



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Gov. Scott Issues Updates on Hurricane Michael**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Governor Scott will continue to be in constant communication with state and local emergency management officials and state agency leaders to ensure the state is prepared to respond to the potential devastating impacts from Hurricane Michael.

This afternoon, Governor Scott also requested that President Donald Trump declare a pre-landfall emergency for the State of Florida in preparation for Hurricane Michael. This declaration will provide important resources and assistance from the federal government, as well as free up funding sources for emergency protective measures. To view the Governor's request, click [HERE](#). The pre-landfall declaration request is for 35 Florida counties.

On October 7th, Governor Scott declared a state of emergency in 26 Florida counties, and expanded it to include 35 counties total on October 8<sup>th</sup>. To see his Emergency Order, click [HERE](#).

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

### **STATE PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS**

#### **WATCHES AND WARNINGS**

- **Hurricane Warning:** A hurricane warning is in effect for the Alabama/Florida Border to the Suwannee River.
- **Tropical Storm Warning:** A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect from the Suwannee River to Chassahowitzka
- **Tropical Storm Watch:** Tropical storm watches are in effect from Suwannee River, Florida, to Anna Maria Island, Florida, including Tampa Bay.

- **Storm Surge Warning**

A storm surge warning is in effect from the Okaloosa/Walton County Line to the Anclote River.

- **Storm Surge Watch**

Anclote River to Anna Maria Island, including Tampa Bay, and Alabama/Florida border to Okaloosa/Walton County Line Florida

## EVACUATIONS

*Though the below evacuation orders are current and in effect, everyone should check with their local emergency management office or website for the most up to date information regarding evacuations as they are constantly being updated.*

- Bay County- Mandatory evacuation orders are now in place for zones A, B, and C. Residents living in these areas should evacuate before 6 am tomorrow.
- Franklin County- A Mandatory Evacuation has been issued for ALL NON-RESIDENTS.
- Gulf County- Mandatory Evacuation was issued for the following areas:
  - All of Cape San Blas
  - All of Indian Pass Area
  - Simmons Bayou, Highland View
  - Windmark
  - In the city of Port St. Joe, all areas from St. Joseph Bay to Long Avenue
  - St. Joe Beach and Beacon Hill- Waterside of Highway 98
  - Those with high profile vehicles, living in mobile homes, low lying areas, or anyone who feels unsafe in their current location
- Hernando County- Voluntary evacuation order for coastal zone levels A and B for Tuesday beginning at 8 a.m.
- Leon County- a Voluntary/Phased evacuation has been issued for mobile homes and low lying flood prone areas.
- Liberty County- Voluntary evacuations for mobile homes, sub standard housing and low lying areas.
- Santa Rosa County- Voluntary evacuations for mobile home parks, campsites and low lying areas.

## UTILITIES

- Governor Scott has called on every local government to immediately confirm their mutual aid agreements between investor-owned utilities, municipals and co-ops are in place and effective so there is no delay in power restoration for Floridians. These agreements allow municipal utilities to receive aid from investor-owned utilities and co-ops as they work to restore power to customers. Without these agreements in place ahead of time, power restoration will be delayed. To view the full list of Florida utilities with agreements in place, click [HERE](#).

