

Gov. DeSantis (03:23):

Well, good morning. I just received a briefing from our state meteorologist about hurricane Ian. I'm joined here by our division of emergency management director, Kevin Guthrie, uh, the head of the Florida national guard, General Eifert, um, and Grace, thank you for coming for our FEMA, uh, regional coordinator, uh, as of 11:00 AM. The storm is located roughly 375 miles south of key west, and it's moving north Northwest at about 14 miles per hour. Maximum sustained winds are now up to 80 miles an hour, uh, and it moves into the Gulf where is expected to strengthen into a major hurricane in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico as early as tomorrow. Uh, it will bring heavy rain, strong winds, flash flooding, storm surge, along with isolated tornado activity along Florida's Gulf coast, uh, Floridians up and down the Gulf coast should feel the impacts of this as up to 36 hours before, um, actual landfall due to the size of the hurricane.

Gov. DeSantis (04:23):

This is a really, really big hurricane at this point. Uh, the diameter, uh, the, the width of it's about 500 miles wide. Uh, so if you look at the, the cone, and if you look at where they have the landfall going, I think the landfall is still levy county. Uh, the impacts are gonna be much, much, much broader than that. Of course, that track is still, uh, uncertain. It could absolutely wobble further into the peninsula or even further away from the peninsula. Uh, you will see storm surge in places like Southwest Florida, even though the storm is projected to be a hundred or 150 miles, uh, off the coast of Southwest Florida. And so you look and call your county. They've already issued man or, uh, voluntary evacuations for some of their coastal communities because the storm surge is likely to be significant given how big the storm is.

Gov. DeSantis (05:14):

A tropical storm warning has been issued for a portion of the Florida keys from the seven mile bridge south to key west hurricane and tropical storm watches have been issued from Inglewood south to Naples. Uh, we also have storm surge watches in effect from Pinellas county down to the Florida keys. Those watches are anticipated to become warnings later today. Uh, now some counties have begun issuing, uh, evacuation orders or voluntary evacuations. Uh, the important thing for people to know is to know the zone that you're in. Uh, you will have counties probably throughout, uh, this morning and into this afternoon, uh, identifying areas that are vulnerable for evacuation. So you should anticipate that if you're on counties, uh, in Florida's Gulf coast, of course, as you go further north in Florida, there is a little bit more time, uh, before those decisions have to be made.

Gov. DeSantis (06:05):

So as we get into the Northern Florida and into the panhandle, uh, those decisions may not be today, but certainly for Southwest and, and Tampa bay, uh, be on the lookout for that, because I know we've been conferring with a lot of the local officials, uh, that those, those are gonna happen the way to go is to go to Florida disaster.org/plan, prepare Florida disaster.org/plan prepare that will be able to allow you to look, to see whether you are in an evacuation zone. And so if they do call for an evacuation of say zone a and you're in zone a, then you know that, and you can take the appropriate action. The Florida department of transportation is now suspending tolls, uh, at facilities in the Tampa bay area, uh, the Polk park Parkway and, and, uh, Polk county, mid bay bridge in OSA Spence Parkway in OSA Garon point bridge in Santa Rosa.

Gov. DeSantis (07:02):

Um, and of course all the Tampa bay area, uh, Pinellas, byway, sunshine, Skyway, Selman expressway, I four connector in Hillsborough as well as alligator alley down in Collier into Broward counties. And as we continue to monitor the path of hurricane in, uh, we may do more toll suspensions in other parts of the state. Uh, if that is warranted, some school districts have announced, uh, school closures for the this upcoming week. And you may see more as the track becomes more certain. If you wanna look at the most updated information regarding schools, uh, you can get that at FL doe.org/storm info. That's FL doe.org/storm info. The Florida national guard has activated 5,000 Florida guardsmen as well as 2000 additional guardsmen from Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina that have been activated to help. We've also have five urban search and rescue teams that are activated. We have Florida fish and wildlife commission mobilized and ready to support N needed efforts.

