

NJ Office of Emergency Management



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RESOURCES FOR JOURNALISTS REGARDING THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE IRENE

TIMELINE

Hurricane Irene became the 9th named storm of the 2011 hurricane season on August 20, 2011.

Irene became a major hurricane on August 24, 2011 with sustained winds of 115 mph, reaching Category 3 status.

Hurricane Irene grew to almost 600 miles wide. Tropical storm winds extended 290 miles from the center and hurricane force winds extend 90 miles from the center or 180 miles in diameter.

In response to the situation, Governor Chris Christie directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan on August 25, 2011, and declared a State of Emergency for the entire State of New Jersey.

The National Weather Service (NWS) projected that the storm would impact the entire State of New Jersey as a dangerous hurricane at 9:43 a.m. EDT, Friday, August 26, 2011. In accordance with federal guidelines, Governor Christie requested a pre-landfall federal disaster declaration for the entire State, and also a disaster declaration for the incident period commencing August 26, 2011 and continuing.

On Saturday, August 27, 2011 Hurricane Irene made landfall near Cape Lookout, North Carolina as a Category 1 hurricane with sustained winds near 85 mph. Irene's hurricane-force winds extended 90 miles from the center or 180 miles in diameter. Tropical-storm force winds extended 260 miles from the center, making Hurricane Irene approximately 520 miles in diameter. Hurricane Irene became the first hurricane to make landfall in the United States since Ike in 2008.

After making landfall in North Carolina, Hurricane Irene moved back over open water travelling north along the Atlantic Coast and towards New Jersey. The devastating effects of the high winds, torrential rain and storm surge associated with this powerful storm were expected to be compounded by the wet antecedent conditions that existed in this State.

Light rain arrived Saturday morning, August 27, 2011, in Southern New Jersey. Steady, heavier rain developed on Saturday afternoon moving into northern New Jersey by mid-afternoon. Rain continued for about an 18-hour period through Sunday morning. On Sunday, August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene's eye made landfall in New Jersey near Little Egg Inlet at 5:35 a.m. EDT.

According to the Office of the New Jersey State Climatologist, the threat of Irene's strong winds and a significant storm surge necessitated the largest coastal evacuation in State history. The storm loomed dangerously in coastal areas; but it weakened as it moved up the East Coast, and damage was less than originally predicted in these areas. Despite this weakening, the inland areas

received as much as 10" of rain that resulted in record or near-record flooding on a number of rivers. Strong winds toppled trees onto power lines, resulting in outages for almost 1 million customers.

Prior to the first drop of rain falling from Irene, enough precipitation had fallen across New Jersey to rank August 2011 as the State's 6th wettest since statewide records commenced in 1895. With the addition of Irene's rainfall, which stands as the State's 3rd heaviest rainstorm, the previous record for any calendar month was shattered by over 5".

Hurricane Irene produced torrential rains that resulted in major flooding and several record breaking crests on rivers. A storm surge of 3-5 feet along the New Jersey shore caused moderate to severe tidal flooding with extensive beach erosion. A recorded 6-8 inches of rain fell across most of the State. Higher amounts, from 9 inches to as much as 10 inches, were observed at USGS and NWS precipitation gages in southwestern, central, and northeastern New Jersey.

Hurricane Irene disrupted transportation and public safety systems. Numerous roads were closed and/or severely compromised with floodwaters and debris creating threats to public health and safety, limiting access to medical facilities, schools, food, fuel, utilities and access for police, fire and rescue units.

On August 27, 2011 President Barack Obama declared an emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 (the "Stafford Act") for the State of New Jersey. On August 31, 2011 President Obama declared a major disaster under the Stafford Act for the State of New Jersey due to damage resulting from Hurricane Irene beginning on August 27, 2011 and continuing. Federal relief and recovery assistance was authorized in the affected areas, and Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, and Hazard Mitigation recovery programs were provided under the Presidential Disaster Declaration.

As the result of further analysis, in December 2011, the National Hurricane Center downgraded Hurricane Irene from a hurricane to a tropical storm as it crossed into New Jersey. Maximum sustained winds did not reach hurricane strength (74 mph), but only 69 mph when it reached Little Egg Inlet.

IMPACTS

Hurricane Irene caused over \$1 Billion worth of damage and 11 fatalities in New Jersey.

August 2011 was the wettest month on record in New Jersey, since record keeping began in 1895. Subsequent flooding due to the previous rains, combined with the Hurricane rains from 27 August to 5 September, set 10 state flood records. New Jersey measured rainfall totals for August 1 through August 26, 2011 ranged from 8 inches, to more than 16 inches. A band of precipitation ranging from 300 to 600 percent of normal was observed from southwestern through central New Jersey.

