

Important Safety Information for Hurricane Survivors in the U.S. Virgin Islands

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ST. CROIX, Virgin Islands – The top priority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its federal partners is to support the government of the U.S. Virgin Islands and local communities to protect the life and safety of those in hurricane-impacted areas.

The following are important safety tips if you are in an area that has been affected by Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria:

- Listen to local officials for updates and instructions. Do not return to evacuated areas until local officials indicate it is safe.
- When it is safe to do so, check on your neighbors who may require assistance such as infants, children, older adults, people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.
- Monitor local radio for updated emergency information, and follow the instructions of local officials.
- Emergency workers may be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way as much as possible.
- If you encounter floodwaters, remember: Turn around, don't drown.
- Driving through a flooded area can be extremely hazardous and almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. When in your car, look out for flooding in low-lying areas, at bridges and at highway dips. As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- For more information on what to do before, during and after floods, visit:



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- o English: <https://www.ready.gov/floods>
- o Spanish: <https://www.ready.gov/es/inundaciones>
- o Creole: <https://www.ready.gov/ht>

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following:

- If your home has flood water inside or around it, don't walk or wade in it. The water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline or raw sewage. Use extreme caution when returning to your area after a flood. Be aware of potential chemical hazards as flood waters may have buried or moved hazardous chemical containers of solvents or other industrial chemicals from their normal storage places.

- Drinking water may not be safe to drink. Don't use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, make ice, or make baby formula. Listen to local officials to find out if your water is safe. More information is available at:

- o English: https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/16_262392-a_drink-safe-water_flyer_eng_508.pdf

- o [Making Water Safe in an Emergency](#)

- o Spanish: https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/16_262392-b_drink-safe-water_spflyer_508.pdf

- Using some bleach helps make water safe to use. More information on the process is available at:

- o English: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/make-water-safe.pdf>

- o Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/pdf/make-water-safe-sp.pdf>

- Throw away food that may have come in contact with flood or storm water, perishable foods, and those with an unusual odor, color, or texture. When in doubt, throw it out. For more information, visit:



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o English: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2017/a0829-safety-after-hurricanes.html>

o Spanish: https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/mediosdecomunicacion/comunicados/a_0915-huracan-inundacion.html

• If your power is out, safely use a generator or battery-operated flashlights. Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open. Keep generators outside at least 20 feet from windows, doors and vents as they can produce carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas that can sudden illness and death. Read both the label on your generator and the owner's manual and follow the instructions. More information is available at:

o English: <https://www.cdc.gov/co/pdfs/Generators.pdf>

o Spanish: https://www.cdc.gov/co/pdfs/CO_Generator_Safety_Spanish.pdf

o Creole: <https://www.cdc.gov/co/ht/pdfs/guidelines.pdf>

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*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at **800-621-3362** (voice, **711/VRS** - Video Relay Service) (TTY: **800-462-7585**). Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish)*

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

For official information on the recovery effort please visit www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma, or www.informusvi.com. Follow us on twitter [@femaregion2](https://twitter.com/femaregion2).

*To donate or volunteer, contact the voluntary or charitable organization of your choice through the National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disasters (NVOAD) at www.nvoad.org. For those who wish to help, **cash** donations offer voluntary agencies the most flexibility in obtaining the most-needed resources and pumps money into the local economy to help businesses recover. The Community*



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Foundation of the Virgin Islands also has the “Fund for the Virgin Islands” at www.USVIrecovery.org.



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