



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Randy Smith

South Florida Water Management District
Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 389-3386

Gabe Margasak

South Florida Water Management District
Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 670-1245

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SFWMD Monitoring Hurricane Irene

Residents are asked to review their storm plans and supplies

West Palm Beach, FL – While an onshore threat to South Florida from Hurricane Irene has diminished, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is closely monitoring the latest weather forecasts and preparing for any possible impacts. The District has begun adjusting operations of the regional water management system in order to reduce the potential for flooding.

Canals have been placed in the low range in Homestead in Miami-Dade County and in southern Broward County. Water control structures in the rest of the system will be adjusted as needed to enhance the ability of local drainage facilities to route excess runoff into the District canal system. A pre-storm inspection of the regional flood control system is complete, and fuel supplies and other equipment in the field have been checked.

“The challenge for this year is transitioning the regional water management system from water shortage to flood control while being mindful of the longer-term outlook for drier-than-normal conditions,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “Each storm has its own personality, and it is a delicate balance between making room for rain and saving water already in the system should the storm miss the region.”

Independent of whether the storm reaches South Florida, coastal residents will likely see higher water levels as the hurricane coincides with the arrival of the peak of the August high tides.

Along with pre-storm preparations, the District employs a routine maintenance program to ensure the regional flood control system operates at its full potential. The program includes routine inspection and maintenance of water control structures,

clearing canals of debris and exotic vegetation, strengthening canal banks and other improvements.

Even with these precautions, complete flood protection is not possible in South Florida given the potential for extreme rainfall from storm events.

Residents are urged to review their emergency plans and supplies. Experience has shown that people who are adequately prepared are more likely to be safe and rebound quickly than those who do not take action ahead of time. Having essential supplies for at least three days can ensure that basic needs are met immediately following a storm. Tips for emergency preparedness are available at www.floridadisaster.org.

For weather and emergency management updates from the District, follow the agency's Twitter feed: [@SFWMD](https://twitter.com/SFWMD).

Useful Storm Links:

- [Radar & Satellite Images](#)
- [Hurricane Tracking/Tropical Storm Forecast](#)
- [Hurricane and Storm Models](#)

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.