## **MILITARY SUPPORT**

- The Florida National Guard currently has approximately 5,500 Soldiers and Airmen available for activation. The Governor has activated 1,250 Florida National Guard Troops on state active duty orders for pre-landfall coordination and planning.
- They are well-equipped, with assets including more than 1,000 high water vehicles, 13 helicopters, and 16 boats. They are preparing for possible missions to include humanitarian assistance, security operations, and search and rescue.
- In addition to personnel and assets, they can bring in an additional 30,000 personnel from other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).
- The Florida National Guard will continue to work closely with civilian partner agencies, other National Guard states and active duty counterparts.
- The Florida National Guard is leaning forward to ensure that they can get to the areas of greatest need after the storm hits.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is actively monitoring Hurricane Michael and ready to respond. On standby are 40 officers from outside the projected path ready to deploy if needed. They will respond with a variety of specialized equipment, including shallow draft boats, ATVs, airboats and four wheel drive vehicles.
- The Florida Highway Patrol is pre-deploying 100 State Troopers to the Panhandle and Big Bend area of Florida in preparation for Hurricane Michael.
- The Florida Highway Patrol will activate 12-hour shifts for Troops A, B, H, I & Q starting tomorrow. The total activation would include approximately 340 state troopers conducting 24-hour enhanced coverage across Florida's Big Bend and Panhandle. As part of this, regular days off will be cancelled.
- The Florida Highway Patrol is preparing a Quick Response Force team comprised of 33 State Troopers to deploy with minimal notice to areas affected by Hurricane Michael.
- The Florida Highway Patrol is actively monitoring the storm and assisting with emergency management missions.
- The Florida Highway Patrol will begin staffing the Bryant Patton Memorial Bridge in Franklin County (St. George Island bridge) beginning today.
- The Florida Highway Patrol currently has 24/7 representation within the State Emergency Operations Center coordinating preparation, response and recovery efforts.
- The Florida Highway Patrol is actively monitoring the storm and ready to assist with any weather-related missions.
- Florida Highway Patrol will maintain high visibility on Interstate-10 and associated evacuation routes to assist motorists, clear the roadways of any abandoned or disabled vehicles and will routinely check rest areas to assist residents and visitors.

- DHSMV's Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) mobiles are on standby to respond to impacted areas as soon as the storm passes.
- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Mutual Aid team is communicating with law enforcement partners and participating in regular conference calls with the State Emergency Operations Center.
- FDLE has communicated with members and partners in the panhandle to make preparations and be ready to begin response operations tomorrow morning.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

- The State of Florida has deployed three urban search and rescue task forces and resources to the Florida State Fire College to prepare for response.

## **TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS**

- Governor Scott directed the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to suspend tolls effective immediately in the Northwest Florida region in preparation for Hurricane Michael. Tolls will be suspended at the following facilities: Mid-Bay Bridge and Spence Parkway (Okaloosa County), Garcon Point Bridge (Santa Rosa County), Bob Sikes Toll Bridge (Escambia County), and Orchard Pond Parkway (Leon County). By suspending tolls, Floridians and visitors will more easily be able to prepare for any potential storm impacts, access important hurricane supplies, and quickly and safely evacuate when necessary.
- FDOT is currently preparing roadways for impacts from Hurricane Michael.
- FDOT has suspended all construction operations from the roadways in the counties under the state of emergency.
- FDOT is coordinating with the Florida Highway Patrol on bridge and roadway closures and detours.
- FDOT is monitoring roadways for potential evacuations and identifying bridge inspectors statewide.
- FDOT is preparing all standby generators for traffic signal support.
- FDOT issued an Emergency Road Use Permit letter to relieve size and weight restrictions for vehicles responding to Hurricane Michael.
- FDOT participated in the regional coordination teleconference with Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina.
- FDOT issued Weigh Station Bypass letter to allow emergency response vehicles such as utility vehicles and bucket trucks to bypass all FDOT weigh stations.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL**

- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is continuing to monitor the storm and regularly sharing information with waiver support coordinators and providers to ensure the health and safety of the customers the agency serves.