The counties of Cape May, Atlantic and Ocean issued mandatory evacuation orders for an area with a combined population of more than 100,000. All Atlantic City casino resorts were ordered to shut down on August 26, as the city faced its first mandatory evacuation in history.

To relieve evacuation traffic, toll operations were temporarily suspended at selected sites on the Garden State Parkway and Atlantic City Expressway. To further augment the current voluntary and mandatory evacuation flow in progress, the State implemented its contraflow plans. On August 26, 2011 the southbound lanes on the Garden State Parkway south of exit 98 were closed, while east-west bridges and arteries such as Route 70 and Route 72 would be closed to eastbound traffic. Also, traffic on Route 55 south of Vineland, Route 47 and Route 347 only allowed vehicles to head north.

Approximately 1,500 National Guard troops were deployed in New Jersey to assist with emergency operations.

Seventeen New Jersey counties opened shelters to support the evacuees. The night prior to Hurricane Irene's predicted arrival (August 27/28) there were 16,191 registered evacuees supported in shelters across the State. County shelters supported 13,864 evacuees and the State-sponsored shelters supported 2,327 Evacuees.

Recovery Assistance

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE - ASSISTANCE TO STATE, COUNTY, MUNICIPAL, TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND CERTAIN ELIGIBLE PRIVATE NON-PROFITS

For a link to a list of Public Assistance applicants, and amounts paid to-date, scroll down to Hurricane Irene. <http://www.ready.nj.gov/plan/public-assist.html>

To date, \$99,111,766.51 has been obligated by FEMA, of which \$56,501,511.48 is eligible for immediate reimbursement (Category A& B). The NJOEM has disbursed payment on 99% of the eligible projects. All Category A and B projects are paid immediately, along with Categories C-G "Small Projects." Total number of projects is 2,465.

For specific info on FEMA's Public Assistance Program:

<http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, 49,271 applicants have been approved for Individual Assistance under the Individuals and Households Program. The following programs are reflected under IHP:

Housing Assistance Total: **\$161,156,877**

Other Needs Assistance Total: **\$14,221,588**

IHP Total **\$175,378,465**

For specific information on FEMA's Individual Assistance Program:

<http://www.fema.gov/individual-assistance-program-tools>

HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

The chart linked below reflects Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Assistance resulting from Hurricane Irene. The categories include the federal and non-federal shares of the projects. All are acquisition projects, unless elevations are indicated. The total number of properties involved in a project could change for a variety of reasons related to the homeowner's decision or preferences regarding acquisition or elevation. Participation in an acquisition project is voluntary. Final and complete information will not be available until the properties designated complete the closing process.

View at 200% for easier reading.

http://www.ready.nj.gov/programs/pdf/irene_mitigation/081612_4021_hmgpirene.pdf

For specific information on FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Program:

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance>

CITIZEN CORPS VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET - HURRICANE IRENE:

<http://www.ready.nj.gov/media/pr091611.html>

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/NJ VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER

Approximately 10,000 clean-up kits were distributed by The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, Church World Service and Adventist Community Services.

Food Banks distributed over 1.5 million pounds of food, cleaning supplies and hygiene products; and helped store and distribute donated bottled water.

NJ 2-1-1 took calls from homeowners who needed help cleaning their homes; and 18 faith-based groups and organizations help to muck out, clean, remove debris and/or repair over 1,100 homes with individuals and families who did not have insurance, or who were elderly or had access and functional needs.

The groups assisting with clean-up were:

Mormon Helping Hands

Faith Lutheran

Christian Aid Ministry

ICNA Relief USA

Somerset Baptist Church
Southern Baptist Disaster Relief
Notre-Dame Chapel
CRWRC Disaster Response Services
United Methodist in Wayne
Liberty Corner
Baskin Ridge Presbyterian Church
Tzu-Chi
Chinmaya
Frontier Baptist Association
Burlington CERT Team
KPMG
Samaritan's Purse

There are still individuals and families impacted by Hurricane Irene who struggle with long-term recovery. Five different long term recovery groups have formed and have been working with individuals who are still not back in their homes and have unmet needs. Volunteers are helping to rebuild homes and faith-based groups have been sharing their resources.

Those interested in donating to groups assisting with the long-term recovery efforts should contact Cathy McCann, Community Food Bank of NJ at cmccann@njfoodbank.org or 908-242-3960.

NEW FOR 2012

Hurricane Survival Guide for New Jersey – Preparedness Tips and Info
http://www.ready.nj.gov/plan/pdf/081412_hurricane_surviveguide.pdf

Radio Advertising - Preparedness Campaign:
<http://www.ready.nj.gov/plan/hurricanes.html#radio>

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