile homes and low-lying areas in several counties.

To see if you are under an evacuation order, visit <https://www.floridadisaster.org/evacuation-orders/> and follow local officials for updates. As of 11 a.m., evacuation orders have been issued in the following counties:

- Charlotte
- Hillsborough
- Levy
- Lee

- Manatee
- Pasco
- Pinellas
- Sarasota

Current Watches and Warnings in Effect:

- **Hurricane Warnings:** Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee, DeSoto, Charlotte, Lee
- **Tropical Storm Warnings:** coastal Nassau, Duval, Clay, Putnam, St. Johns, Flagler, Levy, Alachua, Volusia, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Sumter, Lake, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Brevard, Okeechobee, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Highlands, Glades, Hendry, Collier, Mainland Monroe, Palm Beach, Lower & Middle Keys
- **Hurricane Watches:** Levy, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Sumter, Lake, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Okeechobee, Highlands, Glades, Hendry, Collier
- **Tropical Storm Watches:** coastal Franklin, coastal Wakulla, coastal Jefferson, coastal Taylor, Dixie, Gilchrist, Alachua, Union, Bradford, Baker, inland Nassau, Broward, Miami-Dade, Upper Keys
- **Storm Surge Warnings:** Suwannee River to Flamingo, including Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor; Dry Tortugas; Marineland to the Mouth of the St. Marys River; the St. Johns River
- **Storm Surge Watches:** Florida Keys; Aucilla River to Suwannee River; Marineland to Volusia/Flagler Line
- Anclote River to Bonita Beach, including Tampa Bay... **5-10 ft**
- Suwannee River to Anclote River... **5-8 ft**
- Bonita Beach to Chokoloskee... **4-7 ft**
- Chokoloskee to East Cape Sable, FL... **3-5 ft**
- Flagler/Volusia County Line to Altamaha Sound, including the St. Johns River... **2-4 ft**
- East Cape Sable to Card Sound Bridge, including Florida Bay... **2-4 ft**
- Aucilla River to Suwannee River... **2-4 ft**
- Florida Keys including the Dry Tortugas... **2-4 ft**

- Indian Pass to Aucilla River... **1-3 ft**

State preparation and response efforts include:

**Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM)**

- FDEM has activated the State Assistance Information Line (SAIL) to provide an additional resource for Floridians to receive up-to-date information regarding Hurricane Ian. Residents and visitors can call this toll-free hotline at **1-800-342-3557**.
- At the direction of FDEM Director and State Coordinating Officer Kevin Guthrie, an Incident Management Team (IMT) from Ohio is en route to Florida to ensure additional support for response and recovery efforts after the storm.
- FDEM is deploying several hundred shelter support staff to address staffing needs in counties that have opened their Special Needs hurricane shelters.
- FDEM is leading the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) for the Hurricane Ian response, with more than 350 SERT members staffing the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- The Division has received more than 550 resource requests for Hurricane Ian and fulfilled 495. Requests are currently being processed and are either en route or being mobilized. This includes the coordination of resources such as: trucks of food and water, generators and water pumps.
  - 160 truckloads (85 loads of water and 75 loads of MREs) are ready to deploy, with some of this supply already en route to Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.
  - Several hundred generators and pumps, in addition to debris equipment, have been staged for response and recovery efforts.
- Five Florida Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams are activated, and will be prepared to deploy to impacted areas. An additional three federal USAR Teams are standing by to assist.

- Over 27,000 power restoration personnel are on standby to assist impacted areas after the storm.
- FDEM has begun setting up a Logistical Staging Area in Polk County and is identifying potential additional staging areas and points of distribution to ensure food and water are readily available if counties request it.
- FDEM has loaded 360 trailers with over 2 million meals and over one million gallons of water in preparation for distribution to impacted areas.
- FDEM is in constant communication with all 67 county emergency management offices and state agencies to coordinate protective actions and needed resources ahead of potential storm impacts.
- FDEM is coordinating with utilities to ensure crews are prepared to respond and restore power. Utility providers have more than 25,000 linemen staged and prepared for power restoration efforts.

### **Florida National Guard**

- Following Governor DeSantis' authorization, a total of 5,000 Florida Guardsmen are being activated to State Active Duty and pre-positioned at armories across the state for Tropical Storm Ian response operations. 2,000 Guardsmen from Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina are also being activated to assist.
- In addition, the Florida Guard has mobilized and is on standby with five Route Clearance Teams and Aviation assets.
- The Florida National Guard is well-equipped, with assets including high-wheeled vehicles, helicopters, boats, generators and more.

### **Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)**

- FDLE's mutual aid team is coordinating evacuation missions in Cedar Key and security for ambulance response teams who are staging prior to Hurricane Ian.

