

HURRICANE MARIA – INFORMATION NOTE #2

AS OF 7:00PM AST ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

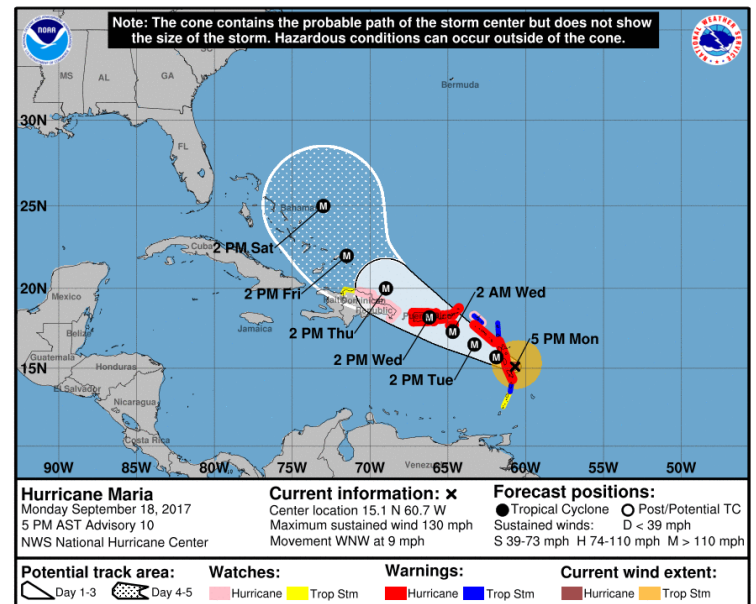
MESSAGE: Hurricane Maria becomes an extremely dangerous category 4 hurricane as it directly impacts Dominica during the next few hours.

Status of Hurricane Maria as at 5:00pm (EDT) September 18, 2017			
Winds	Speed	Longitude	Latitude
130 MPH	9 MPH	15.1 North	60.7 West

THE SITUATION:

Hurricane Maria, the 15th named storm of the 2017 Tropical Atlantic Hurricane Season, is now a dangerous category 4 hurricane. According to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida, as at 5:00 pm (AST), Monday September 18, 2017, Maria was located 15.1N and 60.7W, about 45 miles east-southeast of Dominica and 35 miles northeast of Martinique. It has maximum sustained winds of 130 mph with a minimum central pressure of 950 mb. Maria is moving toward the west-northwest near 9 mph (15 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue through Wednesday.

On the forecast track, the center of Maria will move near Dominica and the adjacent Leeward Islands during the next few hours, over the extreme northeastern Caribbean Sea the remainder of tonight and Tuesday, and approach Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands Tuesday night and Wednesday.



Additional strengthening is forecast during the next 24 to 36 hours, and Maria is expected to be an extremely dangerous major hurricane during the next couple of days. Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 25 miles (35 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 125 miles (205 km).

Participating States:

Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Virgin Islands



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SUMMARY OF WARNINGS AND WATCHES IN EFFECT:

A Hurricane Warning is in effect for...

- Dominica
- St. Kitts, Nevis
- Montserrat
- British Virgin Islands

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for...

- Anguilla
- Antigua and Barbuda
- St. Lucia

A Hurricane Watch is in effect for...

- Anguilla

A Tropical Storm Watch is in effect for...

- St. Vincent and the Grenadines

CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE FOR METEOROLOGY AND HYDROLOGY (CIMH) WEATHER UPDATE:

The Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) provided a briefing for Regional Response Mechanism partners today at 1:00PM today, Monday September 18, 2017. CIMH models suggest that the system will produce rainfall of up to 12 inches with maximum rainfall of 350-400mm in Dominica. Southern Dominica, specifically the southeastern areas should expect heavy rain and wind impacts.

WEATHER - Heavy showers and thundershowers extend 120 to 200 km from the storm centre. Rain bands with imbedded showers and thundershowers are moving into the Central Lesser Antilles. Expect gusty winds to increase beginning tonight into tomorrow.

