

GLOUCESTER COUNTY
EMERGENCY INFORMATION

**HURRICANE FLORENCE
ANNOUNCEMENT 2**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Tuesday, September 11, 2018

TIME: 6:00 PM

CONTACT: Emergency Public Information Officer

PHONE: 804-693-5730

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM GLOUCESTER COUNTY

WEATHER UPDATE: Hurricane Florence is predicted to bring tropical storm force winds to our area as early as Thursday morning. Significant storm surge, coastal and inland flooding (including potential for flash floods), and heavy rainfall is expected through the weekend as this storm is predicted to slow and stall after landfall. State officials have stressed the danger and life-threatening nature of the storm and all are encouraged to take this storm seriously.

EVACUATION INFORMATION: The Governor of Virginia has issued a mandatory evacuation order for Zone A residents across the Commonwealth. This zone includes the lowest-lying and most flood-prone areas in Gloucester. To find information on your specific zone, visit www.knowyourzoneva.org or call 2-1-1 Virginia by phone. Law enforcement officials will not force people out of their residences. Those evacuating will be allowed back into the area after the storm unless there are safety issues such as unsafe roads, electric wires and downed trees. The Sheriff's department staff will be conducting special patrols through the evacuation zone areas as an added security measure.

EVACUATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: Due to Route 17 being one of the primary evacuation routes for Hampton Roads as well as Gloucester, it is highly recommended that residents plan to leave as early as possible if planning to evacuate. Tropical Storm force winds

as well as coastal and road flooding due to heavy rain will make travel difficult at times, if not impossible. Storm impacts are predicted for mid-day Thursday through the weekend.

BRIDGES & ROADWAYS: Local bridges will be unsafe to travel in the event wind speeds exceed 45 mph. There are several bridges on the evacuation route. There are also bridges and low-lying roads that may flood with overwash along the evacuation path. Please do not wait for tropical storm force winds to arrive to start your evacuation – tropical storm force winds are expected to arrive as early as Thursday morning. Keep in mind that roads may flood and block your path from your house to Route 17, and that Route 17 itself may be impacted by floodwaters. At all times, if water is on roadways, **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN** and do not travel through the water.

SAFETY WARNING: This storm has the potential to cause catastrophic flooding from both storm surge and rainfall. Houses and properties in low-lying areas may experience life-threatening situations. **FIRST RESPONDERS WILL BE UNABLE TO RESPOND OR CONDUCT RESCUES IF ROADWAYS ARE UNSAFE** due to the presence of flood waters and/or high winds, heavy rain, debris, downed trees and/or electrical wires. **PLEASE DO NOT TRAVEL ON ROADWAYS DURING OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE STORM.** After the storm, response to those in need will likely be limited and delayed. If you have any concerns about sheltering at home for 5-7 days, you should consider evacuating.

PUBLIC EMERGENCY SHELTER: With the number of potential evacuees from Gloucester and Hampton Roads, shelters may be very crowded. **IF THERE ARE OTHER SAFE ALTERNATIVES TO USING PUBLIC SHELTERS, the use of such safe alternatives is encouraged.** Public shelters will be opened in order “as needed” with **Peasley Middle School** designated as the first primary shelter. The school is located at the corner of Route 606 (Ark Road) and Route 614 (Hickory Fork Road) in Sassafra. **THE SHELTER IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN ON THURSDAY MORNING SEPTEMBER 13TH AT 6 AM.** Bethel

Elementary School (adjacent to Peasley) will be the second shelter to open once Peasley is filled to capacity.

Although emergency shelters will be available for those needing it, space and accommodations are very basic and limited and a visit with friends or relatives, or staying in a motel or hotel away from the most heavily impacted areas, is recommended. Persons with functional needs must be accompanied by a caregiver while at the shelter and support supplies and equipment should be brought to the shelter.

Domestic pets, accompanied by their owners, will be allowed at the Peasley School shelter only and as long as space is available. Please bring pet kennel/crate, food, bowls, bedding, litter, and rabies vaccination record.

Persons coming to the shelter are asked to bring the following items and due to the potential of this storm, plan supplies based on up to a five (5) day stay if needed:

- bedding materials (mat/lounge chair, sleeping bag, blanket, pillow, etc.)
- changes of clothes
- snack foods, beverages, and special dietary foods
- special items for infant, elderly, or disabled people
- diapers/food for babies and small children
- medication or prescription drugs
- personal toiletries (deodorant, soap, toothpaste, washcloth, towels, etc.)
- eye glasses/contacts, hearing aids
- entertainment (reading materials, games for children, etc.)

Firearms and alcoholic beverages are not allowed. Do not bring any valuables with you.

Portable radios and stereos must have head/ear phones. Persons are encouraged to eat before

arriving at the shelter and bring snacks for your stay. Before coming to the shelter, please call relatives or friends to notify them of your location.

CLOSURES: Gloucester County Public Schools are closed from Tuesday, September 11 until further notice. All Parks, Recreation and Tourism activities as well as other community events and activities sponsored by Gloucester County held in the schools are also cancelled. Gloucester Point Public Beach will be closed beginning Wednesday and public access to the beach and public boat landing closed by road barrier. Local government offices remain open on regular schedule at this time, however they may be closed (in whole or in part) over the coming days due to impending weather conditions. Please note that while open, certain departments may experience service delays due to staff resources being committed to emergency management operations.

PHONE HELPLINE: An emergency information helpline has been established during business hours (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM) and hours may be extended if/as needed due to anticipated progression of the weather system. The number is 804-693-3000. **PLEASE RESERVE 911 CALLS FOR MATTERS RELATED TO SIGNIFICANT INJURIES, ILLNESSES AND LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES.** Please be patient if lines are busy as calls will be answered in the order in which they are received. Citizens are encouraged to continue to monitor local media sources for official advisories, instructions and updates from Gloucester's Emergency Operations Center.

WAYS TO STAY INFORMED: Official county announcements will be posted on the county's website (www.gloucesterva.info), Gloucester County and Gloucester CERT Facebook pages, local radio and television stations (including WXGM 99.1 FM) and may also be distributed through CodeRed system notifications. The Emergency Management Helpline phone number to use is (804) 693-3000.

End of Announcement