

Governor DeSantis (00:00):

Can be found at [fldoe.org/storminfo](http://fldoe.org/storminfo). That's [fldoe.org/storminfo](http://fldoe.org/storminfo), Florida. National guard has activated 5,000 Florida guardsmen. We have 2000 additional guardsmen from neighboring states that are also activated to help. We have five urban search and rescue teams activated and are ready to help. The Florida fish and wildlife conservation commission is activated and ready to help. Florida highway patrol is also standing by to respond and they will be, when necessary, implementing 12 hour shifts and mobilizing additional state troopers to the Gulf coast. And of course the coast guard is there and will help as needed as well. So we have a state of emergency for the entire state of Florida. There may not be direct impacts in all 67 counties but there may be indirect impacts, not just from the storm, but also from people that may be evacuating to other parts of the state.

Governor DeSantis (01:04):

So we wanna make sure that our communities have the maximum flexibility that they need to be able to respond to this storm in any way that they need to. We have been in communication with a lot of our major retailers like Walmart and Publix, and they are cognizant of the need to keep moving supplies in. I would say that most of the supplies have done fairly well. Water has gone at an incredibly brisk pace. And so they both understand that and they're doing what they can to do more. They've already done a lot more than what they normally would do, and those, those are falling, going off the shelves. So they're working on more water. Of course, as the storm hits and things get stabilized, Florida department of emergency management, we're gonna be delivering a lot of water to people once the storm passes and hopefully that's not necessary and we don't get hit as hard, but we're assuming that that that was, that will happen and that'll be a big, big priority.

Governor DeSantis (02:00):

And Kevin Guthrie is prepared to bring it in by helicopter into Pinellas county if that's something that is necessary, for both food and for water. We're also in contact with all the major utilities throughout the state of Florida from duke energy, TECO, FP&L, municipal providers, as well as rural electric co-ops. You have more than 25,000 linemen that are stationed ready to go once the all clear is given and they are given the go ahead to go and get the power back on. I think Floridians who are in the path of the storm, whether you're, if you're not in an evacuation zone and you're happy with your home, the sturdiness of your home, and you're hunkering down, just be prepared to lose power. I think that that's something that people should expect and depending on the severity of the storm, you know, those power outages can be, can be lengthy.

Governor DeSantis (02:51):

It may not just be one day where you're out of power. So, so prepare for that, understand that that's something that's a possibility, of course, as soon as the storm passes and the all clear is given, you're gonna have all of this manpower dedicated to getting the lights back on, because it's just very important for the functioning of our society. But as you see the storm come in, particularly in areas where there is a lot of trees and other things like that, you know, you're gonna see trees down, you're gonna see power lines come down. You're gonna have to have clear roads. There's gonna be a lot, a lot that goes into that. So, the manpower is there. The urgency will be there as well. But just prepare yourself that a storm of this magnitude is going to take power out more than likely if you're on the Gulf coast of Florida, we've now received that the state level 338 requests for assistance from local counties.

Governor DeSantis (03:42):

Uh, we fulfilled 293 others around the way. And as Kevin mentioned earlier today, most of the requests that have not been fulfilled are ones that will be once the storm passes. It's like, you don't want to just leave water in a trailer somewhere in Pinellas county as the storm's coming in. So that's being staged, ready to go. We know where the requests are and Florida DEM will be moving those in as appropriate. We have deployed 210 medical professionals to Hillsborough county, special needs shelters, and another 120 to surrounding counties. We're setting up a logistical staging area in Polk county with an additional staging area later today in the area, 300 ambulance supporting special needs. Evacuations are now deployed in the area. Hundreds of generators and pumps have been staged in the Tampa bay area to prepare for flooding, which we anticipate to be significant, and pre-landfall food and water, as I mentioned, has been staged for both Pinellas and for Hillsborough counties.

