



NEWS RELEASE

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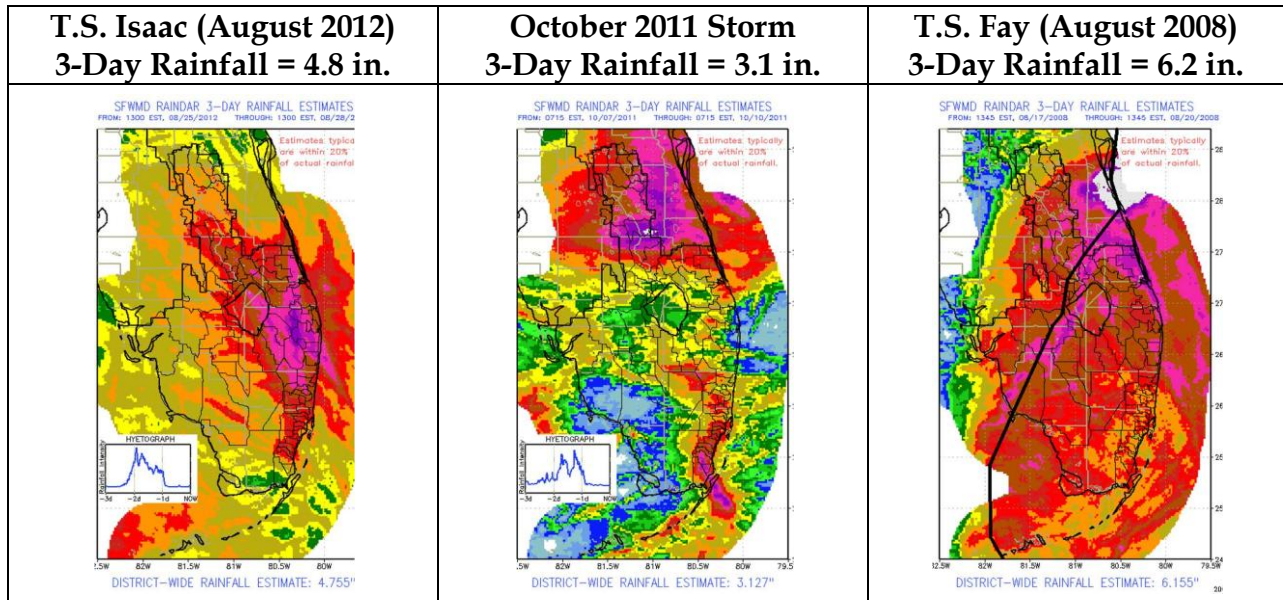
South Florida Water Management District

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Gov. Scott Briefed on SFWMD Response to Tropical Storm Isaac *Water managers continue to operate the regional flood control system at full capacity*



The above maps compare three-day rainfall totals from Tropical Storm Isaac with other recent major rainfall events in South Florida. (Click on the maps for larger versions.)

West Palm Beach, FL – Florida Governor Rick Scott and a delegation of state officials today visited the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for a briefing on the agency’s response to Tropical Storm Isaac and an aerial tour of areas in Palm Beach County impacted by flood waters. The Governor also visited the District’s Emergency Operations Center and its Operations Control Room, where water managers monitor water levels and flows and operate the massive regional flood control system 24 hours a day.

According to SFWMD meteorologists, Isaac produced the second-largest single-day rainfall total and the third-largest two-day total across the District’s region in the last 20 years. Despite some additional rainfall Tuesday, water levels are starting to recede in central Palm Beach County and other areas affected by the storm. The District continues to operate the regional flood control system at full capacity to move flood waters to tide.

Impacted Areas and SFWMD Response

Since Monday, water managers have been discharging at maximum rates from both the east and west ends of the C-51 Canal, which moves water to tide from inland areas of Palm Beach County. Emergency orders remain in place to maximize system operations and divert water.

In the nearby L-8 Canal, the District is utilizing excess capacity in the L-8 Reservoir and coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to move water into Lake Okeechobee. In addition, field crews are installing temporary pumps adjacent to the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area to divert water to the C-18 and L-8 canals. This will further improve drainage from affected communities in Palm Beach County by moving water into Lake Okeechobee and to tide.

