

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

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Sussex County

DELAWARE

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Delaware governor orders evacuation of coastal areas in Sussex County ahead of Hurricane Sandy

Limited state of emergency in effect beginning late Saturday; three shelters set to open at noon Sunday

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

**1900 Hours, Saturday
Oct. 27, 2012**

Delaware's governor has issued a limited state of emergency and a mandatory evacuation order for flood-prone areas within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of Sussex County's coastline and major waterways, effective 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27, as Hurricane Sandy continues to threaten the mid-Atlantic region with strong winds, severe tidal flooding, and torrential rains that could span Sunday to Tuesday.

Gov. Jack A. Markell has ordered that those within the identified evacuation zones leave by 8 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 28 – 24 hours from the beginning of the limited state of emergency. There are no travel restrictions, and no prohibitions for businesses inside or out of the zones.

Meantime, three shelters will open at noon Sunday in Sussex to house those displaced in anticipation of 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 the evacuation zone and the potential for 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 hit Delaware and the mid-Atlantic region with tropical storm-force winds, a 3- to 6-foot-high tidal surge and up to 10 inches of rain across the county.

“The prospects of Sussex County dodging a bullet this time are looking less and less by the hour,” said Sussex County Emergency Operations Center Director Joseph Thomas. “Now is the time to move as we get closer to this storm coming ashore. If you’ve experienced flooding from any storm in the past, you’re going to have flooding from this one. For anyone who doesn’t get out now, it may be days before help can get to you.”

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. The shelters will open to the public at noon Sunday, Oct. 28.

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 will be 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 Florida coast, to begin drifting toward Delaware late this weekend before coming ashore late Monday night or early Tuesday morning, somewhere in the area of the Delmarva Peninsula.

However, the storm’s first effects could begin to be felt as early as Sunday, with tropical storm-force winds beginning Sunday evening and lasting at least 36 hours. Winds throughout the county are expected to be sustained at 40 mph to 45 mph, with gusts as high as 65 mph. Winds could be higher, possibly hurricane force of 75 mph, along the coast.

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The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center continues to monitor the situation and reminds the public to prepare now in advance of the storm. Have a supply kit ready, know the evacuation routes, and plan on where to relocate.

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 6 feet, exacerbated by a full moon Monday that is already expected to cause higher-than-normal astronomical high tides.

Meantime, up to 10 inches of rain, maybe even a foot, is expected across the county.

With high winds expected over a prolonged period, downed trees and power lines – and the possibility of electrical outages lasting for multiple days – are a distinct possibility with this storm.

The Sussex County EOC 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.

The Sussex County EOC will activate at 8 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 28 with full staff on hand by midday. Members of the public with questions about evacuations or other issues can call the EOC storm line, beginning at that time, 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.