



Federal Government Prepares For Ike: Are You Ready?

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is coordinating the preparations of its partners in federal, state, tribal and local governments as Hurricane Ike is now expected to make landfall in Texas later this week. But with the record this year of storms shifting course before they strike the coast, and the breadth of this storm spanning more than 100 miles, all Gulf Coast residents are reminded to "Get Serious: Be Prepared."

Individual and community preparedness is the responsibility of everyone. Individuals, families and businesses should prepare emergency supply kits and develop family emergency plans. Emergency preparedness information for individuals and businesses is available online at www.ready.gov.

President George W. Bush issued a pre-landfall disaster declaration in Texas that enables federal aid to supplement and support any of the immediate response efforts. At this time, the State of Texas is coordinating the evacuation of residents with special or medical needs. Federal assets are standing by to provide support – with the focus being on the state's request for air evacuation – while the state and individual medical facilities are managing their own ground evacuations and determining how best to proceed. As in previous events, FEMA coordinates efforts to supplement state and local resources, which are the primary support for any evacuation.

Numerous storms have already had an impact along the Gulf Coast in 2008, but residents are reminded not to get complacent. Each of these storms have inflicted injuries and serious damage and only proper preparations and a willingness to listen to instructions has helped to limit the damage from otherwise devastating storms.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- FEMA has pre-positioned staff and assets across Texas and in neighboring states to ensure their availability for any preparations or response activities. Response teams are in place, to include anticipated commodities and logistical support.
- FEMA has stationed Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs) in Austin and San Antonio, Texas. IMAT teams provide essential situational awareness and are the initial federal coordinators on the ground.
- Urban Search and Rescue Teams are pre-deployed across Texas and in neighboring states where they can quickly assist any rescue operations in the immediate aftermath of a storm.
- FEMA has commodities and emergency resources across Texas including meals, water, blankets, cots, generators and diesel fuel. Contracts have been activated to supplement existing resources without shifting resources from other disaster operations. FEMA is also working

with the private sector and voluntary agencies to enhance their abilities to provide resources and support to communities before and after a storm.

U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

- USCG forces have been pre-deployed to conduct response, recovery and clean up operations.
- USCG has 17 helicopters in Texas and 10 helicopters within reach of Texas to support search and rescue operations as needed. USCG also 10 fixed-wing aircraft to support over-flight and transportation missions.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

- TSA deployed more than 400 additional personnel, including Transportation Security Officers and Federal Air Marshalls, to facilities across Texas to assist with planned evacuations.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- USCIS is contacting community organizations and the media to inform them that USCIS will reschedule all appointments in offices that close. USCIS is advising customers to take all necessary actions to protect their documents and inform them that if they are evacuated, or a USCIS office is closed, they can temporarily make an appointment in another USCIS office.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Service (ICE)

- ICE has more than 1,000 personnel ready to deploy in response to the impact of Hurricane Ike.
- All residents should respond to local and state evacuation orders. ICE will not conduct immigration enforcement operations associated with evacuations.

National Protection and Programs Directorate

National Communications System (NCS)

- NCS personnel are actively reaching out to the states on Ike's potential path to confirm access procedures for restoration teams, and are adjusting critical communications infrastructure analysis.
- The Shared Resources High Frequency Radio Network is scheduled to be activated 12 hours prior to landfall and the Disaster Information Reporting System 24 hours prior to landfall.

Infrastructure Protection (IP)

- IP is focused on key elements of the region's infrastructure including power grids and generators; ports, oil, gas and petrochemical facilities; and water and wastewater plants.
- Eighteen IP Protective Security Advisors have deployed to Texas to coordinate and support preparedness and response efforts and to beginning to identify critical infrastructures in the storm's projected path, and assessing any potential impacts.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- NOAA's National Hurricane Center is monitoring Hurricane Ike, issuing watches and warnings as needed. NOAA's National Weather Service forecast offices in Texas are supporting federal operations in the region as well as state and local emergency managers.
- NOAA's aircraft continue round-the-clock operations in support of hurricane research, reconnaissance and surveillance missions into Hurricane Ike.

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

- DOT is facilitating evacuations in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation, including the opening of shoulder lanes on evacuation routes.
- DOT is planning and pre-positioning equipment to facilitate debris removal and other actions which will accelerate their ability to reopen roads following the storm.
- DOT's Federal Aviation Administration is deploying personnel to airports along the Gulf Coast and placed those facilities on alert in anticipation of any needed evacuations.
- DOT is working with the rail industry as they take precautions and plan to cease operations during the storm.

