

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Coast Guard Issues Small Craft Advisory For USVI, Puerto Rico, As Tropical Storm Mathew Passes

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ST. CROIX -- The U.S. Coast Guard said on Wednesday that it remains vigilant in anticipation of Tropical Storm Matthew's passing south of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico Thursday and Friday.

The tropical storm is not expected to directly impact the territory, according to the National Weather Service, but it will pass close enough to cause strong winds and heavy rainfall -- which is already being experienced throughout the islands. On Wednesday, strong winds caused stoplights located at the Estate Carlton intersection on the Melvin Evans Highway here to [come off their hinges and crash onto the road](#), causing traffic to be temporarily impeded.

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency has yet to issue a press release on the inclement weather.

Tropical Storm Mathew has already made its mark after leaving one person dead in St. Vincent, who was crushed by a falling bolder, according to St. Lucia News Online. The storm passed over St. Vincent with 90 miles per hour winds and very heavy rainfall. Currently, it's packing 60 miles per hour winds and will continue to strengthen as it continues to travel, climbing to about 100 miles per hour by Monday as it heads to Jamaica.

"Mariners, boaters, swimmers, and the general public should make preparations and monitor official weather updates and any active small craft advisories as this tropical storm moves through the area," said Capt. Robert Warren, Sector San Juan commander and Captain of the Port San Juan. "We will continue to monitor the winds and sea conditions in our area of responsibility."

As Tropical Storm Matthew approaches, swimmers, recreational boaters and the general public should exercise caution and stay away from shoreline rocks and other potentially dangerous coastal area until weather and surf conditions normalize, Coast Guard said. There are small craft advisories in effect for much of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from 2p.m. Wednesday through Friday evening as well as an anticipated increase in rip currents throughout the area:

<ftp://tgftp.nws.noaa.gov/data/raw/fz/fzca52.tjsj.cwf.sju.txt>

Here are a few tips to help mariners protect themselves, their families and their vessels:

- Do not go out to sea in a recreational boat if you know bad weather is approaching and pay close attention to any official and active small craft advisories.
- At the first sign of heavy weather seek shelter. While en route, secure boat and prepare passengers for possible rough water, heavy rains and high winds: have all aboard put on life jackets.
- Boaters and coastal residents can get storm and hurricane information from VHF marine radios, commercial radio and television stations and newspapers, or NOAA weather radios
- Contact local marinas to ask for advice about securing your vessel. Marina operators are knowledgeable and can advise you on the best methods for securing your boat.
- Take action now. The effects of a tropical storm can be felt well in advance of its arrival and can prevent the safe completion of preparations.