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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 with Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie. Full remarks from this morning's press conference are available [here](#).

Hurricane Ian became a Category 1 hurricane this morning and is projected to continue strengthening into a major hurricane this week. Tropical-storm force winds may begin as soon as tonight in the Florida Keys and southern Florida. Regardless of Ian's exact track and intensity, there is a significant risk of life-threatening storm surge, hurricane-force winds, and heavy rainfall along the west coast of Florida and the Florida Panhandle by the middle of this week.

Current Watches and Warnings in Effect:

- Tropical Storm Warnings are in effect for the Lower Keys (from the 7 Mile Bridge southward to Key West, and the Dry Tortugas).
- Tropical Storm Watches are in effect for portions of the Florida Gulf Coast stretching from Englewood to Chokoloskee (Charlotte, Collier, and Lee Counties).
- A Hurricane Watch is in effect for Englewood to the Anclote River, including Tampa Bay.
- Storm Surge Watches are in effect for the Florida Keys and mainland Monroe County, as well as far southern Miami-Dade, Collier, coastal Lee, the Tampa Bay area and coastal Charlotte counties.
- Anclote River to Longboat Key including Tampa Bay... **5-10 ft**

- Longboat Key to Englewood... **5-8 ft.**
- Englewood to Bonita Beach, FL... **4-7 ft**
- Bonita Beach to East Cape Sable, FL... **3-5 ft**
- East Cape Sable to Card Sound Bridge, FL including Florida Bay...**2-4 ft**
- Florida Keys including the Dry Tortugas... **2-4 ft**

State preparation and response efforts include:

Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM)

- FDEM is leading the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) for the Hurricane Ian response.
- The Division has received 361 resource requests for Hurricane Ian, and has already fulfilled 293 of those requests. Additional 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.
- Five Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams are activated, and will be prepared to deploy to impacted areas.
- FDEM has begun setting up a Logistical Staging Areas 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. Two thousand Guardsmen from Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina are also being activated to assist.

- The Florida National Guard is currently supporting missions including staffing and supporting the State Logistics Response Center (SLRC) in Orlando.
- 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 Health (DOH)

- DOH continues to coordinate across 67 county health departments on any necessary preparation resources, in coordination with county emergency managers.
- The Department 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](#).
- The Department is supporting Special Needs Shelter operations in areas of anticipated landfall.
- Nearly 300 ambulances, paratransit busses, and support vehicles are being deployed in areas of anticipated landfall.
- The Department 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)

- 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)

- APD sent a statewide message to remind customers to register for the Special Needs Registry if needed.

Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)

- DCF submitted a request for a federal waiver to release SNAP benefits early 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 Veterans Affairs (FDVA)

- 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, Sept. 26 through Thursday, Sept. 29. This closure extends to the Emergency Department.*
- North Pinellas and St. Petersburg VA Clinics: *Wednesday, Sept. 28 and Thursday, Sept. 29.*
- Sarasota, Bradenton, and Port Charlotte VA Clinics: *Wednesday, Sept. 28.*

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

- To help Florida families safely and quickly evacuate in preparation of Hurricane Ian, tolls are now being suspended on many facilities in the projected areas of impact. Tolls will be suspended as of 12:00 PM today for the following:
1. Polk Parkway in Polk County
 2. Suncoast Parkway in Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus County
 3. Veterans Expressway in Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus County

4. I-4 Connector in Hillsborough County
5. Selmon Expressway in Hillsborough County
6. Pinellas Bayway in Pinellas County
7. Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Pinellas County
8. Garcon Point Bridge in Santa Rosa County
9. Spence Parkway in Okaloosa County
10. Mid-Bay Bridge in Okaloosa County
11. Alligator Alley in Collier and Broward Counties

- FDOT contractors on all active construction projects are securing work sites, clearing traffic control devices that are not actively being used to direct traffic, and checking drainage systems.
- Additional Road Rangers have been deployed to assist motorists along critical roadways.
- The SunRail corridor is being secured to prepare for the storm. SunRail services will be discontinued effective Tuesday at 8:30am and will tentatively resume on Friday morning.
- Florida's 511 Traveler Information System is available for drivers to stay informed about roadway conditions during emergencies. The service includes traffic conditions, road and bridge closures, toll suspensions, and other specialized alerts. To use Florida's 511, visit the website at FL511.com or download the app—on both Apple and Android devices.
- On Saturday, September 24, FDOT waived standard weight restrictions for commercial vehicles transporting fuel, emergency equipment, services, supplies, and agriculture commodities and citrus. Commercial vehicles now will have an increased weight restriction to transport goods.
- FDOT is monitoring traffic levels along critical corridors to ensure safe flow of traffic as the storm's predicted path becomes clearer.
- FDOT is staging resources to perform road and bridge inspections after the storm.
- FDOT is procuring and staging resources to perform cut-and-toss operations to expedite roadway openings after the storm.
- FDOT is activating district emergency and pre-event contracts for post-storm operations including debris removal, traffic signal and lighting repairs, and generators.
- FDOT is coordinating with the Florida Highway Patrol, other law enforcement agencies, and Georgia DOT partners in support of potential evacuations, as well as with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection regarding debris management sites.
- FDOT is working with utility providers to coordinate post-storm debris operations in support of electrical power restoration.

- FDOT is coordinating with U.S. Coast Guard on movable bridge lockdowns.

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV)

- The Florida Highway Patrol 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 Wildlife Commission (FWC)

- On September 23, at Governor DeSantis' direction, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (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.
- 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 with real-time information for business owners to prepare their businesses, families, and employees for Hurricane Ian

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 (HARTs) 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.
- 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 Education (DOE)

The Florida Department of Education is consistently updating their website with county school closures, for a list visit fldoe.org/storminfo.

K12 School Closures

- Hernando County Schools will be closed Tuesday, September 27 through Friday, September 30, 2022.
- Hillsborough County Schools will be closed Monday, September 26 through Thursday, September 29, 2022.
- Lake County Schools will have early dismissal on Tuesday, September 27 and will be closed Wednesday, September 28 and Thursday, September 29, 2022.
- Pasco County Schools will be closed Tuesday, September 27 and Wednesday, September 28, 2022.
- Pinellas County Schools will be closed Tuesday, September 27 and Wednesday, September 28, 2022.
- Sarasota County Schools will be closed beginning Tuesday, September 27.

Florida College System Closures

- Hillsborough Community College will be closed Tuesday, September 27 through Thursday, September 29, 2022.
- St. Petersburg College will be closed Tuesday, September 27 and Wednesday, September 28, 2022.
- State College of Florida will be closed Tuesday, September 27 through Friday, September 30, 2022.

State University Closures

- New College of Florida classes will be canceled Monday, September 26 through Friday, September 30, 2022.
- University of South Florida classes will be canceled Monday, September 26 through Thursday, September 29, 2022. Campuses will be closed starting Tuesday, September 27, 2022.

Florida Department of Management Services (DMS)

- State buildings in Hillsborough County will be closed tomorrow, Tuesday, September 27, 2022. An updated list of state building closures is available [here](#).
- 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.

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