

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Update: Tropical Storm Erika Projected To Reach Territory On Thursday At 70 MPH

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Update: New USVI Forecast:

On its current path and based on projections, the center of Erika should make its closest point of approach to the Virgin Islands on Thursday at 6 p.m. when the storm center will be located about 25 miles to the north-northeast of St. John, according to new information provided by VITEAM. At that time, Erika is forecasted to be a strong tropical storm with sustained winds of up to 70 miles per hour, according to the National Weather Service – Weather Forecast Office at San Juan. Most models continue to indicate a significant amount of tropical moisture over the local area with a good potential for significant rainfall over the region.

Earlier...

As Danny leaves the territory virtually unscathed, bringing along with it some much-needed rain, tropical storm Erika has formed in the Atlantic, moving at about 20 miles per hour with a west-northwestward motion, according to the National Hurricane Center and VITEMA.

At 11 p.m. Monday, the center of Tropical Storm Erika was located near latitude 14.4 degrees North, longitude degrees 47.7 West, about 955 miles east of the Leeward Islands. The storm's forward speed is expected to decrease during the next couple of days.

Buoy observations and satellite wind data indicate that the maximum sustained winds are near 45 miles per hour with higher gusts. Some strengthening is forecast during the next couple of days.

Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 80 miles from the center. Earlier this evening, a NOAA buoy reported sustained winds of 45 miles per hour with a gust to 51 miles per hour.

There are no coastal watches or warnings in effect.

The National Hurricane Center is advising interests in the Leeward Islands to monitor the progress of Erika. Watches may be required for a portion of the Leeward Islands early Tuesday.

VITEMA Director Mona Barnes again urged the community to closely monitor this fast-moving system and to be prepared in the event a tropical storm watch or warning is issued for the US Virgin Islands.

"I continue to encourage the Virgin Islands community to remain very vigilant and very prepared. We are currently in peak of the Atlantic Hurricane Season and we will begin to see heightened activity in the Atlantic," Barnes said. "Ensure you have a well-stocked emergency supply kit with essential items for at least three to five days. Review your emergency disaster plan with your family so everyone knows what to do."

Emergency supply kits should include 1 gallon of water per person per day, dry foods, can opener, personal hygiene items, filled prescription medication, first aid kit, batteries, battery-operated radio, solar cell phone charger and other items needed to survive for an extended time without power. Special consideration should be given to the needs of children and elderly in the home as well as pets.

"Please stay tuned to local radio and television for weather updates and for information coming from local government officials on preparedness and response actions," Barnes added.

Barnes said the FEMA Region 2 Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT) that deployed to the USVI for Hurricane Danny is still in the territory and embedded in VITEMA's Emergency Operations Centers territory-wide. The IMATs are poised to provide emergency response support as needed.