Gov. DeSantis ([08:06](#)):

And of course the us coast guard is also willing and able to assist in both preparation and response. Of course, we've declared a state of emerging for, for the entire state, given the uncertainty, uh, that exists. Of course, as we go every hour, we get a little bit more certainty in the general area, and we know that this is gonna have major impacts on, on Florida's golf course, uh, a golf coast, uh, we've issued waivers of weight restrictions for commercial trucks to ensure we've ample fuel and resources coming into Florida that make sure you're prepared. There's no need to panic by, uh, if you normally don't drink a lot of water, you know, you may not need to go out and buy 20 gallons of water right now. Uh, so just do what you need to be prepared. Uh, we were been in contact with some of the major retailers like Publix and Walmart.

Gov. DeSantis ([08:51](#)):

They are constantly resupplying. I know Publix did way more than they normally do. And a lot of that is flying off the shelves, but just know, uh, there's an effort to be made to make sure that those shelves are restocked as quickly as possible. We've also authorized emergency refills of maintenance prescriptions for 30 days, and we can anticipate anyone as part of your hurricane preparedness plan, make sure you have the prescriptions, uh, that you need. Uh, we've also been in contact with, uh, the major utilities, uh, throughout the state of Florida, particularly those that are servicing the Gulf coast of Florida, uh, FP and L duke energy Tico, the municipal electric providers, as well as the rural electrical co-ops. And I can tell you, uh, between all of those, I mean, there are tens of thousands of people that are staged, uh, and that are gonna be ready to go when the storm passes to try to get power restored, but folks should, should be prepared if you're in this region, uh, that there is going to be an interruption of power.

Gov. DeSantis ([09:47](#)):

So just, just plan on that, uh, understand that that, that will happen. Uh, even if the storm, the, the eye of the storm, doesn't hit your region, you're gonna have really significant winds. Uh, it's gonna knock over trees. It's gonna cause interruptions. And so that's just the name of the game. So just be prepared for that. Uh, and then they have the resources in place where of course that's gonna be a priority once it's safe to go in there and get, uh, as much power back on as quickly as possible, make sure that you have your plan, uh, in place finish whatever preparations you have. I mean, we're, this thing is coming, uh, this week. And, and, and we know that, and, and we know we're gonna have some major impacts throughout the state of Florida. We have at the department here for emergency management received 338 requests for assistance from local counties.

Gov. DeSantis ([10:35](#)):

Uh, 293 of those have already been fulfilled and others are on the way, uh, we've deployed 210 medical professionals to Hillsborough county, special needs shelters, and another 120 to surrounding counties. We have 300 ambulances supporting special needs evacuations in the Tampa bay area. And hundreds of generators in pumps have also been staged in the Tampa bay area to prepare, uh, for the flooding that we're anticipating. So please continue to monitor your local weather service for updates, uh, make sure that you're commencing your storm preparations, uh, visit FloridaDisaster.org/get a plan, uh, to see some of the things, um, that that, that may need to be done for all. You know Floridians, who haven't been through one of these before, uh, just understand, just remain calm there. There's no need to panic, uh, listen to the folks at the local level, listen to what they advise in terms of, uh, preparations, any, any evacuations, uh, if you are gonna be in your home when the power goes out and you have one of the generators, just understand those generators must be operated outside the home.

Gov. DeSantis ([11:39](#)):

Every year, we tend to have people that operated inside their home. You know, you will, you will get poisoning from carbon monoxide and we have fatalities, uh, for that. In fact, we've had more fatalities in recent storms from the use of the generators than we've had from the direct impact of the storm itself. So just understand, it's great to have a generator. Obviously we live in a very connected world. People want to have that power on, and I, and I understand that and I do too, uh, but make sure it's used properly. And that exhaust has gotta be going outside your home. Do not let that come inside your home. So we are continuing to work with communities, uh, at the local level, I've been able to speak with a number of the folks, uh, today. Uh, we're gonna continue to work to support, uh, their plans.