Governor DeSantis (04:39):

Please continue to monitor your local weather service for updates, finalize your storm preparations. I think with, Hillsborough has done, some of the other counties, you'll hear from Pinellas. You know, they're doing this, I think in a very intelligent way, that is, um, they don't want to do it willynilly when you don't know where the storm's gonna be, but we have enough certainty that you could have major, major impacts in this region that they're giving you enough time to be able to evacuate if you're in those evacuation zones and to be able to make additional preparations. And so you'll hear from them in a minute, uh, [Floridadisaster.org/getaplan](http://Floridadisaster.org/getaplan). Uh, if you need to know what additional preparations may be necessary, if you're new to Florida and you haven't experienced these, [Floridadisaster.org/getaplan](http://Floridadisaster.org/getaplan) will allow you to help make those plans for your families.

Governor DeSantis (05:29):

And so safety is paramount. We wanna make sure that that everyone gets through this in a safe way. There's gonna be damage. And that'll be things that we'll be able to fix. It will not necessarily be easy, but it's doable. What's not doable is to bring somebody back if they, if they end up being in a situation that they don't survive. And so safety's paramount. We want everyone to get through this safe, secure, we will work hard to provide the response to the damage of the storm. Any individuals that may be in peril, of course, the property and the surrounding areas, and then make sure all the services are restored as soon as possible. We're gonna hear from Kevin Guthrie, we'll hear from Kathy Perkins, Ashley Moody, and then the mayors of St. Pete.

Kevin Guthrie (06:18):

Thank you, governor, and thank you for your leadership. Thank you for having me here today. We currently have more, more than 338 active missions. As you heard the governor say, we are working with those local partners and we are working diligently to ensure all needs are met. I'm sure since we've flown here there's been more, but again, we'll continue to work tirelessly to get that done. It includes obviously mills, water, ambulance strike teams, oxygen, technical communications, and much, much more. We have deployed several hundred shelter support staffs statewide to address staffing needs in the counties, especially in the area of our special needs hurricane shelters. We have also set up two logistical staging areas to provide immediate direct assistance after the storm's landfall. We will set up one of those on the west side of the storm.

Kevin Guthrie (07:08):

And one of those on the east side of the storm. Residents can expect power outages. The governor mentioned that. Again, I wanna say that residents can expect power outages due to these impacts. We

do have telephone companies on standby, ready to restore critical cellular service if power is lost, but in the meantime, Florida should be prepared to have a communications plan in place with their families. During previous hurricanes, cell phone towers went down, keeping individuals from being able to call or message loved ones. Residents should have alternate ways to communicate with loved ones, whether it might be walkie talkies, whether it might be some type of messaging app, physically checking in with your neighbors or some other type of communication that does not necessarily rely on the use of phones or wifi. Additionally, residents should ensure that their vehicle gas tanks are at least half full to ensure they have enough fuel to evacuate as soon as possible without worrying about long lines at gas stations and to avoid gas shortages, part of impacts from hurricane Ian. For Floridians, with electric vehicles, it's recommended that the battery be maintained between 50 and 80% capacity depending on the type of vehicle and what the vehicle's manual recommends.

Kevin Guthrie ([08:28](#)):

Remember evacuations typically do not have to be hundreds of miles away. You can escape the wind and the water by just moving tens of miles away. For more updates in your area. Remember to follow your local county emergency management agency and other public safety officials on social media. You can also follow us on the division on Facebook and Twitter at FLCERT. You can also find additional information and updates about everything we talked about here today at [Floridadisaster.org/info](http://Floridadisaster.org/info). Again, I want to thank the governor so much for his leadership on this, uh, historic, uh, hurricane that's heading this way again. Thank you, governor.

