

Update: Tropical Storm Fiona to Approach USVI and Puerto Rico This Weekend; Little Change in Strength Forecast

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Tropical Storm Fiona, which formed in the Atlantic late Wednesday will arrive to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico over the weekend, according to the National Hurricane Center. N.H.C. is expected to start issuing tropical storm warnings later today.

So far tropical storm watches have been issued for Saba and St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Montserrat, Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Anguilla. This means that tropical storm conditions are possible within the next 48 hours — around late Friday.

"Interests elsewhere in the northern Leeward Islands, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Hispaniola should monitor the progress of this system, as additional tropical storm watches or

warnings will likely be required for portions of these areas later today," according to N.H.C.

At 500 a.m. Thursday, the center of Tropical Storm Fiona was located near latitude 16.6 North, longitude 53.0 West. Fiona is moving toward the west near 13 mph (20 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue for the next several days. On the forecast track, the center of Fiona is forecast to move through the Leeward Islands late Friday and Friday night, and move near the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico this weekend.

Maximum sustained winds are near 50 mph (85 km/h) with higher gusts. Little change in strength is forecast during the next few days.

Wind: Tropical storm conditions are possible across portions of the northern Leeward Islands by Friday night, where a Tropical Storm Watch has been issued.

Rainfall: Fiona is expected to produce total rainfall accumulations of 3 to 5 inches with maximum totals of 8 inches across the northern Leeward Islands, the British and U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and eastern Hispaniola. These rains may produce isolated flash and urban flooding, along with isolated mudslides in areas of higher terrain.

Surf: Swells generated by Fiona are expected to begin affecting the northern Leeward Islands on Friday. These swells could cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions. Please consult products from your local weather office.