Gov. DeSantis ([12:23](#)):

Obviously, at this point, we want everyone to be safe. Uh, you have a significant storm that may end up being a category for hurricane. And I know they say it may slow down by the time it reaches landfall. But if you have that off the west coast of Florida, that's gonna cause a huge amount of storm surge. You're gonna have flood events. You're gonna have a lot of different impacts from that. So we want everybody to be safe. Uh, we want people to, uh, weather the storm, and that ultimately is the most important thing, property damage, and these things, you know, it's, it's terrible that that would happen in a storm, uh, but we can fix that. We can help rebuild, uh, but you gotta take care of yourself and we wanna make sure everybody is safe. Of course, as the storm hits in the immediate aftermath, we have all these resources that are staged from our guard to fish and wildlife, uh, search and rescue, uh, to be able to help people that are in need. Uh, and then of course, once the dust settles, uh, there's a premium on restoring power, fuel communication so that people, uh, can resume normalcy as soon as possible. I wanna let Kevin Guthrie come up here from our department of emergency management.

Kevin Guthrie ([13:31](#)):

Thank you, governor, thank you for your leadership and support as we, uh, move into hurricane in, uh, we currently have more than, as the governor said, we have currently have more than 338 active missions for our local partners. We're working diligently to ensure all needs are met. Some of those needs need to understand we're not gonna get them to the, uh, counties before landfall. Uh, that's typically an issue where they've asked for water or food, but they have no place to house it. We cannot leave a, semi-trailer just sitting in a parking lot with 110, 120 mile an hour winds. So that is the discrepancy between the number of, uh, uh, missions that we have filled and the number of emissions that we are responding to. So if that should come up, this includes providing, uh, meals, waters, ambulance, strike teams, oxygen, technical communication statewide.

Kevin Guthrie ([14:20](#)):

Uh, we have deployed several hundred shelter support staff. As the governor has already mentioned. We have also set up two logistical staging areas to provide immediate direct assistance. After the storm's landfall, we will be operating one of those on the east side of the storm. And one of those on the west side of the storm, we know that for many Floridians, this may be their first hurricane experience. As the governor said, do not panic. There is still time to get your preparations in order and safely evacuated necessary. Remember to make a plan that works best for your family and business and include your children, pets, and seniors that you care for in your disaster. Preparedness plans. Know if you live in an evacuation zone, you can visit [Florida disaster.org/know](http://Florida.disaster.org/know), or plan prepare, to input your address and determine if you live in an evacuation zone.

Kevin Guthrie ([15:13](#)):

Evacuations, evacuation zones are designated as zones, A through F with A generally being the most vulnerable and most likely to be evacuated. First evacuations are issued at the local level. So make sure you have multiple ways to receive weather alerts and information from your local officials. We've received numerous inquiries from individuals navigating our know your zone website. If you enter your address and you are not located in one of the colored coded areas, which is red, orange, yellow, green, or purple, then you do not live in an evacuation zone. If you do not live in an evacuation zone, you may be able to shelter in place. This is where we ask you to know your home. Can your home sustain hurricane wind speeds? If you live in a manufactured home, you need to evacuate. If you live in a older home that can not stand those winds, you need to evacuate.

Kevin Guthrie ([16:18](#)):

If you are power dependent for your livelihood, you need to evacuate. If you are going to use a generator, as the governor mentioned, please do not operate it indoors, do not operate it in your garage, and make sure that you have plenty of distance from any open windows where you may be running cords through that window for more updates in your area, remember to follow your local county emergency management agency and other public safety offices on social media. And you can always follow us on Facebook or on Twitter at FL SERT. Thank you, governor. Thank

General Eifert ([16:56](#)):

Morning, the, uh, Florida national guard is fully engaged, uh, with every resource we have available to bring the bear on the problem. Uh, we have also been in constant contact with our neighboring states, primarily Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky. Um, uh, let's see, Louisiana have all responded, um, with, uh, with, uh, promptness to be able to provide additional resources as we find gaps and seams in our own ability to respond, uh, for the citizens of Florida. So I couldn't be happier in, uh, more appreciative of our neighboring states being willing to, uh, uh, provide those resources to us. And some of them are actually already even starting to move so that we can, uh, have them in place when we need them. We're also assessing constantly the location and, uh, path of the storm and repositioning, and prepositioning our resources and our people to be able to most immediately and effectively respond, uh, once the, uh, landfall has, uh, has passed. So, uh, we're here. We're ready. We're uh, excited about the opportunity to continue to serve our citizens in Florida. Thank you.

