

Biden-Harris Administration Urges People in Debby's Path to Stay Safe During Flooding, Listen to Local Officials

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WASHINGTON – As Hurricane Debby moves ashore in Florida, the Biden-Harris Administration urges residents in the storm's path to use caution and prepare for this extreme weather event. The storm could bring historic rainfall across parts of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. Life-threatening storm surge along areas of Big Bend, parts of the Florida Gulf Coast, northeastern Florida and South Carolina coasts are also predicted. In preparation for the storm, President Biden approved an emergency declaration for the state of Florida.

"This storm looks to be a significant flooding event for millions of residents in the southeast," said FEMA Region 4 Administrator Robert Samaan. "For anyone already affected, listen to your local officials, check on your neighbors and monitor the weather in your area. To everyone else further down the storm's path, there is still time to make last minute preparations for you and your family."

FEMA's National Response Coordination Center and Region 4 Regional Response Coordination Center are activated and managing the pre-staging of commodities and response assets, including Urban Search and Rescue Teams. FEMA liaisons have deployed to 11 county emergency offices and to the Florida Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, and additional agencies are on standby if needed to deploy to disaster areas.

FEMA also has liaisons jointly located with state officials in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina to assist with any requests for federal assistance.

For Residents Experiencing Flooding

- **Stay safe.** Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters as it may be contaminated and contain dangerous debris. Additionally, underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water. Turn Around, Don't



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Page 1 of 2

Drown! Remember, just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away. Stay off bridges over fast-moving water and never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.

- **If you do not evacuate, find a safe location to ride out the storm.** Get to the highest level if trapped in a building. Only get on the roof if necessary and once there, signal for help. Avoid enclosed areas, such as an attic, where you may become trapped by storm surge and flooding.
- **Be aware of other risks.** Hurricanes have the potential to form tornados. If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately in the center of a small interior room, such as a closet or interior hallway, on the lowest level of a sturdy building. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- **Flooding can affect power systems, as utility companies may shut down portion of the electrical grid.** If the power goes out, use only flashlights or battery-powered lanterns for emergency lighting. Never use candles during a blackout or power outage due to extreme risk of fire.

For Residents in the Storm's Predicted Path

- **Encourage your family and friends to finish their preparedness activities now.** Check on your neighbors, especially older adults or those who may need additional assistance, to make sure they have what they need to ride out the storm. Have a plan to remain in contact during and after the storm.
- You can find more information on how to prepare for the incoming storm and how to stay safe at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) or [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov). You can also [download the free FEMA App](#) to locate open shelters and receive alerts for up to five areas.

