

FEMA, Federal Agencies Supporting First Responders in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

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WASHINGTON – Hurricane Dorian continues its path through the Caribbean, moving near St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands and then over the open Atlantic toward the Continental U.S. The National Hurricane Center issued hurricane warnings for the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, Culebra and Vieques, and the storm is expected to produce heavy rainfall and flash flooding.

President Donald Trump approved an Emergency Declaration on Tuesday making federal funding available to Puerto Rico to assist with emergency and life-safety actions taken ahead of Dorian. This assistance is for all 78 municipalities in the Commonwealth.

FEMA and other federal agencies are supporting territorial and local officials as residents brace for the storm. FEMA is urging everyone in the path of this storm to monitor weather forecasts and follow instructions from state, territorial, and local officials.

Since the 2017 hurricanes, FEMA has been working closely with leaders in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to build their capacity to respond to and recover from future disasters. Rebuilding from the 2017 hurricanes and Hurricane Michael is ongoing and even a smaller, less severe tropical system could have significant impact.

Follow Instructions from Local Officials

Expect extended power outages that could last for several days. If you still have power, make sure cell phones and other equipment is fully charged. Be aware of blocked roads and avoid walking or driving near downed power lines.



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Plan how you'll communicate with family members once the storm passes. Remember that during disasters, text instead of calling because phone lines are often overloaded. Dial 9-1-1 only in case of an emergency.

[Download the FEMA App](#) to receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service, locate open emergency shelters and community recovery centers, and get additional preparedness information. In addition to local, state and commonwealth resources, more hurricane preparedness information is available at [Ready.gov](#) or [Listo.gov](#).

Flood Safety

Avoid flooded areas that can hide hazards such as debris and damaged roads. Be aware that flash flooding can occur in minutes and with little notice.

If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.

Be prepared to take detours and adjust your route due to road closures if there is standing water. Do not drive through flood water. Just 12 inches of floodwater can float a car or small SUV. Turn around, don't drown!

Federal Agencies are Positioned to Support Local and Territorial Partners

FEMA is working closely with federal, territorial and local officials as response efforts continue throughout the day. Life-sustaining commodities have been pre-positioned throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to enable quick response to events in the Caribbean, including millions of liters of water and meals, as well as tarps and other necessities.

Actions that have been taken to respond to Dorian include:

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- Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT) are in U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- One Incident Support Team and two Urban Search and Rescue Teams have deployed to Puerto Rico, additional teams are available, if needed.



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- Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Disaster Emergency Communications are in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Logistics Staging and Transportation Teams are in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to support response efforts, if needed.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

- USACE mobilized infrastructure assessment, debris management staff and other experts to Puerto Rico.
- A Temporary Emergency Power Planning and Response Team has deployed to Puerto Rico. There are 307 generators, if needed.

U.S. Forest Service

- The Forest Service deployed a road clearing crew to Puerto Rico.
- Law enforcement officers have deployed to assist local authorities, if needed.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- Incident management personnel and three Disaster Medical Assistance Teams are positioned in Puerto Rico should medical assistance be needed in the Caribbean.
- The Disaster Distress Helpline is available to help residents in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands cope with stress. To speak with a trained crisis counselor, call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 (for Spanish, press 2 or text Hablanos to 66746).

National Guard Bureau

- The Puerto Rico National Guard activated to provide support at correctional facilities.
- National Guard Bureau liaison teams are deployed to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

American Red Cross

- American Red Cross is staffing three shelters in the U.S. Virgin Islands.



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