## Florida Department of Health (DOH)

- Over 300 ambulances, paratransit busses, and support vehicles are deployed to areas of anticipated landfall, with an additional 60 EMS vehicles standing ready awaiting landfall.
- The Department is evacuating five (5) hospitals in the Tampa Bay area. The Department continues to assess and support any additional necessary evacuations.
- The Department is working with the Agency for Health Care Administration to support the evacuation of 25 health care facilities.
  - DOH has prepared for Special Needs Shelter operations to begin in areas of anticipated landfall. A [press release](#) has been sent with additional information on special needs shelters.
  - The State Surgeon General has signed a letter to allow staff of the Department and Agency for Health Care Administration to travel past any potentially issued curfews across state lines to conduct any necessary health and safety actions.
  - DOH continues to coordinate across 67 county health departments on any necessary preparation resources, in coordination with county emergency managers.
  - DOH has coordinated with the Office of Insurance Regulation to distribute an alert regarding permitted early prescription refills during a State of Emergency. This alert was sent to health insurers, managed care organizations, health entities, and licensed health care providers. The alert can be found [here](#).
  - DOH is supporting Special Needs Shelter operations in areas of anticipated landfall.
  - DOH has coordinated with Federal partners to support the deployment of nearly 100 individuals through various health and medical teams. These teams stand ready in Orlando, Atlanta, and Warner Robbins Air Force Base in Georgia.

## Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)

- The Agency sent a Medicaid Provider Alert outlining Key Medicaid Information for Fee-For-Service and Managed Care Providers during Hurricane Ian, this can be found [here](#).
  - AHCA has activated the Emergency Patient Look-Up System (E-PLUS). Special Needs Shelters for 16 counties are able to utilize the system to retrieve patient medical records. E-PLUS is also available to assist medical providers and emergency response personnel with locating missing or displaced persons after the storm.
  - AHCA is requiring health providers to update the Health Facility Reporting System by 10 AM daily to ensure each facility is taking the appropriate precautions to ensure patient safety.
  - AHCA has completed 124 onsite visits in Nursing Homes and ALFs that were previously identified as out of compliance with generator requirements. **As of today, 100% of operating long-term care facilities have a generator on-site. The Generator Status Map for long-term care facilities is available [here](#).**
  - AHCA has reminded all Medicaid Managed Care Plans of the requirement to allow 30-day emergency prescription refills of maintenance medication.

## Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)

- In APD's Suncoast Region, more than 20 group homes are in mandatory Evacuation Zones have enacted their Emergency Preparedness plans and are evacuating.

## Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)

- Early Learning Coalitions have closed in the following counties: Hardee, DeSoto, Highlands, Charlotte, Hillsborough, Lee, Collier, Hendry, Glades, Manatee, Pasco, Hernando, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota.
  - DCF submitted a request for a federal waiver to allow for the early release of SNAP benefits in preparation for Hurricane Ian.
  - DCF has been working with contracted partners, including, Managing Entities, Community Based Care lead agencies, and child care providers to ensure Florida's communities remain apprised of all storm updates and are making preparations for potential impacts.
  - DCF is also ensuring all Mental Health Treatment Facilities and methadone treatment programs are prepared for the storm.

#### **Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA)**

- DOEA's CARES Assessors are preparing to staff special needs shelters.
- DOEA continues preparation coordination calls with the 11 Area Agencies on Aging and other field staff.

#### **Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)**

- Veterans enrolled in VA Health Care in need of routine or urgent care services in the projected path of the storm can contact VA Health Connect, also known as the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center, at 1-877-741-3400.
- The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System will close the following locations for in person and procedure appointments:
  - C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center: Monday, September 26 through Thursday, Sept. 29. This closure extends to the Emergency Department.

- North Pinellas and St. Petersburg VA Clinics: Wednesday, Sept. 28 and Thursday, September 29.
- Sarasota, Bradenton, and Port Charlotte VA Clinics: Wednesday, September 28.

### **Florida Department of Education (DOE)**

- The Florida Department of Education is consistently updating their [website](#) with county school closures, as well as State University System and Florida College System Closures.
- As of 11 a.m. there are closures in 53 school districts, 19 Florida College System institutions and 9 State Universities. For a full list of closures, visit [fldoe.org/storminfo](http://fldoe.org/storminfo).

### **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**

- Toll suspensions went into effect at 12:00 PM EST September 26 for the following facilities:
  1. Garcon Point Bridge in Santa Rosa County
  2. Spence Parkway and Mid-Bay Bridge in Okaloosa County
  3. Polk Parkway in Polk County
  4. Suncoast Parkway in Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus County
  5. Veterans Expressway, the I-4 Connector, and the Selmon Expressway in Hillsborough County
  6. Pinellas Bayway and Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Pinellas County
  7. Alligator Alley in Collier and Broward Counties
- Updated toll suspension information can be found at [fdot.gov/lanTollSuspension](http://fdot.gov/lanTollSuspension)
- FDOT road and bridge contractors have suspended operations and secured equipment at active construction projects within the projected path of Hurricane Ian. These projects are performing activities such as



lowering crane booms and high mast lighting, securing barges, clearing traffic control devices that are not actively being used to direct traffic, and checking drainage systems.

