

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gonzalo Is Now A Cat 1 Hurricane, VI Braces For Impact

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What was just a tropical disturbance in the Atlantic on Sunday, has turned into a full-fledged hurricane on Monday night. According to the latest forecast from the National Weather Service, Gonzalo is now carrying maximum sustained winds of 75 mph, making it a Category 1 hurricane.

- [JUA Radar](#)
- [Gonzalo](#)

Places to Avoid

The Department of Public Works has issued a list of problematic areas on St. Croix and St. Thomas that residents should avoid traveling.

St. Croix

- La Grainge in Frederiksted
- Gallows Bay in Christiansted
- Melvin Evans Highway in the area of Diageo

St. Thomas

- Brookman Road
- Bolongo Bay and Crown Mountain
- Along Moravian Highway adjacent to the main branch of Banco Popular

The Department is asking motorists to seek alternate routes once the rains begin. Crews have already been dispatched to these areas in order to implement protective measures and to guard against the potential effects of the predicted rainfall.

In addition, with the anticipation of the heavy rainfall, all burials scheduled for Tuesday in public cemeteries will be postponed until further notice.

WAPA Issues Plan of Action

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority has activated its internal and external emergency plans in order to operate efficiently and safely as Hurricane Gonzalo moves in.

Executive Director, Hugo V. Hodge, Jr., said WAPA is closely monitoring the weather system and that under storm conditions, all employees are designated as essential and will report to work as scheduled to assist in the restoration of the electric and water systems in the event storm damage occurs.

Hodge and WAPA's Chief Operating Officer and Emergency Response Coordinator Gregory Rhymer have met with emergency response teams and determined that WAPA has adequate fuel and water storage to serve all customers; power plant personnel are currently securing generating equipment, water plants, fuel dock facilities, buildings and all other areas to minimize possible damage; line and engineering departments have designated damage assessment teams and restoration crews throughout the territory to immediately address problems in the field once the storm has passed; WAPA's contracted restoration companies will be placed on standby if weather projections indicate that assistance will be needed for high voltage work and other support services; local companies will also be on standby to provide support services; emergency radio and telephone systems have been checked and determined fully operational; and WAPA representatives will staff the emergency call centers to take calls from customers experiencing electricity and/or water service interruptions.

To report power or water issues after the storm passes, St. Thomas/St. John/Water Island customers may call 774-3552, press #4 or to 774-1424. On St. Croix, customers may call 773-2250 and press #7 or 773-0150. Customers should be prepared to give accurate information including clear directions to the home or business with the problem.

Message From Governor De Jongh

In a press release issued on Sunday, Governor de Jongh cautioned residents of the territory to monitor closely the storm, and prepare for rain and wind from Monday afternoon through Tuesday.

“In conjunction with our federal partners at FEMA, the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service in San Juan, I was provided an extensive update this afternoon by VITEMA Acting Director Austin Callwood on the present position of Tropical Storm Gonzalo and its projected path through our area tomorrow night. I also received a status report on the possible deployment of federal assets to the territory such as the FEMA advance team and other personnel. We have already begun discussion with our commissioners and directors of key local government agencies that would be activated to serve the community during a storm event: VITEMA, Police, Human Services, Public Works, WAPA and the American Red Cross,” de Jongh said.

He added: “I realize that we are in the middle of a long holiday weekend but I urge all residents to get up to speed on the threat of this storm system and take all precautions seriously. VITEMA has begun issuing notices to the public via the news media and through V.I. Alert. Take the necessary steps to protect your homes and your personal belongings as we prepare for the winds and rains associated with this tropical storm.”

VI Consortium will continue to monitor hurricane Gonzalo closely.