



Hardee County Emergency Management

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THIS IS AN OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE FROM THE HARDEE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

For Immediate Release

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Hurricane Irma at the 5am update from the National Hurricane Center shows the track of Irma has been nudged just a bit west again. Hurricane warnings, now extend north to the Hernando/Citrus county line including Hardee County. Hurricane watches exist further north across Levy and Citrus counties. Impacts from Irma will be felt well away from the center, so don't get caught up on the center line.

Irma is a category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Do not put your guard down on this. Some fluctuations in intensity are likely to occur. Maximum sustained winds are 155 mph with a movement WNW at 12 mph. The center location is 22.5N and 78.8W.

With the current forecast, Hardee County can expect Tropical Storm force sustained winds to start on Sunday morning around 11am. HURRICANE FORCE winds around 7pm, with a duration expected 8-12 hours. This will be night time hours of hurricane force winds. Forecast currently has us back in Tropical Storm force winds on Monday around 10am.

Along with this, we could see as much as 15-20" of rain. This will add a multitude of danger to event. Mandatory evacuation is being ordered for all low-lying areas, mobile homes, RV's and poorly structured buildings. Shelters are in place for you to go. Keep in mind that Public Safety First Responders WILL NOT be able to respond during Tropical Storm Force and Hurricane Winds. This is going to be a duration of approximately 24 hours.

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District III-Rick Knight

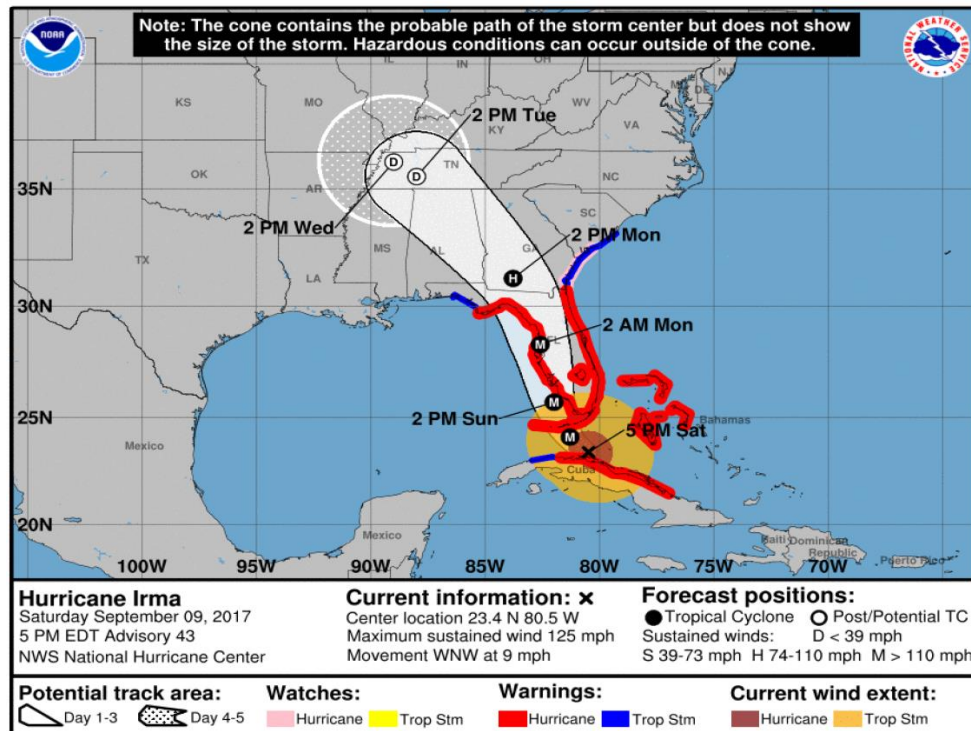
District IV- Russel Melendy

District V-Mike Thompson

With these timings, for safety reasons, add 12 hours ahead on any of them. Night time hurricane is very dangerous. Do not plan on going out. Stay in place until officials advise that it is safe to go out.

