

Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Hurricane Warning and Watch Issued

Nassau, Bahamas, October 3, 2016

The following Emergency Message is being transmitted to alert U.S. citizens to the development and progress of Hurricane Matthew. The National Hurricane Center (NHC; www.nhc.noaa.gov) reports that Hurricane Matthew is headed for The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands and a hurricane warning is now in effect for Southeastern Bahamas, including the Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Ragged Island, Long Cay, Samana Cay Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. A hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions could affect the mentioned islands within 36 hours. A hurricane watch is now in effect for Central Bahamas, including Long Island, Cat Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador and the Exumas Islands. A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions could affect the mentioned islands within 48 hours. A hurricane alert remains in effect for Northwestern Bahamas, including Eleuthera, New Providence, Andros, the Berry Islands, Bimini, Grand Bahama and Abaco Islands. A hurricane alert means that hurricane conditions could affect the mentioned islands within 60 hours.

Maximum sustained winds are near 145 miles per hour with higher gusts. Matthew is a Category Four hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Some fluctuations in intensity are possible during the next couple of days, but Matthew is expected to remain a powerful hurricane into Tuesday.

U.S. citizens residing and traveling in coastal areas in this region should be alert to flooding. Small craft operators throughout The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands should seek safe harbor for their vessels.

Given the approaching hurricane, there is limited time available for a safe departure. The Department of State has authorized family members of U.S. government employees to depart The Bahamas in advance of Hurricane Matthew. We recommend U.S. citizens depart The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands if possible and work with commercial air carriers to leave prior to the arrival of the hurricane. Airports will close once conditions deteriorate and safe travel is not possible. We recommend those citizens who are unable to depart to shelter in place in a secure location.

Travelers should apprise family and friends in the United States of their whereabouts, and keep in close contact with their tour operator, hotel staff, and local officials for evacuation instructions. Travelers should also protect their travel and identity documents against loss or damage, as the need to replace lost documentation could hamper or delay return to the United States.

The U.S. Embassy advises all U.S. citizens living in and/or visiting this region take certain basic precautions immediately in preparation for the storm.

For further information:

- See the [State Department's travel website](#) for the [Worldwide Caution](#), Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and [Bahamas Specific Information](#).
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Contact the U.S. Embassy in The Bahamas, located at 42 Queen Street (across from the British Colonial Hilton Hotel), Nassau; telephone: 242-322-1181; after hours emergency telephone: 242-357-7004; ACS unit fax: 242-356-7174; e-mail: ACSNASSAU@state.gov; web page: <http://nassau.usembassy.gov>. The Turks & Caicos Consular Agency is located at 2 Venture Ct., Grace Bay Suite 102E, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos. The Consular Agent is LeShelle Tull-Thomas (649-232-5713, TullThomasLS@state.gov).
- Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).