- APD is also checking on individuals with developmental disabilities who live in their own homes to ensure they are prepared for the hurricane.
- APD has canceled all guest reservations for the week for William J. Rish Recreational Park in Gulf County. The facility will be closed beginning Tuesday.
- APD is making Hawkins Park in Santa Rosa County available to utility trucks as a staging area.
- The Florida Department of Health is actively monitoring Hurricane Michael and has activated ESF-8 personnel to staff the State Emergency Operations Center.
- Florida's State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip participated in a Florida Hospital Association Planning Call to discuss collaboration and making timely decisions regarding evacuations. Two conference calls were also conducted with county health departments (CHDs) to discuss situational awareness and current needs.
- The Department has requested 5 ambulance strike teams and 35 Special Needs Shelter Teams to support relief efforts.
- The Department is working to forecast long-range public health and medical resource needs and identify potential areas for EMAC and federal resource support.
- The Department is monitoring and supporting Special Needs Shelter operations through census reporting and resource support as requested by local emergency operations.
- CHDs are coordinating with their local County Emergency Management to ensure preparations are in place for Special Needs Shelters. Call downs are being conducted to persons on Special Needs Registries to ensure plans are in place for potential evacuations.
- CHDs are reviewing their local continuity of operations plans to ensure public health activities and CHD services are not interrupted by the storm.
- CHDs are conducting outreach to health care facilities within the county to ensure they are implementing facility level emergency plans.
- The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) is in contact with healthcare facilities to ensure they have the resources they need.
- AHCA had a joint call with the Florida Health Care Association and all residential and inpatient healthcare facilities including all areas of the panhandle and east to Jacksonville. AHCA and the Florida Hospital Association had a joint call with all hospitals in the panhandle.
- AHCA has activated the Emergency Status System (ESS) for health care facilities in the panhandle to enter their storm preparedness status including generators and utility company information, emergency contacts, and bed availability.
- All nursing homes and assisted living facilities are required to keep residents in a safe environment in an emergency to ensure the protection of resident health, safety, welfare, and comfort.
  - Facilities are required to have a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan approved and on file with the local emergency management agencies.

- Nursing facilities all have back-up power that can power medical equipment and refrigeration for medicine and food.
- Additionally, facilities are required to have an emergency power plan in place to ensure that resident occupied area temperatures do not exceed 81 degrees. These plans include onsite generators, delivered generators, or shifting populations to locations that can maintain comfortable temperatures.
- As part of licensure, facilities are responsible for the health and safety of their patients.
- The State is here to serve as a resource to connect facilities to the local emergency management officials to make sure needs are being met.
- AHCA staff is reaching out to all hospital CEOs and all residential health care facilities in the panhandle.
- The Florida Department of Elder Affairs is in contact with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in Planning and Service Areas (PSAs) in the projected storm path.
- AAAs continue to coordinate with their Lead Agencies, local service providers, and local county offices of emergency management as part of their emergency relief measures. Call-downs have already begun to assess client needs before, during, and after the storm.
- The Department of Elder Affairs has also been communicating with our Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) and CARES field offices who anticipate office closures. CARES staff is trained and stands ready to participate by assisting at Special Needs Shelters in affected areas, including with the discharge planning.
- The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) operates six skilled nursing facilities and one assisted living facility. All state veterans' homes are currently operational.
- The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) is working with courts in Florida Panhandle counties to sign blanket travel approvals for all foster parents to evacuate with children in foster care.
- DCF has ordered an early release of food assistance benefits for those Florida residents in the 11 counties under a hurricane watch who would have received normal SNAP benefits between now and 10/28. Benefits will be released to their cards 10/9 at 6:00 a.m. in the impacted counties.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has reached out to high-priority regulated facilities to remind them of storm preparations they should be making, and has issued two emergency final orders to ensure recovery efforts are not hampered or delayed.
- DEP has activated and is closely monitoring water and wastewater facilities to provide updates on their operational status.
- An [online tool](#) for the public to report the location of storm debris in waterways has been deployed.
- The current condition of the state's beaches has been assessed, which will expedite post-storm assessments.

- Florida State Park closures can be found at <https://www.floridastateparks.org/StormUpdates>
- 165 Disaster Debris Management Sites have been pre-authorized for the counties addressed by the Governor's Executive Order.

## **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY**

- To help residents and emergency personnel stay connected following the storm, Comcast is opening its network of more than 8,000 Xfinity WiFi hotspots throughout the Florida Panhandle, including Tallahassee, Panama City, Panama City Beach and surrounding areas and the Dothan, Alabama area, to anyone to use for free, including non-Xfinity customers.
- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) continues to encourage businesses to visit FloridaDisaster.biz for disaster preparedness tips and register to receive updates as the storm progresses.
- The state has opened the Private Sector Hotline at (850) 815-4925. The hotline is available for business inquiries about the storm, preparedness information and post-impact information.
- DEO continues to coordinate with CareerSource Florida, local workforce boards, and other public-private partners.
- VISIT Florida has activated the Expedia/VISIT Florida Hotel Accommodation Web Portal to support evacuation orders.
- The Florida Retail Federation and the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association continue to share disaster preparedness information with their business affiliates.
- The Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) offers a Hurricane Guide with information about hurricane preparedness, what to do as a storm approaches, disaster recovery, and helpful hurricane-related resources. DBPR has shared the Guide on social media and it is available at [http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/documents/HurricaneGuide\\_web.pdf](http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/documents/HurricaneGuide_web.pdf).
- A team from FEMA including experts from Homeland Security, the EPA, the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, and the Army Corps of Engineers is now in Florida and providing federal assistance