FLOOD/LANDSLIDES: Flood producing rains have already been experienced in Barbados. Such rainfall amounts are likely to increase and lead to life threatening flash flooding, dangerous river conditions and debris flows especially due to already blocked waterways in the Central Leeward Islands. Rainfall amounts will be enhanced due to local topographic conditions. The persistence of rainfall and already saturated soils will exacerbate flooding especially in low lying areas. The persistence of rainfall due to multiple systems will raise the likelihood of landslides in prone areas within the rainfall field and the uprooting of large trees leading to debris flows, blocked intakes and roads. Damage to low level bridges, shifting of temporary bridges and disruption to utility services is likely.

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WINDS: Maria, as it approaches the Leeward Islands, will produce Category 4 winds with stronger gusts in areas of thunderstorms. Wind speeds will cause devastating damage. Damage to power lines, homes and infrastructure will occur. There remains the possibility that catastrophic damage can occur as the system strengthens in the vicinity of Dominica. Trees will be uprooted resulting in power outages, blocked roads and debris flows.

WAVES: Maximum significant wave heights of above ~11 metres are likely in open waters close to the Leeward Islands. This will result in rough sea conditions, dangerous swells and damaging waves. Damage to coastal infrastructure is likely on the eastern side of the Leeward Islands. Notwithstanding, marine conditions will deteriorate on the western side as Maria tracks into the Caribbean Sea. Marine operators should exercise extreme caution and seek to protect assets. Storm surge in the vicinity of 3-4 m can be expected in low lying sheltered coastal bays and will be exacerbated by runoff, tidal conditions and wave run up. Surge is likely to increase as Maria strengthens.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SUMMARIES OF THE NATIONAL ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY CDEMA PSs:

Barbados – Department of Emergency Management

- Schools were closed today, September 18, 2017
- Tropical Storm Watch lifted as at 2:00pm today, September 18, 2017

Dominica – Office of Disaster Management (ODM)

- National Emergency Planning Organisation (NEPO) met at 5:00pm on Sunday September 17, 2017
- EOC activated at 6:30 pm Sunday September 17, 2017
- A national shut down was announced by the Prime Minister, today September 18, 2017
- All shelters are opened
- 314 persons are in shelters and more persons expected
- Persons in low lying areas are advised to move to higher ground
- Marine advisory issued: Fisher folk were advised to move vessels to safe location
- Issued public advisories
- Prepositioned heavy duty machinery in strategic locations to facilitate speedy response
- ODM along with the Meteorological Service continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as necessary

Grenada – National Disaster Management Agency (NaDMA)

- Shelters remained closed but will open if required
- Providing updates to the public as necessary

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Montserrat – Disaster Management Coordination Agency

- NEOC activated at 2:00pm today, September 18, 2017
- National shut down in effect from 12:00 noon today September 18, 2017
- Shelters opened today, September 18, 2017
- Pre-deployed security emergency personnel

St. Kitts and Nevis – National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

Pre-strike

- The pre-strike meeting held on St. Kitts at 8:30 a.m was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and on Nevis at NDMD chaired by the Premier 9:00 a.m. Monday 18th September 2017.

Closures

- All government offices/sectors closed at 2:00 pm and schools and banks at 12:00 noon and the Private sector at 2:00 p.m.

Shelter and Shelter Management

- **Nevis:** Ten (10) shelters will be opened from 4 pm in 1 St. Paul, 2 St. John, 2 St. Georges, 2 St. James and 3 St. Thomas.
- **St. Kitts:** one (1) each in districts 1,2,3,5,6,7 and (2) two in district #8 and three in district #4.

NEOC/EOC Activation

- Partial activation of both the NEOC (St. Kitts) at 8 a.m. and full activation the EOC (Nevis) at 8:00 p.m. On Nevis, the Fire and Rescue Services will be posted at the EOC for rapid deployment from 6 p.m.
- On Nevis the Health Sector is assisting with transporting the vulnerable to the shelters. On St. Kitts, Community and Social Development (Welfare) with assist similarly

Mandatory Evacuations: Precautionary

- St. Kitts: Half way tree to New Guinea (Coastline)
- Pump Bay (Sandy Point)
- Old Road Bay (Below Sprat Net)
- Newtown and Irishtown (Bay Road)

Saint Lucia – National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)

- National Emergency Management Advisory Committee met at 11:30am yesterday, September 17, 2017
- NEOC was partially activated as of 6:00pm yesterday, September 17, 2017
- All key stakeholders including emergency personnel were alerted and all disaster committees placed on standby

