

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

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Sussex County

DELAWARE

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Sussex County begins to feel first effects of Hurricane Sandy

State of emergency elevated as forecasts call for potentially historic coastal flooding; three shelters open to house evacuees

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

**1800 Hours, Saturday
Oct. 28, 2012**

Sussex County is bracing for what forecasters say could be flooding of historic proportions, causing destruction unlike anything the region has seen in decades, as Hurricane Sandy continues its destiny with the mid-Atlantic coastline in the hours and days ahead.

A state of emergency remains in effect for all of Delaware, including a mandatory evacuation of identified flood-prone areas along the Atlantic coast, Delaware Bay, Inland Bays, and Nanticoke River coastlines. Delaware Gov. Jack A. Markell on Sunday afternoon modified the declaration and evacuation order to now require that businesses located within the ¾-mile evacuation zones close by 6 p.m. Sunday. There are no travel restrictions at this time.

State and County government offices will be closed Monday due to the storm.

In Sussex County, the evacuation zone includes all or portions of the communities of Slaughter Beach, Prime Hook, Broadkill Beach, Long Neck and Oak Orchard, as well as Lewes Beach, Henlopen Acres, Rehoboth Beach, Dewey Beach, North Bethany, Bethany Beach, South Bethany and Fenwick Island. Additionally, the evacuation order includes areas along the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek on the western side of the county.

A detailed map showing areas of potential flooding caused by a Category 1 storm surge is posted on the Sussex County website at www.sussexcountyde.gov.

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Hurricane Sandy remains on track to pass through the mid-Atlantic region with 40 mph to 65-mph winds, a 3- to 8-foot-high tidal surge and up to 10 inches of rain across Sussex County. The earliest effects of the storm began Sunday morning, with flooding already near Slaughter Beach, Prime Hook, Oak Orchard, and along the State Route 1 corridor at the Indian River Inlet bridge.

The Delaware Department of Transportation has closed State Route 1 from Dewey Beach to just north of Bethany Beach, as well as Prime Hook Road, due to flooding. Travel may be limited in other localized areas.

“There is little doubt now that Hurricane Sandy is going to greatly affect us here in Sussex County, Delaware, and throughout the mid-Atlantic region,” said Sussex County Emergency Operations Center Director Joseph Thomas. “This is a major event, one that could rival the historic Storm of 1962. Just like that storm, Sandy could be remembered for decades to come.”

For those in need of shelter, Sussex County and Delaware emergency planners have designated three facilities as residents leave flood-prone areas in advance of the storm.

As capacity will be limited, these shelters should be used as a means of last resort. Residents and visitors evacuating from at-risk areas are encouraged to seek refuge with family or friends elsewhere, if possible. The shelters are:

Cape Henlopen H. S.
1250 Kings Hwy.
Lewes, DE
(Pets Accepted)

Indian River H. S.
29772 Armory Road
Dagsboro, DE

Milford M. S.
612 Lakeview Ave.
Milford, DE
(Pets Accepted)

Those visiting a shelter should remember to take adequate clothing, medications, sleeping materials, and food for themselves, their families and/or their pets (where accepted). Shelters are staffed by the American Red Cross of the Delmarva Peninsula (www.redcrossdelmarva.org).

Regardless of whether visiting a shelter or relocating elsewhere, the public is reminded to have supply kits on hand and know the evacuation routes.

Forecasters with the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center expect the now-Category 1 storm, with sustained winds of 75 mph off the North Carolina coast, to turn toward Delaware coast sometime Monday before coming ashore late Monday night or early Tuesday morning, somewhere near Atlantic City, N.J.

However, because of the storm’s size, the first effects began early this morning, with flooding occurring not long after daybreak. Tropical storm-force winds are

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expected later tonight, and should remain sustained at 40 mph to 50 mph, with gusts as high as 65 mph, well into Monday night. Winds could be higher, possibly hurricane force of 75 mph, along the immediate coast.

Forecasters believe Hurricane Sandy's current predicted track will come close enough to give Sussex County some of the strongest effects of the storm, with moderate to severe tidal flooding likely in low-lying areas, particularly along the oceanfront, Inland Bays and the Delaware Bay shoreline. Storm surges and tides could swell by as much as 8 feet, exacerbated by a full moon Monday that is already expected to cause higher-than-normal astronomical high tides. The storm is expected to last through several tide cycles from now until at least Tuesday.

Meantime, up to 10 inches of rain is expected across the county. The saturated soil combined with high winds over a prolonged period is expected to cause numerous downed trees and power lines – and the possibility of electrical outages that could last multiple days.

The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center continues to monitor the situation, and encourages residents and visitors to continue monitoring the tropics and conditions as they deteriorate. For updates, stay tuned to local television and radio stations, the Sussex County EOC Web site at www.sussexcountyde.gov/services/storm, and the County's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SussexCountyDE. The public should also follow the County's Twitter feeds at www.twitter.com/sussex_pio and www.twitter.com/sussexctyde_eoc.

For the latest forecast, visit the National Weather Service website at www.nws.noaa.gov/er/phi, and the National Hurricane Center at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

For helpful tips on what to do in preparation for a hurricane, including evacuation maps and preparedness brochures, visit www.sussexcountyde.gov/services/storm.

Members of the public with questions about evacuations or other issues can call the EOC storm line at (302) 856-7366.

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Media calls should be directed to Chip Guy or Joe Hopple in the EOC's public affairs office, at (302) 858-0505 or (302) 854-5277.