Gov. DeSantis ([18:05](#)):

Okay. Any questions?

Reporter ([18:07](#)):

Yeah, go, uh, considering the fragility of the insurance market, do you have concerns about how insurers are gonna fare here and what can the state do about em?

Gov. DeSantis ([18:16](#)):

Well, obviously, I mean, we've, you know, we, we just did a, a special session. We put \$2 billion into, into a fund to provide a backstop. It kept a lot of 'em from going out of business. Um, and this is a problem that, that we're gonna continue to, to tackle clearly there's other things legislatively I would like to see done. I think we will get that done soon. Um, but, uh, this is something that, that we will respond to. First of all, we're in a, we're a strong state, we've got a huge amount of financial wherewithal right now. Uh, so we'll be able to, uh, uh, to get through it. But I, if you're asking what I rather not have had a storm hit us, the answer is yes,

Reporter ([18:52](#)):

Just to clarify, is this gonna be a storm sort of that where Irma was like 400 miles wide and was able to almost hit both sides of the, uh, both coasts at the same time? Are we, this sounds like it might actually be bigger. Are we gonna with that set are what sort of challenges is DM gonna face with logistics? Cause I think it used to have the warehouse and Orlando, but I think there were planes could change

Gov. DeSantis ([19:10](#)):

That. So, uh, the, the answer is, is, I mean, I think we've said, I mean, you could have impacts in Southeast Florida flooding that's absolutely could happen. Uh, you can see impacts, uh, on the east coast of Florida farther up for sure. I mean, I think people should, should anticipate that, um, at, you know, the further off the, the coast, it is obviously that that is, that is beneficial for us in, in that respect. There's still a little bit uncertainty on the exact track. Uh, that's been taken. I think we're gonna know a lot more as it gets even in past Cuba. And then at that point, I think we're gonna have a pretty good sense of what's going on, but this is really developed into a really big storm. And that means just the impacts are gonna be far and wide. I mean, the fact that you're looking at, uh, if you look at the current track, how far off Naples it will be when it gets, gets, uh, parallel to Naples, yet you're gonna see major storm surge, even, even that far off, off the coast to have the eye of the storm that far off the coast.

Gov. DeSantis ([20:02](#)):

So I think that's indicative of, of, of what we're dealing with here in

Reporter ([20:06](#)):

The past. We've seen, um, major traffic build up from massive operations. Is that a concern this time?

Gov. DeSantis ([20:13](#)):

Of course. I mean, when you have, uh, millions of people in a Metro area, um, you, you, no matter how, how it's done, you are going to have, you're gonna have traffic. I mean, that's just the reality. We've suspended the tolls to try to help, uh, get that, get that going better. Uh, I do think because, uh, the counties, uh, have been engaged in this, uh, early, uh, this is something that they've been talking about that they've been warning people, uh, to, to make the preparations. Uh, I think you have, do have some people that, that have already decided, uh, to, to, to do that even before, uh, they've had anything done, but, but I think people when they're on the road should just anticipate that, however, it takes you

to normally get from one place to another. It's gonna just take you longer. I mean, that's just the reality. So just be just prepare for that. Uh, and that's something that, uh, that, that will happen.

Reporter ([21:02](#)):

Governor, how are we feeling about the fuel situation in the states? I know there are some parts of Tampa that are concerned that gas stations are already running out.

Gov. DeSantis ([21:08](#)):

So they're constantly resupplying the fuel and there have been some, but I think Kevin by and large, I mean is getting resupplied in, in good order. Uh, there's no need to panic buy fuel. Obviously you need fuel fill up your, your tank. Some people have some extra that's fine. Uh, but we, uh, we are continuing to bring it in. Now when the storm's coming close hitting, there's gonna be some interruption to that. So people should be prepared for that. We do have contracts with folks that can bring some fuel in if necessary and we'll have to see whether that is, that is the case. Uh, we've not had to do that. I don't think in the past, but we do have the capability to do that. If the storm hits, uh, you have a need for fuel, normal supplies in getting there, we could tap some of these contracts, uh, that we have here. Uh, so, so people should just be prepared for there will, there will likely be some interruption of fuel at some point, and the goal is to minimize that and keep that as, as small as possible.