Kathy Perkins ([09:12](#)):

Thank you governor, thank you, director Guthrie for your state support and for also advocating for federal support for us for this event, as it comes towards us. As governor mentioned, Pinellas county remains under hurricane watch and storm surge watch. We are expecting seven to 10 inches of rain with isolated spots up to 15 inches of rain. With our grounds already saturated, this is going to cause widespread flooding. We do expect surge of at least up to 10 feet, some areas possibly up to 15 feet. And we have our risk map will be up on our storm.Pinellas county.org website. So residents can see what the potential surge for this storm will be in their location. As the governor mentioned, there is a slight risk of isolated tornadoes, especially in those outer bands. So we don't want people to think just because this storm shifts slightly to the left that we are going to be out of harm's way.

Kathy Perkins ([10:05](#)):

Our entire county is going to feel some type of impact. The most likely arrival time for tropical storm force winds is 3:00 AM on Wednesday, September 28th, but this is subject to change with every advisory. So we ask all of you to stay informed. You can sign up for alert Pinellas. You can also download our ready Pinellas app. With alert Pinellas we will send information right to your phones. With ready Pinellas we have information on how you can prepare your homes and what to do after the storm. Once you've opened that app, it will allow you to cash that information on your phone. So if you lose internet or phone connectivity, you will still have access to that critical information. The time for everyone in this county to act is now. Effective 6:00 PM. Tonight, all residents and evacuation zone, a including our mobile home residents, will be under a mandatory evacuation order.

Kathy Perkins ([10:59](#)):

Again, 6:00 PM tonight, evacuation zone a and all of our mobile home residents will be under a mandatory evacuation order. Mandatory evacuation orders for zones B and C will be effective tomorrow

morning at 7:00 AM. As the governor and the director Guthrie mentioned, it's really important you know your zone. We changed some of our zones this year in Pinellas county. So make sure you go to our storm.Pinellascounty.org to look up the address of your home, to ensure whether or not you are inside or outside of those evacuation zones. A little while ago, we issued a mandatory evacuation for all residential healthcare facilities in zones a B and C. We have 99 residential healthcare facilities and hospitals within those zones. Our hospitals have already begun to start their evacuations. Everybody needs to take this seriously. If you live in zone a B or C, we ask that you evacuate to higher ground.

Kathy Perkins ([12:04](#)):

As director Guthrie mentioned, you don't have to evacuate hundreds of miles. You can evacuate tens of miles, but we know there will be some people who wanna drive further somewhere in the state. If you're going to do that, do that now. Don't wait. The traffic is going to build up and what is normally an hour drive could take 4, 5, 10 hours to get there. We will be opening shelters tonight at 6:00 PM. We will have three general population shelters and our special needs shelters. The general population shelters are at Ross Norton recreation center, Liman exchange, and our pet friendly general population combined will be at Largo high school. Those will open tonight at 6:00 PM. We will open additional 19 shelters, including two more pet friendly shelters tomorrow morning at 7:00 AM. At that time, we'll be calling for that mandatory evacuation of additional zones. If you live in zones B and C, be ready to leave your home. Take tonight to secure your home and be ready to go.

Kathy Perkins ([13:04](#)):

If you live in those evacuation zones, if you're not going to a shelter, you are welcome to evacuate tonight. We are encouraging all of our visitors to leave. We're glad you came to visit Pinellas. We want you to come back and visit us again, but we want your memories to be fond ones. All of the shelters that we have selected are outside of the surge areas, just in case there's any additional intensification. Our list of all of our shelters can be found at [storm.pinellascounty.org](http://storm.pinellascounty.org). We are offering evacuation assistance to all of our special needs residents. If anyone still needs assistance with registering for special needs transportation, please call our county information center at 7 2 7 4 6 4 4 3 3 3 until 10:00 PM tonight. And we'll reopen again at 7:00 AM. Tomorrow schools and county government offices will be closed here in Pinellas, at least Tuesday and Wednesday. I just also wanna stress, we've talked a little bit about mobile and manufactured homes in Pinellas county.