Residents should continue to secure their property, and take action today to assemble emergency supplies (gas, food, water, flashlights, batteries, etc.) A complete list can be found in various areas to include <http://floridadisaster.org> or <http://hardeecounty.net/eoc>.

Dangerous major hurricane impacts will effect Hardee County as well as the whole peninsula of Florida continues to increase. Prepare for a catastrophic hit.



Key points:

- **Local State of Emergency:**
 - Has been signed by BoCC
 - Has been signed by Town of Zolfo Springs
- **Florida Hospital Wauchula**
 - Florida Hospital will be open and functioning during the storm. However, when emergency response ceases operations due to tropical storm winds, the hospital secure their access for the safety of patients and staff, until the all clear is given.
- **Evacuation Orders:**

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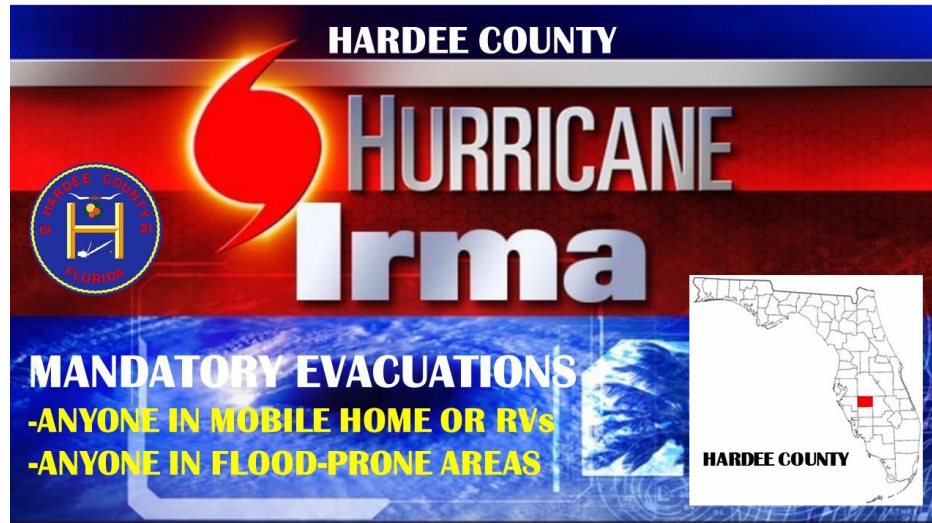
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- Mandatory evacuation for residents living in mobile homes, RVs, poorly structured buildings and low lying areas. Shelters space is available. Life Safety is the most important decision you can make right now.



- **Shelters**

- General Population shelter is open at Hilltop Junior High School, 2401 US Hwy. 17N, Wauchula.
- General Population shelter open at Bowling Green Elementary School at 4530 Church Avenue, in Bowling Green.

(This pertains to General Population Shelters Only)

All hurricane shelters in Hardee County will be accepting pets. If you are bringing a pet, please bring a pet carrier if you own one, pet food, a collar and a leash.

Bob Shayman,
Superintendent of Schools

- Special Needs shelter is open at South Florida State College at 2968 US Hwy. 17N, in Bowling Green.
Website for further info:
<http://www.hardeecounty.net/Site/content/eoc/shelters.htm>
- Special Needs Registry with the County by accessing the website at <http://www.hardeecounty.net/site/content/eoc/specialneeds.htm> or pick one up at the Emergency Operation Center at 404 W. Orange Street, in Wauchula.

As 5:00pm, on 9/9 there were 1,616 people in general population shelters, and 49 total in Special Needs shelter.

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- **Sandbags**
 - Operations are currently closed.
- **Curfew Orders:**
 - The Hardee County Sheriff's Office has issued a curfew order for 8:00pm – 7:00am daily, until it cancelled.

