



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Moving Water in Storm Mode

Flood control system operating as designed

West Palm Beach, FL – All pump stations, gates and other structures in the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) are operating in storm mode to maximize stormwater storage and reduce flooding where possible from Tropical Storm Isaac. The District plans to fully active its Emergency Operations Center in West Palm Beach at noon today, and all manual pump stations are fully staffed.

With the storm forecast to have the largest impact south and west of Lake Okeechobee, the District has taken the following actions:

Miami-Dade County

- Lowered canal levels beginning last week in anticipation of the storm
- Continued coordination with county officials to facilitate local drainage
- Tested and prepared C-4 Canal emergency detention basin and its two pump stations near NW 150th Avenue, north of U.S. 41, to receive stormwater
- Operating pumps in the C-4 area at full capacity to continue moving water to tide when possible given the storm surge and ocean tides
- Field staff are monitoring water levels and will make adjustments as necessary

Big Cypress Basin, Collier County

- Lowered canal levels beginning last week in anticipation of the storm
- Continued coordinating with county staff and providing support as needed
- Fully opened all manually operated structures on Saturday to accommodate anticipated rainfall
- Automated structures changed to manual operation today and were fully opened to maximize flows
- Local field staff are closely monitoring water levels and will make operational adjustments as necessary

“We have the system prepared for the storm, and we are monitoring conditions in real-time,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “Areas of heavy rains over the past three days have taken up some pre-storm capacity in the local and regional canal networks in the Miami-Dade and Homestead areas. We are making adjustments as the storm progresses to ensure the system is operating at its optimal capacity.”

North of Lake Okeechobee, all canals are within acceptable range, and all water control structures are available for flood control. As the storm moves north, water managers will make adjustments to structures in Broward, Palm Beach, Martin and St. Lucie counties and the Kissimmee region as necessary. Water levels and flows are monitored around the clock by field staff and the District’s Operations Control Room in West Palm Beach.

Pre-storm preparations by the District also included:

- Inspecting key parts of the flood control system
- Ensuring adequate fuel supplies for pump stations and other equipment
- Ready staff and equipment for storm assignments

The District remains in a condition of increased readiness and is coordinating information with the state Emergency Operations Center as well as federal and local partners, including local drainage districts that connect to SFWMD canals.

Throughout the year, the District carries out a robust 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.

As a reminder, complete flood-proofing is not possible in South Florida given the potential for excessive rainfall from storm events.

Residents are urged to review their emergency plans and supplies and stay clear of water control structures, where there may be a rapid water flow even before a storm.

Useful Storm Links:

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

For updates in case of an emergency, residents and visitors can follow the District’s Twitter feed ([@SFWMD](#)) and its list of weather and emergency management tweeters related to South Florida ([@SFWMD/emermanagement](#)).

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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.