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

- DOE remains in close contact with Gulf Coast utilities as they monitor the path of Hurricane Ike and make advance preparations.
- Personnel have been evacuated from 167 production platforms and from 44 rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Natural Gas producers, pipeline and processing plant operators are closely monitoring Hurricane Ike and some facilities are taking advanced precaution to shut-in and shut down operations. Four natural gas pipelines have shut-in their systems in preparation for Hurricane Ike.

U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)

U.S. National Guard Bureau (NGB)

- NGB is staging provisions, prepositioning people and equipment, and coordinating with federal, state and local governments.
- Texas has authorized up to 7,500 Texas National Guard Citizen-Soldiers and - Airmen to provide support for evacuation preparations, search and rescue operations, and shelter operations
- The Texas National Guard has hundreds of 'high-water' vehicles and generators available to support search and rescue operations and provide electricity to critical infrastructure

U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)

- USNORTHCOM has deployed units to Corpus Christi and Brownsville, Texas to support medical evacuations.
- USNORTHCOM has identified additional units able to provide a wide range of additional support including helicopter support, medical evacuation, high-water vehicles, mobile communication packages, bridging and engineering support, medical assistance, search and rescue, and Incident Awareness and Assessment airborne platforms that provide after-landfall water level and surge assessments.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

- USACE has pre-positioned key personnel and equipment so that it can perform debris removal, commodities procurement and delivery, temporary emergency power, temporary housing, temporary roofing, infrastructure assessment, and support to urban search and rescue missions.

- USACE has 400,000 sandbags on-hand in the Galveston area as well as a Deployable Tactical Operations Center, Rapid Response Vehicles and other key commodities staged in San Antonio and Austin.
- Of note, the pre-positioned teams ready to support a Temporary Power mission represent the largest concentration of assets for such a mission in the history of the USACE.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

- HHS is supporting state and federal efforts to assess and plan for the evacuation of patients and nursing home residents in the path of the storm.
- Medical and pharmacy caches are in place to support medical needs of impacted communities in states across the Gulf Coast. Some personnel and medical materiel are being re-positioned to Texas in response to the storm's track.
- Five Disaster Medical Assistance Teams are pre-deployed to Texas with an additional 14 teams available across the Gulf Coast region.
- Five Federal Medical Stations, 250-bed facilities that can provide care for evacuated patients from hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities, are pre-positioned in Texas.
- Nearly 6,000 U.S. Public Health Service commissioned officers are activated ready to deploy to states that need assistance in preparing for Hurricane Ike. More than 500 of Public Health Service officers are currently staging or pre-positioned in Georgia, Louisiana and Texas.
- HHS' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing public messaging state and local partners pre-landfall focusing on protecting individual health and safety when authorities tell the public to evacuate from the path of a hurricane.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

- VA is staging fuel, water, food, medications, and supplies, and making arrangements for essential staff to be on-hand to meet the health care needs of veterans in the area.

U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury)

- Treasury is working with the U.S. Social Security Administration and the U.S. Postal Service to provide early payment delivery for SSA Cycle payments dated today, September 10th.
- Checks will be delivered early to specified ZIP Codes in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana, including New Orleans (a total of approximately 40,150 checks).
- Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control has begun to approve new licenses and amend existing licenses for the increased transfer of funds for hurricane relief on the island of Cuba. This will enhance the ability of U.S. citizens to contribute to Cuban hurricane relief through licensed providers.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- EPA has staff on-site in the region and EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs has initiated information sharing with its Texas Gulf Coast network and Kickapoo Tribe.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

- SBA is reaching out to homeowners, renters and businesses to encourage them to review their insurance policies to make sure they understand what is and isn't covered.
- If a homeowner, renter or business owner has an SBA disaster loan from a previous disaster event, and is having difficulty making their loan payments because of a more recent hurricane's impact, they should contact SBA's Disaster Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 to discuss their situation. The SBA may be able to defer their payments. SBA works with each borrower on a case by case basis.

The American Red Cross (ARC)

- ARC is providing information to potential evacuees, stressing that residents should bring prescription and emergency medication, extra clothing, toiletries, important documents, special items for children or older adults and other comfort items such as extra pillows or blankets when evacuating. ARC provides as many of these items as possible, but evacuation shelters are meant to be shorter-term locations.
- ARC workers have already mobilized to Texas, where supplies are in place and preparations are being made to help provide relief once Ike makes landfall.
- ARC welcomes all evacuees to established shelters, where relief workers provide a safe place to stay, food, water, comfort, basic health services and more.

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

- GSA is coordinating Logistics and Resource Support for all federal activities and is providing critical resources to effected areas.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Consumers with food safety questions can "Ask Karen," the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov. The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EDT Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. For more information on FEMA activities visit www.FEMA.gov and for more information on personal preparedness see www.Ready.gov.