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Hazardous Weather Alert: Dangerous Seas, Rip Currents, and Potential Flooding in USVI

The NWS warns of hazardous marine conditions, rip currents, and isolated thunderstorms today. By Thursday, a northwesterly swell will bring 8-12 ft waves and an increased risk of flooding due to heavy rains expected through the weekend.

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The National Weather Service in San Juan has issued a Hazardous Weather Outlook for the U.S. Virgin Islands, warning of dangerous marine conditions, isolated thunderstorms, and life-threatening rip currents starting today and continuing into the weekend.

For Wednesday, March 19, forecasters are monitoring isolated thunderstorms, particularly over St. Croix's regional waters. Residents and mariners are urged to remain alert and prepared to seek

shelter if storms develop.

Marine conditions are expected to be hazardous for small craft, with seas reaching 7 feet or higher, especially in the Atlantic Waters and the Anegada Passage. Small craft operators should exercise caution throughout local waters.

Rip currents will pose life-threatening risks across north- and east-facing beaches of St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas. The strongest rip currents may develop near piers, jetties, and channels, making ocean conditions particularly dangerous for swimmers and beachgoers.

A larger northwesterly swell is forecast to arrive late Wednesday night, bringing a significant increase in wave heights and rough seas. By Thursday afternoon, waves are expected to reach 8 to 12 feet, with wave periods of 13 to 15 seconds. These long-period swells will result in dangerous breaking waves and treacherous rip currents, particularly along the Atlantic coastline.

Hazardous marine and coastal conditions are expected to persist into the weekend, with deteriorating sea conditions across the Atlantic Waters and Caribbean Passages.

Additionally, an unstable weather pattern is set to develop from Thursday into the weekend, increasing the potential for flooding rains across the USVI. Residents are advised to stay informed and be prepared for possible localized flooding and rough weather conditions.

Safety Recommendations

- Boaters and small craft operators should monitor marine forecasts and avoid venturing into hazardous waters.
- Swimmers and beachgoers are advised to avoid north- and east-facing beaches, as life-threatening rip currents and strong breaking waves are likely.
- Residents should prepare for flooding risks later in the week, as heavy rains could lead to hazardous conditions.