

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VITEMA Urging Community to be Ready as Hurricane Peak Season Nears

Hurricane Season / **Published On July 23, 2020 06:57 AM /**

Staff Consortium **July 23, 2020**



The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency is encouraging the public to prepare now for the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season. The season is heading into its peak, from August to October, when the frequency of storms is expected to increase.

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency is encouraging the public to take time now to make sure they are ready for the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season. The season is heading into its peak, from August to October, when the frequency of storms is expected to increase.

“Now is the time to make sure that you have supplies, such as water and dried goods, to last at least 10 days and that you and your family have a plan for communicating and know what to do if a storm or hurricane impacts the Territory,” said VITEMA Director Daryl Jaschen. “Consider the needs of children, the elderly and pets in the home when you plan. Additionally, everyone should also prepare their homes and store any loose items that could become a projectile in a storm.”

He added, “In this COVID environment, it is also imperative that you avoid waiting until the last minute to rush to the store to get what you need. Preparing now means that you are being proactive in keeping your family safe and knowing what to do means that there will be much less stress when a storm is headed our way.”

VITEMA said it continues to coordinate with all government agencies, its federal partners and non-government organizations to ensure the territory is prepared to respond in the event a storm. This coordination effort includes the distribution of sandbags, readying shelters, shoring up communications capabilities and much more, the agency said.

A key member of this partnership is the VI Department of Human Services. D.H.S. Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez stated that the department has been working diligently with all partner agencies to ensure the U.S. Virgin Islands is responsive and a shelter and feeding plan is in place during this 2020 Hurricane Season.

“We are asking that everyone be prepared to shelter in place, as a primary measure, or with family and friends who have a secure place to weather the storm,” Ms. Causey-Gomez said. “Due to social distancing measures related to COVID-19, we will need to keep the number of people in congregate shelters to a minimum with extensive screening measures.”

The agency said it's keeping a watchful eye on the Atlantic Basin. Today, Tropical Storm Gonzalo formed near Latitude 9.9 North, Longitude 45.0 West.

Tropical Storm Gonzalo

The fast-developing weather system that started taking form over the weekend is expected to become a hurricane today, according to the National Hurricane Center (N.H.C.).

A Hurricane Watch is in effect for Barbados, N.H.C. said.

A Hurricane Watch means that hurricane conditions are possible within the watch area. A watch is typically issued 48 hours before the anticipated first occurrence of tropical-storm-force winds, conditions that make outside preparations difficult or dangerous.

Interests in the Windward Islands should monitor the progress of this system. Additional watches or warnings will likely be required for some of these islands later today.

According to N.H.C.'s 5:00 a.m. advisory, the center of Tropical Storm Gonzalo was located near latitude 10.0 North, longitude 47.0 West. Gonzalo is moving toward the west near 12 mph (19 km/h). A general westward motion at a faster forward speed is expected followed by a turn toward the west-northwest on Saturday. On the forecast track, the center of Gonzalo would approach the Windward Islands late Friday and Saturday.

Maximum sustained winds have increased to near 65 mph (100 km/h) with higher gusts. Further strengthening is forecast during the next couple of days, and Gonzalo is expected to become a hurricane later today.

Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 35 miles (55 km) from the center.

The estimated minimum central pressure is 997 mb (29.44 inches).

© Viconsortium 2026