



News Release



For Immediate Release

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City and County Prepare for Hurricane Irma

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. – The City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County are preparing for the possibility of Hurricane Irma hitting locally.

“The City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County employees are working closely together to ensure we are prepared and ready for the storm, should it affect our area. Our employees are taking proactive steps, and have been for the past few days, to do as much as possible in advance of the pending hurricane to mitigate any dangers that might be brought on by Irma,” said Kevin Arata, Communications Director for the City. “We’ve learned a lot of valuable lessons from our experiences with Hurricane Matthew last year. We will be prepared to act quickly and decisively to help keep our residents safe should this hurricane hit us.”

Residents are encouraged to visit the County’s website at Co.Cumberland.NC.us, the City’s website at FayettevilleNC.gov and both the County and City’s social media sites, as well as Spectrum Channel 7 (the City’s Government Access Channel) for the latest information on the hurricane. In the event the County and City activate the Emergency Operations Center, the alert banner at the top of the City’s website will also be activated, telling residents information pertinent to the hurricane in this area. The City’s hurricane webpage, FayettevilleNC.gov/Hurricane is also active now, with preparation tips for the pending storm. As the storm develops, more information, to include press releases specific to the storm, will be posted on this site. We encourage residents to take advantage of the information being provided in all these different outlets.

Below is a list of actions being taken by the County in preparation for Hurricane Irma:

- Cumberland County Emergency Management is coordinating with state Emergency Management and local jurisdictions, public safety agencies and other stakeholders as we prepare for Hurricane Irma.

- The county is ready to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and issue a state of emergency when needed.
- Once the EOC activates, a call center with a hotline phone number will be established in the EOC and will be used to filter incoming calls by the public.
- The County is responsible for shelter operations and has met with Health Department, Department of Social Services, School System, Parks and Recreation, Sheriff's Office and Red Cross representatives today to review the sheltering plan.
- Emergency Management has met with damage assessment crews from Tax Administration and Planning & Inspections to review damage assessment deployment after the storm.
- County Maintenance is ensuring County generators and vehicles are fueled.
- Engineering & Infrastructure is securing county buildings and plans to place sandbags along the shore of Cross Creek to prevent flooding at the Headquarters Library.
- The County is strongly encouraging residents to sign up for Cumberland ALERTS by visiting the county's website.

Below is a list of actions being taken by the City's various departments to ensure we are prepared and ready for Hurricane Irma, should it affect our area:

Public Services

- All City Public Works crews will be cleaning storm basins and checking outfalls in their assigned areas. Our Parks & Recreation crews will be cleaning storm basins on all major thoroughfares.
- Trucks are already pre-loaded with high water signs, barricades and cones so they can get to affected areas quickly, once those areas in need are identified.
- All vehicles expected to be used during Hurricane Irma will be topped off with fuel.
- Many vehicles and equipment will be relocated to the Marsh Street facility and Milan Yard by Friday, except for any essential equipment that may be used in the immediate future.
- Backhoes will be pre-loaded on trailers for quick mobilization.
- All chainsaws will be checked and ready for use.
- Generators are being checked and repaired as needed.
- The Mirror Lake spillway is being checked and addressed prior to the storm.
- Crews will be assigned in stand-by mode by Friday in the event they are needed to work in a 24/7 mode.

Fayetteville Area System of Transit (FAST)

- FAST will be testing the reverse 911 system they use for contacting employees and ADA-scheduled clients about any possible route or service changes.
- FAST has received a delivery of diesel fuel to top off their storage tanks.
- FAST is working with Public Services to relocate City vehicles from flood prone areas to higher ground.

FAST plans to continue normal operations until sustained winds reach tropical storm strength or road conditions become unsafe. We always try to give a minimum two-hour notice before suspending service or changing hours. Updates to routes and services will be provided via press releases, social media, and the FAST website at www.ridefast.net.