Reporter ([22:10](#)):

How are, how are the ports gonna operate? Uh, I know a lot of our fuel comes in from the ports. So how are the ports preparing for this? Well,

Gov. DeSantis ([22:16](#)):

Kevin, I think having a talk, but, but obviously, I mean, that's gonna be an issue.

Kevin Guthrie ([22:21](#)):

So Rick we're on the ports. We, uh, we, we, we know we're gonna not lose, but we're gonna have to shut down port of Tampa based on this scenario. Uh, at this point in time, the east coast ports should remain open. There may be to your point in a previous question, this is about a 500 mile wide storm. It's gonna have some impacts on the other side. However, if we have that Admiral, Brenda McPherson will be here tomorrow from the United States coast guard. He is already preparing to expedite the opening of those ports and get 'em back open so we can get that in there. But right now all ports are open and we're still taking fuel into the state so that we can get ourselves topped off

Reporter ([22:57](#)):

B bridge. Yes, bay bridge is

Reporter ([23:00](#)):

Still open general, general, have you requested permission to mobilize unvaccinated guardsman? And could you talk about the impact of having nearly 10% of your force sideline because of the military vaccine mandate, uh, for your planning and Readiness

General Eifert ([23:17](#)):

The vaccine mandate does not impact our ability to bring people in on state active duty. So, uh, regardless of what DoD may end up doing with those people, which is still undetermined, um, we will be activating all of those people in support of the citizens of Florida,

Reporter ([23:33](#)):

Governor perhaps direction go three. Um, because the track seems to like, it'll be spitting out, uh, for several 48 hours, like off the coast of Florida are, are onto us, should, um, people who are evacuating prepared to stay for quite a long, much longer period of time than might have been used to previous storms and not return, uh, before it's necessary.

Kevin Guthrie ([23:58](#)):

So, uh, you know, I'm going to give kudos to, uh, Monroe county after hurricane Irma. Um, a lot of that stuff is driven at the local level and in with state supporting as trying to get that open back up. But, um, I was just down in the keys a couple of weeks ago for the, uh, anniversary of hurricane, uh, Irma. And, you know, if you recall, the keys were open in like 10 to 14 days for tourism and whatnot, I, we need to look at them or we need to use them as a best case example and start looking at lessons learned for all communities across the state of Florida to get those roads open. And let's get people back in here and let us see them back to work. Let's get 'em back to, uh, tourism, which is, you know, what we need to do. I don't believe we're gonna run into a situation where we just cannot get certain things back up and running. We're gonna, that is gonna be our number one priority. We're gonna get power, fuel, communications back up and running so that we can get those roads open and get ourselves back to normal because we're not gonna necessarily be remembered for how we respond in the next 72 to, you know, 96 hours. We're gonna be remembered for how we recover. And this team in here is gonna get that done. But

Reporter ([25:04](#)):

Question specifically,

Gov. DeSantis ([25:05](#)):

One thing too, though, is that just, I mean, if you look at something like Tampa Bay, very vulnerable area, you could see significant flooding. So the initial, um, you know, response, once the storm hits, assuming that you have bridges that are outta commission and, and other, uh, difficulties in even accessing the peninsula, Kevin has Chinook helicopters and they will be bringing in supplies, uh, uh, via, via Hilo and, and dropping those off at probably the St. Pete-Clearwater airport. I would imagine in doing that. So, so, but that's something for people to think about. You may have, um, uh, flooding such that, that, that some of those places may not be, be accessed. And so that's not like government telling you, you can't, you can't go back, but it's just the reality of, of what we could do when you talk about some of the storm surge that they're, that they're, uh, forecasting, you know, this is very significant storm surge for a very low lying area. So that's gonna have significant impact. All right, well, we're gonna do, uh, I'm gonna do another briefing, uh, later, uh, later this afternoon, like likely down in Tampa bay, and we may be back here, uh, later tonight, if there's any, uh, major developments on the track. Thanks.