Kathy Perkins ([14:05](#)):

We have 265 mobile home parks, 44,000 mobile home structures. These are extremely vulnerable to winds. And even if you have a newer home, that's stronger and is tied down properly, there's going to be a lot of flying debris. We ask that all mobile home residents evacuate. We've been lowering our lakes and actively pumping our Brooker Creek area that is prone to flooding. You need to plan. We are planning for our damage assessment operations and already working on our post landfall needs, putting in missions to the state to help us again. This kind of storm is going to cause serious damages and widespread power outages. Everyone in Pinellas county will witness some degree of storm impacts and we need you to take action now.

Ashley Moody ([15:04](#)):

Well, the mayor and I are in agreement as well as mayor Hibbard. Before we came in today, those of us that have lived here a very long time, I'm a fifth generation Floridian. We have often talked about this kind of storm hitting Tampa bay and what that could do to this area we all love and our families and

friends and communities and how that will affect this area. This could be the storm that we have all feared. So we advise everyone in the Tampa bay area to please take this seriously. As someone who has already had discussions with my family and friends to pay attention to this, please understand that these evacuations are very serious. You need to take preparations now. One of the reasons we have price gouging laws in effect during times of state of emergencies, one of the reason the governor enacts a state of emergency is to make sure that everyone can get supplies and prepare for storms such as this and that everyone, regardless of economic status has access and can afford those supplies.

Ashley Moody ([16:16](#)):

So price gouging laws are in effect right now. That means you cannot, whether you're an organization or an individual, you cannot take advantage of an emergency situation and drastically increase prices. We need people to be able to obtain these supplies for a reasonable price. If you do that, we will take action against you. And we need the community to help advise us if they see price gouging taking place. Over the last few years, the state of Florida and my office has worked on a price gouging reporting app so you can help us collect evidence. You can download that to any iPhone or Android device it's called no scam. I would advise you to do that and you can help us respond in rapid fashion. We have teams ready to respond if in fact you see prices extraordinarily increased so that people cannot afford them. Lastly, I would just say, working with law enforcement around this state, I cannot tell you the harrowing stories I have heard after deadly storms, where folks have been advised, encouraged, pleaded with to evacuate and they chose not to.

Ashley Moody ([17:26](#)):

And as a result of that, law enforcement had to put their lives on the line to go into very dangerous situations to save them. So if you are considering whether to heed these evacuation orders, please consider the lives of your fellow community members of your first responders that may be forced to act. If you do not heed these warnings, it is not just about the safety of you and your family. It is about the safety of everyone that is preparing to protect you during and immediately after the storm. So thank you for those of you that we're here today. To help us get the word out to this community. The Tampa bay community is so important to this state and all of us who love this community dearly are doing everything in our power to prepare and protect Floridians in this area. And thank you so much, governor for your leadership during this time.

Mayor Kenneth Welch ([18:25](#)):

Thank you. And good afternoon, everyone. I want to thank governor DeSantis for being here with your leadership team, and as Madam AG said, this does remind me of Charlie. I don't remember feeling this way about the potential impact of a storm since then. And as you see, your state government, your local government, your county and cities are all working together. Our folks are out there handing out sandbags, securing our facilities, vehicles, and equipment, but we need the public to do your share as well. I can't stress enough. When we ask you to evacuate, you need to evacuate. Our first responders will not be able to rescue you after winds reach a certain level, and you'll have to fend for yourselves. Take this time to be prepared, make sure that if you are sheltering in place, you have seven days of food, water, and medications. Know your evac level, go to [storm.Pinellascounty.org](http://storm.Pinellascounty.org). You can get your, your evac level and other information right at that site. Your safety is our primary concern, but it is your responsibility. Please heed, caution and evacuate. As soon as you can, St. Petersburg city employees will be working around the clock with our regional partners and the governor's office to ensure that you have the best information as we weather this storm. Thank you all. Thank you for being here. Thank you,

Mayor Hibbard ([19:53](#)):