Police Department

A severe weather operational plan is in place at this time. The Police Department is ready and able to respond where needed during the pending hurricane, just as it was for Hurricane Matthew. All equipment has been checked to ensure it is in working order. The Crime Information Center (CIC) is actively monitoring Hurricane

Irma and Hurricane Irma's predicted track and will make necessary adjustments as needed. The Command Information Center will be staffed and operational throughout the duration of the pending hurricane. The Police Department is prepared to alter, adjust or shift schedules as needed to handle any and all impacts from Hurricane Irma to ensure adequate staffing. Additionally, the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team has returned from its operations in Texas to prepare for and assist our residents. The Police Department is actively sharing vital information on their social media sites encouraging citizens to prepare now, and will continue sharing information via social media throughout the duration of the pending hurricane.

The following points below are offered for resident safety:

- Call 911 for emergencies only. The communications center will be inundated with calls for service and those calls will be handled on a priority basis. We encourage residents to be patient with response times.
- Be aware of areas prone to flooding and avoid those areas. Please do not disregard any street closure signs/barricades or traffic control officers conducting traffic control. Areas which are prone to flooding will be posted on the Fayetteville Police Department's website and its social media sites.
- Please secure your personal property, to include vehicles, if evacuations are necessary or power is lost and you must leave your home. Make sure valuables are photographed and serial numbers are logged and placed in a safe and secure area. Secure any important paperwork such as birth certificates, social security cards, insurance policies, and medicines.
- Be safe and smart. Check on family members and neighbors and stay informed as the situation develops. Be aware of any suspicious activity and of scam artists who may try to take advantage of the situation.

Fire/Emergency Management Department

Emergency Management is monitoring the storm and leading coordination activities via conference calls, webinars and situation reporting between the City, Fort Bragg, Cumberland County and North Carolina Emergency Management to build situational awareness and contribute to a common operating picture. The status of deployable resources and anticipated needs among partner agencies are key concerns at this time.

A state of emergency draft has been prepared and is ready to be declared if needed, and to synchronize with Cumberland County for effectiveness and efficiency. Anticipated actions are also being aligned with the Governor's executive orders, including state of emergency and transportation waivers that support relief efforts.

Key points to highlight for residents are to: register for Cumberland Alerts, create a communications plan with your loved ones, create a transportation/evacuation plan, prepare a 72 hour kit in case you need to evacuate, and download the free ReadyNC app to your smartphone.

Other actions taken to prepare include:

- Preparing staffing for an incident management team to oversee responses during the Hurricane event.
- Station preparations to ensure generator operability.
- Preparing staffing to set up boat crews for water rescue teams.
- Coordinating with NC Emergency Management in preparation of getting additional resources and personnel in the event that they are needed.
- Checked station standby generators and topped off fuel as needed
- Inventory completed of water rescue equipment, to include hip waders and PFD for all personnel
- Fire Department command center prepped for operation, to include back up communication systems
- Firefighters who work on the day shift staff have been put on notice for operating on a possible flex schedule next week
- Maps have been created of Hurricane Matthew responses to predict potential problem areas

Fayetteville-Cumberland Parks & Recreation

Fayetteville-Cumberland Parks & Recreation is working closely with the Fayetteville Fire/Emergency Management Department as they monitor the storm. The Parks & Recreation Division is following its protocol for forecasted shelter operations in the event emergency management authorizes such need.

Airport

The most up-to-date information on the airport's status can be found at Flyfay.com.

The airlines are responsible for cancelling or changing their flights and will announce those changes through their organizations. Those who are flying to or from the Fayetteville Regional Airport can call the following numbers to confirm their flight status, should the hurricane affect flight travel in our area:

- American Airlines Reservations at (800) 433-7300; Luggage check at (800) 535-5225
- Delta Airlines Reservations at (800) 221-1212; Luggage check at (800) 325-8224
- United Airlines Reservations at (800) 864-8331; Luggage check at (800) 335-2247

Fliers can get updated flight information automatically delivered to their cell phones by downloading apps from the servicing airline (i.e. American Airlines, Fly Delta, and United Airlines).

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