- For bridges in the potential impact area, once wind speeds increase beyond 40 mph, and once FHP deems it necessary, law enforcement will stop traffic from crossing bridges to ensure safety of motorists.
  
- FDOT is staging resources nearby to perform road and bridge inspections after the storm.
- FDOT is staging resources to perform cut-and-toss operations to expedite roadway openings after the storm.
- FDOT is working with utility providers to coordinate post-storm debris operations.
  
- Roving FDOT Road Rangers have been deployed to assist motorists along critical roadways to assist in quickly clearing travel lanes of minor incidents and assisting motorists with minor vehicle-related items (flat tires, jump-starts, etc.) to help keep evacuation routes flowing.
  
- The SunRail corridor in Central Florida is being secured to prepare for the storm. SunRail services is closed effective 8:30am on Tuesday, September 27. Updates to service can be checked on the SunRail website or social media at <http://www.SunRail.com>.
  
- Florida's 511 Traveler Information System is available for drivers to stay informed about roadway conditions during emergencies to use 511, visit [FL511.com](http://FL511.com) or download the app—on both Apple and Android devices.
  
- **Ports:**
  - All ports currently have adequate fuel supplies and are staging appropriate measures to be well-positioned after the storm in order to quickly reinstate operations and keep fuel supplies moving.

- Ports are currently closed: Port Tampa Bay, St. Pete, Seaport Manatee, and Port of Key West
- Ports are open *with* restrictions (closed for inbound vessel traffic): Port of Ft. Pierce and Port of Palm Beach
- Ports are open while preparing for storm impacts: Port Everglades, PortMiami, Port Fernandina, JAXPORT, Port Canaveral, Port of Pensacola (with restrictions), Port Panama City, and Port St. Joe
- **Airports:**
- Current status of airports is listed below. While some facilities have scheduled closures, individual airlines may decide to cease flights earlier than that.
  - Tampa International Airport will suspend operations at 5pm Tues Sept 27
  - St.Pete/Clearwater International Airport will close at 2pm Tues Sept 27
  - Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport- Currently open and continuing storm preparations
  - Tallahassee International Airport- Currently open and continuing storm preparations
  - Pensacola International Airport- Currently open and continuing storm preparations
  - Punta Gorda Airport- Currently open and continuing storm preparations

### **Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV)**

- FHP is activating 12-hour Alpha, Bravo shifts, canceling days off, for approximately 340 Troopers in Troop C (Tampa) and Troop F (Sarasota), and Troop B (Gainesville) in response to Hurricane Ian.

- FHP has placed 330 Quick Reactionary Force troopers on standby, ready to move into affected areas quickly to provide immediate relief.
- All 1,766 sworn FHP members are ready to assist with enhanced evacuation efforts.
- FHP has strategically staged its fixed-wing aircraft to monitor traffic routes and to aid search and rescue and damage assessment efforts.
- FHP has placed its unmanned aerial vehicle teams on standby to assist in search and rescue and damage assessment efforts.
- FHP Regional Communications Centers are preparing to perform take-over services for other impacted FHP dispatch centers to ensure all state law enforcement officers continue to receive dispatch services.
- FHP is providing liaisons to affected county emergency operations centers.
- FHP encourages evacuating motorists to report disabled vehicles or dangerous driving conditions to \*FHP (\*347).
- FLHSMV driver license and motor vehicle service center closures can be found [here](#).
- FHP is prepared to implement 12-hour Alpha, Bravo shifts in response to Hurricane Ian.
- FLHSMV has issued Emergency Order [092422](#), which:
  - Waives specific requirements for commercial motor vehicles providing emergency relief; and
  - Waives the replacement fees for driver's license and identification credentials, vehicle registrations and titles, vessel registrations and titles and temporary parking permits for impacted individuals.

## **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)**

- On September 23, at Governor DeSantis' direction, FWC readied high-water vehicles and all other storm response resources so they may be rapidly deployed to assist Floridians in need in the event of any damage or flooding.
- FWC officers in all 67 Florida counties have been placed on heightened alert status, in anticipation of heavy rains and flooding because of Hurricane Ian. High-water vehicles and shallow draft vessels in all Florida counties have been readied for immediate deployment to affected areas. Contingency plans based on forecasted landfall locations have been developed and are flexible based on the storm's projected path.
- Officers will respond with a variety of specialized equipment, including shallow draft boats, larger platform vessels, ATVs, airboats, and four-wheel drive vehicles. These assets do not include local FWC officers in potentially affected areas.
- FWC Special Operations Group (SOG) teams will serve as reconnaissance units for the State EOC and report back on damage after the storm has made landfall.
- FWC Aviation Section has been placed on standby and has readied all appropriate aircraft for potential deployment for EOC aerial assistance, reconnaissance, and post-storm damage assessments when needed.