Thank you governor. Thank you for your leadership and communication. Thank you all for being here and helping us get the word out. I've been asked about many of our new residents, because we've had such an enormous influx of people from the north moving to Florida. And I told somebody yesterday, complacency is our greatest enemy behind the storm. And our newest residents seem to be heeding those, but all of us who have lived here for decades, we've seen many near misses and we need to take this storm incredibly seriously. This is a very dangerous event with the rain that we're going to have. And most of the injuries occur after the storm has passed. When trees still fall from saturated ground, fallen power lines, we can replace property. We can't replace people. So please don't be complacent and has been said, don't put our first responders in harm's way with silly behavior. We always see it. Don't be one of those stories. Prepare now, and we will get through this. I want to thank duke energy who is here. I know they are waiting and ready to respond as soon as the storm passes, but do all that you can to keep us all safe and God bless you.

Governor DeSantis ([21:21](#)):

So we're looking at a situation and if you look at when they do these cones, they take all these different models. And then what you see at the hurricane center is kind of, splitting the difference sometimes between all of those. And what we had seen up until today was this European model was dead set on taking this right into Tampa bay for direct impact, which would obviously be very, very significant. This American model had it going more out into the Gulf, even hitting the panhandle. Well, what's happened since then is now that American one is saying, it's gonna come into Tampa. The European actually was saying, it's gonna be off the shore and toggling a little bit out there and will likely have an impact in the panhandle. The bottom line though, is that there's just a lot of uncertainty with all this.

Governor DeSantis ([22:05](#)):

And I know that we have had storms where people were really ready, like with Dorian in 2019, you know, they were projecting a direct hit in the east coast of Florida and it turned, and that that's a good thing. But you know, these are situations where even some of the models that didn't take it into Tampa three days ago are now taking it in. So the prospect of having a hurricane come onshore in the Tampa bay area is real. The prospect of even if it's off the coast of having really historic storm surge and flooding is very, very real. And I think the mayor made a good point about, obviously the impacts that direct impacts are, are important. And you need to be, you need to keep yourself safe there, but a minute that storm passes, I mean, there's gonna be stuff there's gonna be power lines down.

Governor DeSantis ([22:49](#)):

There's gonna be flooding. There's gonna be a whole host of things that are happening and it's gonna be a very difficult situation. And so if, if you're asked to evacuate, heed those warnings, You're always gonna be able to get back to your house when all this is done, but if you don't heed those warnings, you know, you could regret that. So, we appreciate everything they're doing here locally, as well as our other counties throughout the Tampa bay region as well, up and down the Gulf coast of Florida. And we're in this of course, you know, this is a 24 -7 thing. We're gonna see it all the way through, and we'll be here on the back end. And I know all the folks in and the local communities will be there as well.

Question ([23:29](#)):

Heard the VP say that this could be the storm, that we've all cleared the mayor. Talk about how this remind of Charlie considering how trouble the property insurance market still is. Despite the reforms

that were recently enacted, is there a possibility that a hurricane could devastate destroy the property insurance

Governor DeSantis ([23:47](#)):

So, I would say, clearly when you look at the Tampa bay area, one of the reasons why, you know, we feared storms is because of the sensitivity of this area and the fragility of this area. Whereas you could have other areas that, that could take a storm like this, and probably have less damage here, cuz a variety of factors. You know, you have that. I would also point out in terms of, in terms of insurance, the water events and the flooding will likely be done under the national flood insurance program. So those would probably not be homeowners claims. Most people know this, but not everyone. Your homeowners really is the wind coverage and the flood is the water coverage. If you look in the Tampa bay area, I think that we have close to a million flood policies.

Governor DeSantis ([24:35](#)):

NFIP, I think there's about 10,000 or 15,000 private flood policies. So this is gonna be adding liability most likely to the national flood insurance program. The wind damage is obviously gonna be heavily dependent on the path of this storm. If there's a direct impact of a major hurricane, you know, you are gonna see wind damage. I know we have good building codes. I know a lot of the stuff has done a lot better here in Florida than some other places, but you still have a lot of structures. Yeah. You have mobile home parks, you have things that are gonna be very, very vulnerable.