Copied from Sheriff's Office

"In response to the questions about the mandatory curfew, citizens who are required to go to work during the listed curfew hours or have a legitimate reason for being out will have limited excusal from the curfew. This mandatory curfew is being imposed to protect Hardee County citizens and their property from looting and/or other criminal activity. We are asking all Hardee County citizens for your cooperation and understanding during this time.

If you have any questions please contact the Hardee County Sheriff's Office at 863-773-4144."

- **Government:**
 - County government – closed on Monday
 - Courthouse – closed on Monday
 - City of Wauchula – closed on Monday
 - City of Bowling Green – closed on Monday
 - Town of Zolfo Springs – closed on Monday
 - Property Appraiser's office – closed on Monday
 - Tax Collector's office – closed on Monday
- **School Closings:**
 - Hardee County Schools will be CLOSED on Friday, Sept. 8. and Monday, Sept. 11.
 - South Florida State College and its campuses and facilities will close at 5:00pm Friday, Sept. 8 and remain closed through Monday, Sept. 11.

Weather

Rain: Rainfall is forecast to be extremely high. Hardee County could receive 15-20". Do not drive on flooded roads.

- Protect against life-threatening rainfall flooding having possible extensive impacts across west central and southwest Florida. Potential impacts include:
- Major rainfall flooding may prompt many evacuations and rescues.
- Rivers and tributaries may rapidly overflow their banks in multiple places. Small streams, creeks, canals, and ditches may become dangerous rivers. Flood control systems and barriers may become stressed.

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- Flood waters can enter many structures within multiple communities, some structures becoming uninhabitable or washed away. Many places where flood waters may cover escape routes. Streets and parking lots become rivers of moving water with underpasses submerged. Driving conditions become dangerous. Many road and bridge closures with some weakened or washed out.

Winds:

The likely time of arrival of Tropical Storm Force sustained winds are expected around mid-morning Sunday. We will be seeing spiral bands and squalls before that in the outer bands that will be gusts much higher.

- Protect against life-threatening wind having possible devastating impacts across West Central and Southwest Florida. Potential impacts include:
- Structural damage to sturdy buildings, some with complete roof and wall failures.
- Complete destruction of mobile homes. Damage greatly accentuated by large airborne projectiles. Locations may be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
- Numerous large trees snapped or uprooted along with fences and roadway signs blown over.
- Many roads impassable from large debris, and more within urban or heavily wooded places. Many bridges, causeways, and access routes impassable.
- Widespread power and communications outages.

Tornadoes

The threat of tornadoes will increase on Sunday.

- Protect against a dangerous tornado event having possible significant impacts across West Central and Southwest Florida. Potential impacts include:
- The occurrence of scattered tornadoes can hinder the execution of emergency plans during tropical events.
- Several places may experience tornado damage with a few spots of considerable damage, power loss, and communications failures.
- Locations could realize roofs torn off frame houses, mobile homes demolished, boxcars overturned, large trees snapped or uprooted, vehicles tumbled, and small boats tossed about. Dangerous projectiles can add to the toll.

Hurricane Force Winds are expected begin around 7:00pm Sunday night, and last for approximately 8-12 hours. This will be a night time occurrence. This will be extremely dangerous times. DO NOT be out during this time. Stay in place.

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KEEP IN MIND, this can change with each forecast and could arrive earlier than expected.

Watches and Warnings

Hurricane Warning:

Hardee County is under a Hurricane Warning.

Hurricane Warning

Means that hurricane conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area. Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion.

Recommended Actions:

- **Be in place today, where you will ride out this hurricane.**
- Monitor storm progress at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>
- Check emergency supply kits.
<http://www.hardeecounty.net/site/content/eoc/AreYouPrepared.htm>
- fill up clean containers and bathtubs with water from home. If hurricane hits, use pool water first to flush toilets
- Secure personal property. Bring items inside or tie down loose items from yard.
- Relocate to higher ground if you feel unsafe. Flood waters will be capable of quick ponding on roadways.
- State of Florida Emergency Management: <http://floridadisaster.org>

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