

Sunday, September 9, 2018 – 7:30 am

As of the 5am update from the National Hurricane Center (NHC), a direct east coast impact from Florence is a near certainty. Florence remains a tropical storm, but she is becoming better organized. Florence is forecast to regain hurricane status this morning and is forecast to become a major hurricane (CAT3 - 115mph+) hurricane by Monday afternoon. Continued strengthening is forecast to occur as she moves towards the east coast, current NHC forecast has Florence reaching (CAT4 130mph+) status by Weds.

The NHC 5 day forecast error cone currently includes VA. It is still too soon, to pin down the exact location of landfall. As with past tropical systems, it's important not to focus too much on the center forecast track line - instead pay attention to the forecast error cone. While the current NHC forecast shows the center track of their error cone making landfall near the SC/NC boarder, anywhere within the NHC forecast error cone has a possible chance for landfall. Regardless of landfall, if Florence comes to shore south of VA, it will still be traveling northward after landfall, which means VA will see some impacts from Florence as she moves north.

While it is still soon to forecast specific impacts to our area, the NHC 5am forecast gives Hampton Roads a 45% chance of seeing at least tropical storm force winds(39mph+) in the next 4-5 days; a 18% chance of seeing strong tropical storm force winds (58mph+) in the next 5 days; and an 8% chance of seeing hurricane force winds (75mph+) in the next 5 days. The percentages will continue to change as Florence gets closer and the NHC forecast becomes more refined.

Key Messages from this morning's NHC forecast:

1. Florence is forecast to be a dangerous major hurricane near the southeast U.S. coast by late this week, and the risk of direct impacts continues to increase. However, given the uncertainty in track and intensity forecasts at those time ranges, it's too soon to determine the exact timing, location, and magnitude of those impacts.
2. Interests along the U.S. East Coast, particularly from north Florida through North Carolina, should closely monitor the progress of Florence, ensure they have their hurricane plan in place, and follow any advice given by local officials.
3. Large swells affecting Bermuda and portions of the U.S. East Coast will continue this week. These swells will result in life-threatening surf and rip currents

We'll continue to monitor Florence and will provide updates. We also encourage you to monitor local TV/Radio media for additional updates. Now is the time to be reviewing your hurricane plans with plans to begin implementing them by early next week in preparation for possible impacts from Florence.

