

ATT Says it's Preparing For Incoming Weather System

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AT&T said Wednesday that its ready for what is expected to become Tropical Storm Isaias with an arsenal of disaster response equipment and personnel on standby.

"We are closely monitoring and preparing for the storm," the communications giant said.

The Virgin Islands could be impacted by tropical storm-force winds beginning tonight. AT&T said its preparation includes:

- Topping off fuel generators.
- Testing high-capacity back-up batteries at cell sites.
- Protecting physical facilities against flooding.
- Staging other emergency response and network recovery equipment in strategic locations for quick deployment following the storm.

- Staging dedicated FirstNet deployable network assets for use by public safety agencies on FirstNet to request as needed.

AT&T said it has installed more generators at critical cell towers and switching facilities, and move electronics essential to network operations above expected flood levels. Additionally, the company's Network Disaster Recovery (NDR) team is on standby and prepared to deploy assets if needed.

“Customers rely on us, especially during major storms,” said Alexandra Verdiales Costa, regional VP, AT&T External and Legislative Affairs. “That's why we practice readiness drills and simulations throughout the year. And we do all we can to have our networks prepared when severe weather strikes. We’ve worked for the past few days to position equipment and crews, and are ready to respond if needed. We’re also closely linked with public officials in their storm response efforts.”

The AT&T Network Disaster Recovery (NDR) program is one of the industry’s largest and most advanced disaster response programs, according to the news release. "Our fleet includes hundreds of technology recovery and support trailers that can be quickly deployed to support customers and first responders," the company said.

Response equipment readied in the wake of an event includes:

- Mobile cell sites and mobile command centers like Cell on Wheels (COWs) and Cell on Light Trucks (COLTs)
- Emergency communications vehicles (ECVs)
- Flying Cell on Wings (Flying COWs)
- Drones
- A self-sufficient base camp: This is complete with sleeping tents, bathrooms, kitchen, laundry facilities, an on-site nurse and meals ready to eat (MREs).
- Hazmat equipment and supplies
- Technology and support trailers to provide infrastructure support and mobile heating ventilation and air conditioning
- Internal and external resources for initial assessment and recovery efforts

The company urged Virgin Islanders to prepare for the impending weather system.