

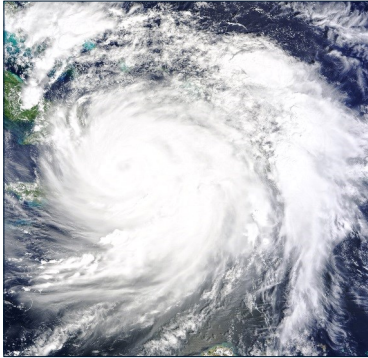


SCEMD



EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2017

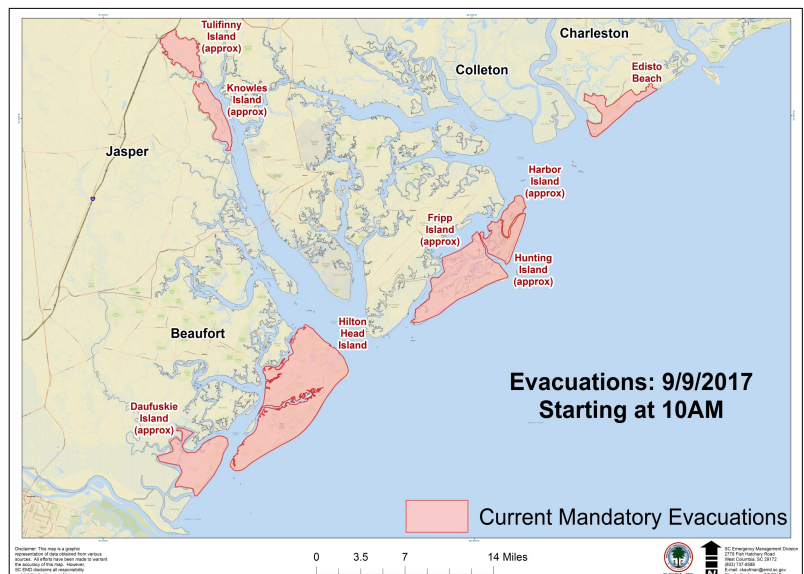


Hurricane Irma was an extremely powerful and catastrophic Cape Verde-type hurricane, the strongest observed in the Atlantic since Wilma in 2005 in terms of maximum sustained winds. It was the first Category 5 hurricane to strike the Leeward Islands on record, followed by Hurricane Maria only two weeks later. It was also the most intense Atlantic hurricane to strike the United States since Katrina in 2005, and the first major hurricane to make landfall in Florida since Wilma in 2005. The ninth named storm, fourth hurricane, second major hurricane, and first Category 5 hurricane of the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season, Irma caused widespread and catastrophic damage throughout its long lifetime, particularly in parts of the northeastern Caribbean and the Florida Keys.

SCEMD personnel began monitoring Hurricane Irma as early as August 30. County and state agency coordination in South Carolina increased Wednesday, September 6, as Governor Henry McMaster issued an executive order declaring a State of Emergency. The South Carolina Emergency Operations Center was then partially activated to monitor storm conditions and allow state agencies time to prepare for the forthcoming full SEOC activation. Hurricane Irma's projected path posed a challenge in emergency planning. At one point, NHC forecasters predicted Irma would directly impact South Carolina and preparations were made to evacuate the state's entire coast. However, those forecasts were continuously revised the closer Irma came to the mainland United States. On Thursday, September 7, the state emergency response team had sufficient information to recommend to the Governor that an evacuation order would be necessary, although not the complete coastal evacuation. By this time, the SEOC was fully staffed 24 hours a day in 12 hour shifts to support any local requests for resources.

On Friday, September 8, Governor Henry McMaster ordered the evacuation for eight areas that comprise the state's southern most coastal barrier islands. Residents in Edisto Beach in Colleton County; Daufuskie, Fripp, Harbor, Hunting and Hilton Head Islands in Beaufort County; along with residents in Knowles and Tullifinny in Jasper County were all to begin evacuation no later than 10 a.m. the following day, Saturday, September 9. SCEMD estimates approximately 47,000 people should have evacuated these areas.

Fortunately, Hurricane Irma weakened to a Tropical Storm by the time it reached South Carolina after making landfall in Florida. Many coastal areas saw flooding due to storm surge, including up to six feet of surge flooding in Charleston, S.C. County Emergency Managers reported isolated wind damage from Irma from the Upstate to the Lowcountry. The S.C. Department of Public Safety confirmed five fatalities in the state attributed to Hurricane Irma.



Eight areas of South Carolina's southern most coast were evacuated due to Hurricane Irma.

Irma resulted in a total of more than 269,000 power outages statewide. At least five weak tornadoes were confirmed by NWS assessment teams.

RECOVERY AFTER IRMA

On September 28, Governor McMaster formally requested a disaster declaration from the White House for Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Edgefield, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper, McCormick, Oconee and Pickens counties. His request followed an assessment of damages by representatives of the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, affected electric co-operatives and local governments.