“With the intense rainfall from Tropical Storm Isaac, even South Florida’s well-maintained flood control system needs time to provide relief for affected areas,” said SFWMD Executive Director Melissa Meeker. “Water levels are gradually responding in these areas as water managers and District field staff work around the clock to quickly and safely alleviate flooding.”

The District is closely coordinating with local drainage districts and municipalities to accept additional flows in regional canals when possible. Water managers must carefully balance the timing and location of inflows from secondary systems into the C-51 Canal to prevent flooding in other communities downstream.

Preliminary data indicate the C-51 Basin, which encompasses central Palm Beach County, experienced a 1-in-100-year rainfall event from Tropical Storm Isaac, with up to 15 inches of rain falling between Saturday morning and Tuesday morning. On top of rainfall before the onset of the storm, the estimated seven-day rainfall total for the basin was 17 inches.

In other areas affected by Tropical Storm Isaac:

- Water levels in communities north of Lake Okeechobee are receding as the District operates pump stations around the lake at full capacity.
- Current inflows into Lake Okeechobee are more than 30,000 cubic feet of water per second – the equivalent of filling up an Olympic-sized swimming pool every two seconds. The lake level has increased from 12.48 feet NGVD on Monday to 13.39 feet NGVD today and is continuing to rise.
- The Kissimmee River remains temporarily closed to navigation for recreational boaters. Flows associated with the storm continue to increase, and restored sections of the Kissimmee floodplain are being inundated with water.
- In Miami-Dade and Broward counties, regional canals have moved back to acceptable pre-storm levels, and water control structures are available for flood control.

The District continues to closely monitor conditions around the clock and is coordinating information with the state Emergency Operations Center as well as federal and local partners.

Rainfall Totals from Tropical Storm Isaac

District-wide rainfall from Tropical Storm Isaac on Sunday measured 3.89 inches – the second-largest single-day rainfall total in the last 20 years, according to SFWMD meteorologists. The only higher single-day total during that time was 5.35 inches from Tropical Storm Mitch in November 1998. Isaac’s two-day rainfall total of 4.76 inches on Sunday and Monday trailed only Tropical Storm Fay in August 2008 and Tropical Storm Mitch.

The heaviest rainfall from Isaac was concentrated in Palm Beach and Broward counties, with local maximum totals of more than a foot. With additional rainfall received in the days before the storm, the District-wide seven-day rainfall estimate was 6.24 inches through Tuesday morning.

Maintenance: Keeping the Flow Going

To sustain the regional flood control system’s capability for handling storms and wet season rainfall, the District has a robust program of structural maintenance and refurbishment. Accomplished primarily during the dry season, these activities are critical to ensuring that the regional flood control system – comprised of more than 1,600 miles of canals, 1,000 miles of levees/berms, 1,300 water control structures and 64 pump stations – operates at optimal capacity.

The District continues to invest in improving the flood control system. The agency has a proposed operations and maintenance budget of approximately \$182 million for Fiscal Year 2013, which includes more than 700 employees and operation of eight field stations. During the past five years, the District has invested approximately \$240 million in essential maintenance work, including:

- Hardening and overhauling pump stations
- Overhauling gated spillways
- Replacing project culverts
- Upgrading microwave towers with control buildings
- Dredging canals
- Stabilizing canal banks
- Enhancing Stormwater Treatment Areas

Each year as the summer rainy season and hurricane season approaches, many canals and lakes from Orlando to the Florida Keys reach the lowest level in their seasonally varying operations. During that timeframe, District crews inspect many of the water control structures and pump stations.

Useful Storm Links:

- [FAQs: Tropical Storm Isaac](#)
- [Radar & Satellite Images](#)
- [Rainfall Maps](#)
- [FloridaDisaster.org](#)

To report flooding or damaged or blocked water control structures, call the SFWMD Citizen Information Line toll-free at (877) 429-1294.

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.