

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

BERMUDA:HURRICANE FLORENCE

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Hurricane Florence – a Category 1 hurricane since the early hours of 10 September – is predicted to strengthen over the next 24 hours and is expected to pass Bermuda during the morning of Monday 11 September as a Category 2 hurricane.

At 2:00 PM AST, the centre of Hurricane Florence was located near latitude 29.2 north and longitude 66.1 west, or about 365 km SSW of Bermuda, according to the National Hurricane Centre's (NHC) Tropical Prediction Centre. Florence is reported to be moving NNW at 20km/hour, with maximum sustained winds of 150km/hour. A hurricane warning has been in effect for Bermuda since 5:00AM AST on 10 September.

It is worth highlighting that Hurricane Florence is considered to be a large tropical cyclone – given that hurricane force winds extend outward up to 75 km and tropical storm winds up to 415 km from the centre. Although the predicted track does not currently have Hurricane Florence passing directly over Bermuda, the cyclone is nevertheless expected to affect the island as it passes nearby. The NHC reports that wind gusts of 57 mph have already been reported as of the afternoon of 10 September.

According to reports from the Bermuda Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross, winds have been increasing, and are expected to do so overnight, with a forecast of thunderstorms and rain.

The airport was closed as of midnight on Saturday 9 September, and will remain closed until the runways are checked post storm. The ports have also been closed until damage assessments for surge and flooding can be undertaken, and they are deemed safe for entry. Longbird Bridge - one of the connectors from east to west - was closed at 5pm, and the Island's Ferry service was terminated at 4:30 pm and will not resume until after the storm's passage. The Causeway - the main connection between the east and west ends of the island - is being closely monitored and will be closed with 1 hour's notice; after that, no vehicles - including Emergency Services - will be allowed to cross, given that the Causeway is very low and prone to wash-over in a storm.

All government offices, schools and businesses on the island have been closed and will remain so until after the storm. The Island Telephone and Electric Company are on standby and will begin repairs as soon as possible.

The Bermuda Hotel Association along with the Ministry of Tourism have been completing their preparations, including moving guests from low-lying properties to higher ground. All residents in low-lying areas are being strongly advised to prepare for storm surge flooding and to secure their properties accordingly, as well as being encouraged to seek shelter at Cedar Bridge Academy which is now manned and open.

Storm surge values of 6 to 8 feet above normal tide levels, along with large and dangerous battering waves are likely along the coast of Bermuda, as Florence passes near the island. Florence is expected to produce total rain accumulations of 5 to 8 inches over Bermuda, with possible maximum amounts of 10 inches. The National Hurricane Centre and the Bermuda Weather Service are warning against large ocean swells and dangerous surf conditions, including strong rip tides.

Red Cross action

Board members of the Bermuda Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross have been in close communications and are coordinating with the Bermuda Emergency Management Organization (EMO) – along with police and NGOs. The BRCS remains on full stand-by in coordination with the EMO.

The Headquarters office has been fully secured with storm shutters and doors have been boarded, all electronics have been secured and all backup discs are with the administrator at home. All tenants on the property have secured their spaces as well.

Coordination and Information

On Saturday 9 September, following a meeting of all members, the EMO held a press conference detailing preparations on the island. Cedarbridge Academy, the largest designated shelter, has been opened and is being manned - with people in low-lying areas being strongly advised to prepare their homes for storm surges, as the storm will be at its closest during high tide.

The EMO plans to meet again on Monday 11 September, once the storm has passed. The Bermuda Regiment has been partially called up, with some soldiers reporting for duty by 5pm, and the rest of the regiment on standby. The Government will open more shelters as needed. Police are monitoring the Causeway (the only connection between the east and west ends of the island), as it is vulnerable to storm surge and flooding and was washed out during Hurricane Fabian in 2003, with the loss of 4 lives. The Bermuda Fire Service has added extra personnel to the east end of the island to help deal with any fires or medical emergencies.

The Federation’s Sub Regional Office and PADRU’s Disaster Management Delegate based in Port of Spain, Trinidad, are closely monitoring the progress of Hurricane Florence, and remain in regular contact with the Bermuda Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross – to assess needs and provide support, as required.

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Source: Bermuda Weather Service