In response to Governor Henry McMaster's request, President Donald Trump declared a major disaster for the State of South Carolina and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in 16 counties affected by Hurricane Irma.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance Program helps reimburse local governments, state agencies, eligible private non-profit organizations and electric co-operatives for certain expenses they have incurred during large-scale emergencies. Disaster aid through FEMA's Individual Assistance Program was not available for residents for this disaster.



A family of four was rescued from this vehicle in Edisto Beach as Tropical Storm Irma came ashore.



While South Carolina was spared the most serious effects of Hurricane Irma, several areas along the coast did experience damage, including Charleston and Hilton Head.

Under the Public Assistance Program, state and affected local governments are eligible to apply for federal funding to pay 75 percent of the approved costs under certain categories such as debris removal and road repair related to the storm. FEMA previously approved reimbursement to State and local governments for costs associated with emergency protective measures taken during Hurricane Irma.

The FEMA Public Assistance program categories are as follows:

- Category A: Debris Removal
- Category B: Emergency Protective Measures
- Category C: Roads and Bridges
- Category D: Water Control Facilities
- Category E: Buildings and Equipment
- Category F: Utilities
- Category G: Parks, Recreational Facilities and Other Items

The declaration also made cost-shared funding available to the state for approved projects that reduce - or mitigate - future disaster risks. Funds under this program were made available to state agencies, local governments, and certain non-profit organizations only. A Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Declaration was granted for Beaufort and Jasper counties on October 5, 2017, making low interest loans available to qualifying residents and businesses in those counties plus Colleton and Hampton. On November 1, 2017, FEMA amended the public assistance declaration for South Carolina to include Abbeville, Newberry and Saluda counties.

PUBLIC INFORMATION



Governor Henry McMaster and agency leaders conducted five emergency news conferences from the state Emergency Operations Center.

During the approach of Hurricane Irma and in its aftermath, the state's emergency public information team maintained continuous engagement with residents through all multimedia resources available. In coordination with the Adjutant General's Office, the Governor's Office, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and local governments, state public information officers coordinated media availabilities, published media advisories, news releases and fact sheets.

SCEMD's website, scemd.org, received more than 22 million hits over a six day period. More than 108,000 people followed the Division's primary social channels, @SCEMD on Twitter and Facebook, with top posts being viewed by more than 4 million people.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

SCEMD Legal Affairs provided continuous updates to members of the State Legislature. In coordination with the Governor's Office, Legal Affairs sent a total of eight Hurricane Irma updates to state elected officials.

OPERATIONS SUPPORT & LOGISTICS

- 173 total resource requests were made to the state EOC.
- 828 Meals Ready-To-Eat were distributed.
- 520 tarps were distributed.
- 41,500 bottles of water were sent to county emergency managers.
- 12,000 boxes to Harvest Hope Food Bank for care packages.
- Nine generators deployed to county emergency operations centers.
- Two missions were completed through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).
- Two states supported S.C. through EMAC, Kentucky and Delaware.
- Total estimated EMAC cost: \$18,500.80.
- EMAC Missions included the deployment of an incident management team and an EMAC advanced team.
- Five contracts were activated for S.C. support: Transportation, Generator and Warehouse operations, Transportation Operational Management, SEOC Staffing and Commodity Procurement.
- One warehouse was established and operated for 7 days.
- SCEMD was prepared to co-locate a logistics staging area with FEMA at North Airfield in North S.C. SCEMD was also prepared to open a staging area at the S.C. State Farmers Market. Staging areas are used to support the reception of the FEMA Alpha Pack, distribution of commodities, and the generator operations and maintenance site.



The S.C. Department of Corrections supported the state's response to Hurricane Irma by filling more than 35,000 sandbags.

OPERATIONS SUPPORT & LOGISTICS CONT'D.



The South Carolina Emergency Operations Center was fully activated for six days. Staff from agencies that comprise the State Emergency Response Team carried out response activities around the clock in twelve hour shifts.

Geographic Information Systems

- 45 different Geospatial products were produced and distributed for Hurricane Irma.

Facilities

- SCEMD operated a functional state Emergency Operations Center for 7 days.
- SEOC Security was provided 24 hours a day by the State Guard and officers from S.C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

PRIVATE SECTOR

SCEMD's private sector liaisons, along with representatives from the S.C. Department of Commerce, continue to assist South Carolina business and industry in the disaster preparedness response, mitigation, and recovery actions regarding the impacts of Hurricane Irma.

- Currently there are 522 approvals for re-entry memoranda of agreement during Hurricane Irma response.
- ESF-24 (Business & Industry) maintained the contact list of over 2,500 email addresses to communicate current, important information in a daily report.
- The state agencies and organizations within the ESF-24 team conducted outreach actions to communicate with their members, local government agencies and businesses in the affected counties.



SCEMD

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division, a division of the Adjutant General's Office, is the coordinating agency responsible for the statewide emergency management program.

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