Question ([25:10](#)):

Uh, it was mentioned that there is an expectation of high levels of traffic that the evacuation order start getting rolled out. And I'm just curious, there's also been high levels of uncertainty, as you mentioned with the models for hurricane I, how has that uncertainty affected, uh, the state and local government's ability to make those calls on evacuation? And are you confident that they're paying to be enough time for people to get out with all the bottlenecks in Tampa

Governor DeSantis ([25:36](#)):

So I think what, so we are seeing an increase of traffic out of Tampa bay. Probably what about 30, 30%? Yes. Probably. You know, you look at all the different roads. So about a 30% big, you know, decrease from central Florida coming into Tampa bay, as you would expect. What the FDOT will do is, with these evacuation orders, do you know when they will go to the shoulders?

Kevin Guthrie ([26:00](#)):

Uh, when the traffic, the traffic congestion calls for, then they'll implement emergency shoulder use.

Governor DeSantis ([26:04](#)):

and this is basically the department study this long time. Sometimes you say, Hey, just open up the highway to only go one way. The problem is that you do need to go the other way to bring supplies and emergency and all that stuff. So what they've determined is it makes more sense to use the shoulder. So you would expand the lanes once the traffic really starts to bottleneck. I mean, just flying in here and looking, I mean, I did not see people rushing to get on the roads necessarily. I mean, I saw cars out there. You're gonna obviously see more tonight, most likely and into tomorrow, but I do think they've given enough time to be able to safely evacuate. And as was said by pretty much every speaker, evacuate does not mean you need to end up in like North Carolina.

Governor DeSantis (26:49):

I mean, obviously if people have friends, I mean they can make their decisions, but when you're in these things like zone a, or if you're in manufactured housing that may be more difficult to withstand getting to shelters within your own county, I mean, Hillsborough is gonna open up a lot of shelters. Pinellas is opening, there'll be others. It's not gonna necessarily require you to drive hundreds and hundreds of miles. That's obviously a choice individuals can make, if they have a place they want to go, but prepare to have more traffic than you would normally have just because you have a lot of people here and these evacuations are calling for, you know, a significant number of people who live in really, really vulnerable areas. And I think they, I think they're, you can see online some of the modeling that they have for some of the surge and yes, the barrier islands of course, Pinellas beaches. But if you look interior of Tampa bay and all the areas of Hillsborough Pinellas that are right there, I mean, that is likely to be the most significant surge. So you've got a lot of people that live in that area. And so they're gonna have to do, but the FDOT will expand. They will go to the emergency lane when that is necessary, but we've seen an increase in traffic, but not an increase that is causing everything to come to a standstill.

Question (28:04):

I have you spoken with the president yet

Governor DeSantis (28:06):

About this, I have not. I've spoken with administrator Criswell. They approved our pre landfall declaration, which we're thankful for. We also have Gratia check out of Atlanta as down, and we've worked with Gratia for a long time. So FEMA is integrated with what we're doing. And of course, I think as many of you know, these things are operated at the local level. We in the state are helping to manage and support. FEMA will basically be to help write checks on the back end. And so things like individual assistance, which we will most likely be applying for, they also supporting the direct assistance right now for us. So those are things that we will be utilizing. We've already been talking with both FEMA and with Florida DEM about if needed to have what we call disaster recovery centers.

Governor DeSantis (28:55):

You know, if you have major impacts where people need individual assistance, need other support, we will stand up those centers in conjunction with FEMA. Clearly, if we have major impact here, you know, you would have, you would have centers in this area. I would imagine that the CFO, knowing him, would want to have people there, like he has in past storms to help with things like flood insurance and homeowners insurance. And so we're sensitive that that's gonna be something that will in all likelihood be necessary and wherever those needs are up and down this coast, Florida DEM is gonna work with FEMA to make sure that folks get the relief that they need. Okay. Thanks everybody.