

Infrastructure Systems Recovery Support Function

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The mission of the Infrastructure Systems [Recovery Support Function](#) (RSF), is to integrate the capabilities of the federal government to support the State of Florida, local governments and public infrastructure owners as they recover from Hurricane Irma and rebuild or repair systems in ways that enable them to better withstand the effects of natural or man-made disasters. The ability of Florida's infrastructure system to supply potable water, energy, transportation, communications, and waste disposal has a direct impact on the quality of life for everyone living, working or visiting the Sunshine State.

The [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) is the coordinating agency for the Infrastructure Systems RSF. The [Department of Homeland Security](#) is supporting the RSF by partnering with state and local governments to improve the security of critical systems. One advantage of the RSF structure is the ability to pull in experts from a variety of disciplines and deploy them to resolve specific issues. The RSF collaborates with multiple federal agencies, local organizations and the private sector.

The Infrastructure Systems RSF can provide technical and financial resources to state and local agencies and public infrastructure owners. Staff can suggest sources for loans and grants to pay for recovery projects that fall outside of the requirements for either FEMA or RSF funding. Subject matter experts can recognize legal, policy, and programmatic needs that may potentially limit an efficient recovery and recommend ways to mitigate those circumstances. The RSF also offers sector-specific guidance on building resilience and upgrading security of critical infrastructure.

Infrastructure Systems RSF and Florida's recovery

Hurricane Irma's impact was felt in different regions within Florida and across several types of infrastructure systems: including the power grid, emergency communications, engineered beaches, roads and wastewater treatment facilities.



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The Infrastructure Systems RSF takes a holistic approach to recovery, encouraging communities to consider improving existing infrastructure and upgrading security as part of their long-term recovery plans. And, the RSF can supply personnel to help state and local agencies develop those plans.

Electricity Generation, Transmission, and Distribution

Hurricane Irma's high winds either destroyed or badly damaged parts of the state's essential power infrastructure network. Enhancing the resilience of Florida's power transmission and distribution systems through planning, mitigation efforts, and rapid response protocols will allow the power system to withstand and quickly recover from natural and manmade disasters.

Beaches

Florida's 825 miles of beaches and dune systems serve as the first line of defense against storm surges and high tides, protecting homes, businesses and infrastructure by absorbing wave energy to reduce the strength and intensity of storm-induced waves. Restoring dunes and renourishing beaches will increase protection for coastal cities and towns and bring tourists to boost the local economies.

Roads

Hurricane Irma damaged bridges in Hendry and Monroe counties and also washed out several roads. Additional road damage was reported in other counties. Developing and implementing a roadway management plan that improves and maintains the condition of roadway pavement and bridge performance will strengthen Florida's transportation system and limit damage from future storms.

Wastewater Treatment Plants

Equipment failures, power losses and inundation of water into wastewater treatment facilities during and after the hurricane led to the release of untreated or partially treated wastewater and backups into homes. Designing risk reduction measures for the state's drinking water/ wastewater facilities and supplying backup power sources to drinking water/wastewater facilities and lift stations will protect the public and the environment during the next storm.



Communication Infrastructure

As Hurricane Irma roared up the Florida peninsula, many South Florida residents and emergency response services lost cable and internet services, had spotty cellphone service, or suffered a complete loss of all communications. Modernizing and strengthening the state's communication system will increase the likelihood that the communication systems will function in future storms.

Before Irma, Florida had not had a landfalling hurricane in 12 years. For many, Hurricane Irma was a wakeup call. It may also be an opportunity; a chance to analyze the impact and response to the storm, build on successes and remedy shortfalls. There may not be another hurricane for another 12 years, or, there may be multiple storms during 2018. While it's impossible to predict the weather, there are ways to mitigate its impact. Increasing the resilience and security of Florida's infrastructure systems will prepare the State of Florida to weather even the strongest storm.



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