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- A national shut down was announced by the Acting Prime Minister today September 18, 2017
- Appealed to persons who reside in traditional flood/landslide prone communities to evacuate
- NEMO is engaging in heavy public awareness activities utilizing all forms of media
- NEMO along with the Meteorological Service continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as necessary

St. Vincent and the Grenadines – National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)

- The NEOC was partially activated as of 7:00 pm September 17, 2017.
- Marine Advisories were issued
- Government offices and the private sector remained opened
- NEMO along with the Meteorological Service continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as necessary

REGIONAL ACTIONS

CDEMA Coordinating Unit

- The CDEMA Coordinating Unit is in contact with the National Disaster Coordinators (NDCs) of the threatened Participating States.
- The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) remains on alert to support any of the impacted Participating States. The Rapid Needs Assessment Teams (RNATs), the CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU), the CARICOM Disaster Assessment and Coordination (CDAC) team, CARICOM Operational Support Team (COST) and Search and Rescue Teams are all on standby.

Regional Security Systems (RSS)

- Standby arrangements have been made with the Barbados Coast Guard as an option for logistics support
- Placed the Caricom Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU) on standby for deployment
- Has made standby arrangements for Security deployments into affected states if required

The CDEMA CU urges all members of the Regional Response Mechanism, and the public to monitor the progress of this system.

CONTACT DETAILS: The CDEMA CU 24-hour contact number 1(246) 434-4880

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The public is advised to...

- Monitor radio or television and other **official sources of information** for progress reports
- Update your personal family preparedness plan and action items according to that plan
- The website www.weready.org provides additional information

Tropical Storm and Hurricane Safety tips

Hurricanes can be dangerous, listening to the hurricane warning messages and planning ahead can reduce the chances of injury or major property damage. Here are a few steps to help you be prepared this hurricane season:

- ✓ *Know your Emergency Shelters:* Contact the National Disaster Office for the closest shelters. Have evacuation routes planned to the emergency shelters near you.
- ✓ *Have a Hurricane Survival Kit*
- ✓ *Protect your windows:* Permanent shutters are the best protection. A lower-cost approach is to put up plywood panels. Use 1/2 inch plywood--marine plywood is best--cut to fit each window. Remember to label each panel according to its respective window. Pre-drill holes every 18 inches for screws. Do this long before the storm.
- ✓ *Trim back branches from trees:* Trim branches away from your home and cut all dead or weak branches on any trees on your property.
- ✓ *Check into your Home and Auto Insurance:* Confirm that policies are valid and coverage is appropriate.
- ✓ *Make arrangements for pets and livestock:* Pets may not be allowed into emergency shelters for health and space reasons. Contact your local humane society for information on animal shelters.
- ✓ *Develop an emergency communication plan:* Make sure that all family members know what to do. Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water. Teach children how and when to call police or fire department and which radio station to tune to for emergency information. In case family members are separated from one another during a disaster (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together

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Hurricane Watches and Warnings

A **Hurricane Watch** is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.

A **Hurricane Warning** is issued when hurricane conditions (winds of 74 miles per hour or greater or dangerously high water and rough seas) are expected in 24 hours or less.

During a Hurricane Watch

- Listen to the radio or television for hurricane progress reports.
- Check emergency supplies.
- Fuel car.
- Get cash (in case ATMs stop working after the hurricane)
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys, and garden tools and anchor objects that cannot be brought inside.
- Secure buildings by closing and boarding up windows.
- Remove outside antennas and satellite dishes.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly.
- Store drinking water in clean jugs, bottles, and cooking utensils.
- Bring pets safely inside with adequate food and water.
- Charge cell phone
- Check your Hurricane Survival Kit to ensure it contains all that you will need.

During a Hurricane Warning

- Listen constantly to a radio or television for official instructions.
- Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home.
- Stay inside, away from windows, skylights, and glass doors.
- Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light.
- If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is restored.
- Put your refrigerator on the coldest setting and keep its doors closed. Turn off utilities if instructed to do so.
- Keep phone lines clear except for serious emergencies
- If you need to evacuate your home, lock up home and go to the nearest shelter.
- Take blankets and sleeping bags to shelter.

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