### **Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)**

- DEO has activated the private sector hotline at 850-815-4925 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Inquiries may also be emailed to [ESF18@em.myflorida.com](mailto:ESF18@em.myflorida.com).
- Partners including Walmart and Publix have indicated that they are constantly bringing additional supplies into the state to restock inventory.

- DEO is updating [www.FloridaDisaster.biz](http://www.FloridaDisaster.biz) with real-time information for business owners to prepare their businesses, families, and employees for Hurricane Ian.
- Private-sector partner, Uber, is offering round-trip rides to and from Southwest Florida shelter locations in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, and Pasco counties listed at [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org). Riders can enter promotional code IANRELIEF in the app to redeem a free round-trip up to \$30 each way. Rides must be requested to or from any state-approved evacuation shelter in Florida.
- DEO is working with business, industry, and economic development partners to distribute informative flyers about disaster preparation, response, and recovery.
- DEO has alerted the statewide Community Action Agency (CAA) Network to initiate disaster preparedness activities following the Emergency Order.
- Career centers in the following counties may experience temporary closures following county closure announcements:
  - Hernando
  - Hillsborough
  - Lee
  - Manatee
  - Monroe
  - Sarasota
  - Pasco
  - Hernando
  - Pinellas
  - Baker
  - Clay
  - Duval
  - Nassau
  - Putnam

**VISIT FLORIDA**

- VISIT FLORIDA has activated its [Emergency Accommodations Module](#) on Expedia to provide real-time hotel availability and lodging resources for impacted Floridians and visitors.

### **Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing)**

- Florida Housing has ensured that all current listings are up to date in the event that families need to quickly relocate at [www.FloridaHousingSearch.org](http://www.FloridaHousingSearch.org).
- Each SHIP office has an adopted disaster strategy that allows for assistance in the immediate aftermath of a declared disaster. Strategies may include temporary relocation and rental assistance, debris removal and short-term repairs to prevent further damage to the structure or to allow for occupancy until further repairs are made.

### **Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR)**

- DBPR is coordinating with wholesale distributors of prescription drugs and medical gases to provide exceptions for the emergency distribution of these critical supplies.

### **Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR)**

- OIR is coordinating with its regulated entities, including property and casualty insurers, to collect information on Hurricane Ian preparedness efforts and to ensure companies have all necessary resources to assist policyholders.
- OIR has updated its [list of resources](#) to assist Florida policyholders with their hurricane preparedness and response efforts.

## **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**

- Following the issuance of the Governor's Executive Order, DEP issued an [Emergency Final Order](#) waiving permitting requirements for the storage and processing of solid waste, including storm debris.
- DEP has also issued an [Emergency Final Order](#) to expedite necessary repair, replacement and restoration of structures, equipment, surface water management systems, works and other systems damaged by the storm.
- Inspectors completed pre-storm beach surveys in all shoreline counties.
- Hazardous Area Response Teams are preparing for potential assessment and deployment to impacted areas.
- All significant Hazardous Waste facilities within the affected counties have been contacted to ensure all pre-storm landfall preparations are being made.
- Florida state park closures can be found at [www.floridastateparks.org/StormUpdates](http://www.floridastateparks.org/StormUpdates).
- Visitors with existing camping and cabin reservations at impacted parks will be notified of their reservation status.
- WaterTracker is active, DEP's online portal for wastewater and drinking water facilities to report their operational status.

## **Florida Department of Revenue**

- [Florida's temporary licensing program](#), which allows exporters, petroleum carriers, and importers to request a temporary license during a disaster or declared state of emergency, has been activated. Applicants are not required to submit a fee, secure bonding, or undergo a background check if they apply for and receive a temporary license.

## **Florida Department of Management Services (DMS)**

- The Telecommunications Division is working with telecom partners to ensure that the state's communications networks have redundancies and remain operations for first responders to respond to Floridians during the storm.
- As of 5:00 p.m. on September 26, state buildings are closed on Tuesday, Sept. 27, in the following counties:
  - Charlotte
  - Hernando
  - Hillsborough
  - Lee
  - Manatee
  - Monroe,
  - Pinellas, and
  - Sarasota

An updated list of state building closures can be found [here](#).

### **Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)**

- DJJ facilities in the projected impacted areas have finalized storm preparations including having generators in the event of loss of power, and ensuring food, medicine, and emergency supplies are stocked and ready.

###