## **EDUCATION**

- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) is in contact with school districts, state colleges and universities for updates and to determine needs before, during and after emergency events. All school districts, colleges and universities are monitoring Hurricane Michael and collaborating with local emergency preparedness officials to make decisions that ensure student and staff safety.
- The following school districts have announced closures:
  - Bay will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
  - Calhoun will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).
  - Citrus will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
  - Dixie will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).

- Escambia will have early release Tuesday (10/9) and remain closed Wednesday (10/10).
- Florida A&M High will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
- Florida State University Schools (Florida High) will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
- Franklin will be closed Tuesday (10/9) - Friday (10/12).
- Gadsden will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
- Gilchrist will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
- Gulf will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12) and will re-open after Fall Break, on Wednesday, 10/17.
- Holmes will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).
- Jackson will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
- Jefferson will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
- Leon will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
- Levy will be closed Wednesday (10/10) and Thursday (10/11).
- Liberty will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).
- Madison will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).
- Okaloosa will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
- Santa Rosa will have early release Tuesday (10/9) and remain closed Wednesday (10/10).
- Suwannee will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).
- Taylor will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Thursday (10/11).
- Wakulla will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
- Walton will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
- The following state colleges and universities have announced closures:
  - Chipola College will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
  - Florida A&M University will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
  - Florida State University will be closed Tuesday (10/9) – Friday (10/12).
  - Gulf Coast State College will close at 5 p.m. Monday (10/8) and remain closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
  - North Florida Community College will close at 3 p.m. Tuesday (10/9) and remain closed Wednesday (10/10) and Thursday (10/11).
  - Northwest Florida State College will be closed Tuesday (10/9) and Wednesday (10/10).
  - Pensacola State College will close at 4 p.m. Tuesday (10/9) and remain closed Wednesday (10/10)
  - Tallahassee Community College will be closed Tuesday (10/9) through Friday, 10/12.
  - The University of West Florida will close at noon Tuesday (10/9) and remain closed Wednesday (10/10).
- The Division of Blind Services and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are monitoring Hurricane Michael to make decisions regarding office closures.
- Districts are preparing in the case that their facilities are needed for shelters.
- FDOE will be posting up-to-date information regarding closures and meeting cancellations at [www.fldoe.org/hurricaneinfo](http://www.fldoe.org/hurricaneinfo).



## **INSURANCE**

- The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) is prepared to order property insurers to submit claims information from Hurricane Michael, if necessary.
- OIR will be actively working throughout this storm with consumer advocates, industry stakeholders and entities licensed under OIR's regulatory authority.
- In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order, OIR has notified all health insurers, managed care organizations and other health entities of their statutory obligation to allow for early prescription refills during a state of emergency.
- The Florida Department of Financial Services' Division of Consumer Services has resources for consumers seeking assistance with the claims-filing process or to file insurance complaints [HERE](#).
- The Florida Department of Management Services, Division of State Group Insurance, has arranged for early prescription renewals starting today for members of the state group insurance program.

## **STATE OFFICE CLOSURES**

- State offices will be closed tomorrow through Thursday in the 35 counties included in Governor Scott's emergency order.
- DMS will stay in contact with all state offices and has asked them to report closures in WebEOC.

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER/ CONTACTS**

- The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated at a level one, which is a full-scale, 24-hours-a-day activation.
- 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 Michael.
- Visit <http://www.floridadisaster.org/info> to find information on shelters, road closures, and evacuation routes.

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