

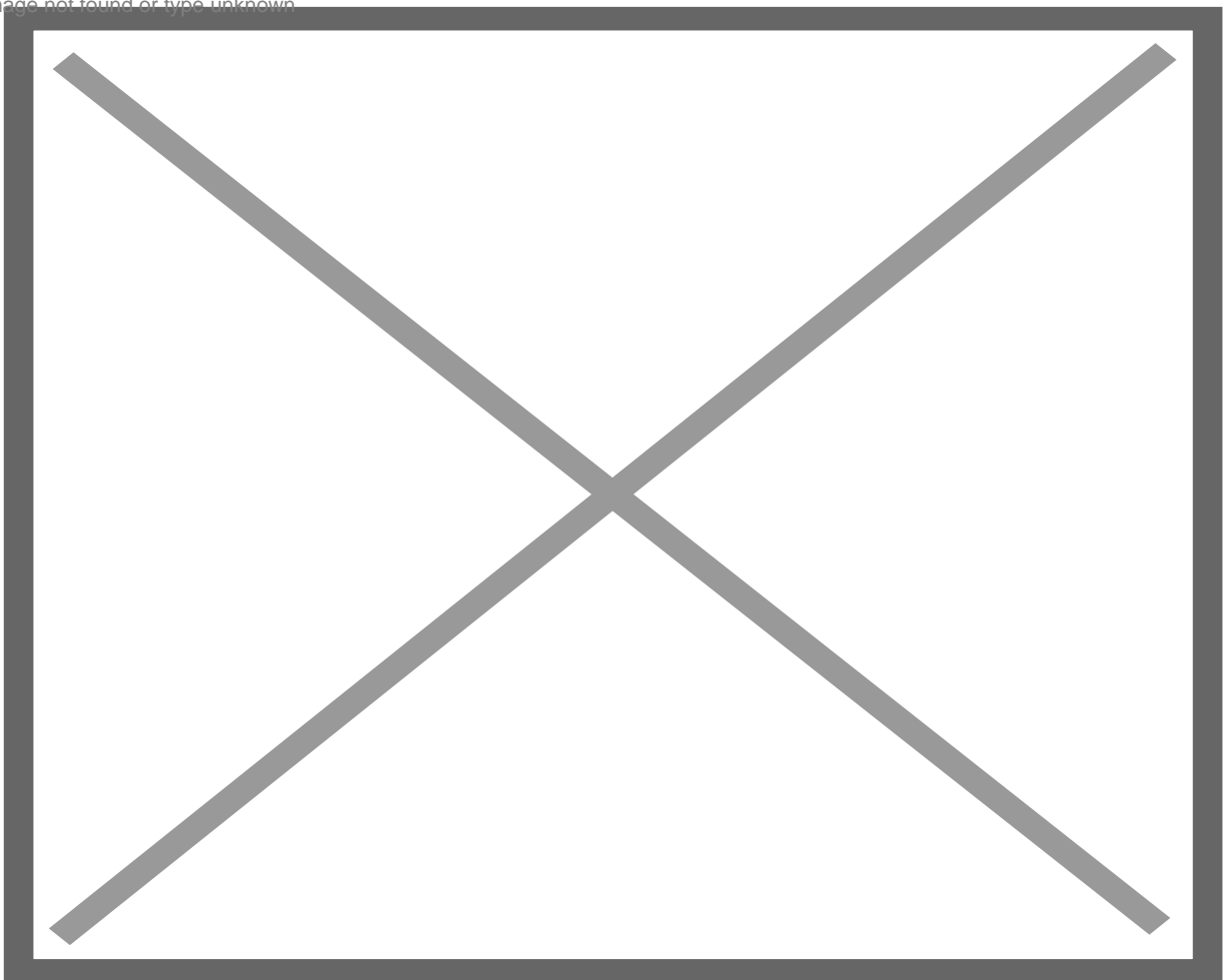
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Bryan Says No Curfew But Residents Should Stay Inside as Warning is Issued For USVI and PR; Fiona to Strengthen Gradually, Reach USVI Saturday; Banks Closed

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Elesha George **September 16, 2022**

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As the Leeward Islands prepare for the impact of Tropical Storm Fiona later this evening, Governor Albert Bryan, while cautioning residents of the territory to also prepare for the weather system, announced that ports will remain open.

Sea ports including ferries operating between St. Thomas and St. Johns will remain open until 10:00 p.m. Friday while airports are not forecast to close though cancellation of flights, he said, can be expected.

“So far, there’s no indication that the airports are going to be closed but realistically speaking with 40-45 mph/50mph wind, if you have a flight scheduled tomorrow, it’s more than likely going to be cancelled,” he said during a storm update press briefing Friday.

Given the current trajectory of the storm, there are no plans to implement curfews either but residents have been advised to stay home.

“As you know, it’s been dry for a while so we expect that when it starts to rain boulders, especially over in St. Johns-St Thomas where it’s mountainous, are going to be coming loose — things are going to get washed away; trees will fall, hopefully no poles will,” he continued.

The government has been distributing sand bags to people who are not mobile and are continuing gutter cleaning.

Banks Closed

Firstbank VI and Banco Popular will be closed Saturday as a result of Tropical Storm Fiona's impending impact to the USVI, the banks made known in separate releases Friday.

FirstBank

FirstBank advised the general public that all branches will be closed tomorrow, Saturday, September 17th due to the impending weather conditions associated with Tropical Storm Fiona.

The bank said it anticipates that regular business hours will resume on Monday, September 19th. "Please stay connected to the FirstBank VI Facebook page and local media for further operational updates," the bank said.

Clients are reminded that accounts can be accessed online 24/7 through the Digital Banking platform. For more information, please visit www.1firstbank.com.

Popular

Banco Popular said its Sunny Isles branch on St. Croix and the Main Branch in St. Thomas will remain closed on Saturday, September 17. All other branches within the Region, including the British Virgin Islands branches, are closed during the weekends, as part of normal operations.

The bank's ATMs will continue to operate and remain available according to weather conditions.

"We will resume operations on Monday if there are no major consequences due to the passing of Tropical Storm Fiona," Popular said.

For more information, access Mi Banco Online by visiting www.popular.com or call TeleBanco at (787)724-3650 or 1-888-724-3650.

Oriental Bank

Oriental Bank announced that its St. Thomas and St. Croix branches will be closed Saturday, September 17th due to tropical storm conditions. The branches will reopen Monday.

For updates on bank hours and operations visit Oriental’s Facebook page OrientalBankUSVI and media outlets. Customers can access their accounts and make transactions in a several ways every day using any of the following methods:

- Online Banking and Mobile Banking – Check balances, make payments, and transfer funds online 24/7.
- Mobile Banking customers can deposit checks using their smartphone cameras, verify balances and transactions, make payments and transfers, and send money to other people.
- Make Loans Payments Online – Customers can make their payments through My Payments for personal loans, car loans and leases, even if they do not have a deposit account with us. Customers can access through orientalbank.com/usvi.
- Balances, transfers, recent transactions, and other services: Use our automated telephone service at 1-866-622-6800, available 24/7.
- ATMs - Customers can check balances, make withdrawals, and transfer funds between accounts.

Latest TS Fiona Update

A tropical storm warning has been issued for the USVI and Puerto Rico, including Vieques and Culebra, along with the British Virgin Islands. Warnings have also been issued for Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, and Anguilla, Saba and St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Guadeloupe, St. Barthelemy, and St. Martin.

According to the National Hurricane Center's 5:00 p.m. forecast, the center of Tropical Storm Fiona was located near latitude 16.4 North, longitude 61.1 West. Fiona is moving toward the west near 15 mph (24 km/h). A westward to west-northwestward motion with a decrease in forward speed is expected through early Monday. A turn toward the northwest is forecast later on Monday. On the forecast track, the center of Fiona is expected to move across the Leeward Islands during the next few hours, near or just south of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico Saturday into Sunday, and approach the southern or eastern coast of the Dominican Republic Sunday afternoon. Fiona is forecast to move across the Dominican Republic Sunday night and Monday.

Maximum sustained winds are near 50 mph (85 km/h) with higher gusts. Gradual strengthening is forecast during the next 48 hours or so before the center of Fiona reaches the Dominican Republic on Sunday.

Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 140 miles (220 km) from the center.

Key Message

The bulk of the Fiona's convective activity remains sheared to the east of the center. However, there are some initial signs of new convection developing in a small ring around the center, the low-level cloud field is thickening up a bit, and visible satellite images show high-level convective cirrus blowing from east to west. It remains to be seen if this is suggestive of some lessening of the deep-layer shear over the system and a moistening of the ambient atmosphere. The initial intensity remains 45 kt given little change in Fiona's organization since earlier today. The next Air Force Reserve reconnaissance mission is scheduled for this evening.

Fiona's center jumped a bit to the north today, and it's just about to move over or just to the north of Guadeloupe. The initial motion is estimated to be 280 degrees at 13 kt, with the storm being steered westward by subtropical ridging to the north. The track forecast philosophy has not changed from earlier today. Fiona is expected to reach the western edge of the ridge, slow down, and turn northwestward by day 3, and then north-northwestward by day 5. The guidance remains

in generally good agreement on this scenario, with the notable exception being the ECMWF model, which shows a smaller Fiona not turning as sharply or moving as fast as in the other models by the end of the forecast period. The new NHC track prediction is adjusted northward during the first 48-60 hours of the forecast to account for the northward jump of the center, but it otherwise falls back in line with this morning's forecast on days 3 through 5 and lies a bit to the west of the consensus aids.

Assuming that recent satellite trends are a harbinger of possible strengthening, the NHC intensity forecast continues to show gradual intensification while Fiona moves across the far northeastern Caribbean Sea during the next 48 hours. Although Hispaniola's terrain could cause some weakening in the 60-72 hour period, the amount of weakening will probably depend on how much of the wind field moves over the island or remains over the adjacent waters. After 72 hours, the global models indicate that the circulation will become re-established over the far southwestern Atlantic, and the official forecast continues to show Fiona becoming a hurricane by the end of the forecast period.

Wind: Tropical storm conditions are beginning across portions of the Leeward Islands within the warning area and will continue through Saturday. Tropical storm conditions will spread westward to the U.S. and British Virgin Islands Saturday morning, and across Puerto Rico Saturday afternoon and Saturday night. Tropical storm conditions are possible on Dominica this evening or tonight and across the watch area in the Dominican Republic beginning Sunday afternoon.

Fiona is forecast to produce the following rainfall totals:

Leeward Islands and Northern Windward Islands: 3 to 6 inches.

British and U.S. Virgin Islands: 4 to 6 inches

Localized coastal flooding is also possible elsewhere in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For information specific to your area, please see products issued by your local National Weather Service forecast office.

Puerto Rico: 4 to 8 inches with maximum totals of 12 inches, particularly across eastern and southern Puerto Rico.

Dominican Republic: 6 to 10 inches with maximum totals of 16 inches possible

Haiti: 1 to 3 inches with isolated maximum totals of 5 inches

Turks and Caicos: 4 to 8 inches