

Wednesday, September 5, 2018 – 10:00 am

Just a quick reminder that while the hurricane season hasn't been of much concern to the eastern US thus far, we are nearing the peak of the hurricane season and now is not the time to put your guard down. Now is the time to be reviewing your hurricane plan (or making one if you don't have one) and making sure you have any needed supplies. In the last week, we've had 2 storms get their names – Gordon and Florence - and we've got 2 more storms near Africa that will need to be watched very closely...and there are more to come. As you likely know, Gordon made landfall in Mississippi yesterday after brushing the tip of Florida. While Gordon never made it to hurricane status, it is responsible for at least 1 death – an important reminder to take all tropical systems seriously.

Hurricane Florence was upgraded to a CAT3 hurricane (sustained winds 120mph) this morning, becoming the first major hurricane of the season. Florence was initially expected to stay well out to sea. The early models and National Hurricane Center (NHC) have continued to move the forecast track westward over the last few days due to a complicated weather pattern that is limiting Florence's northward movement and moving her more westward. While it is still too soon to know where Florence is headed, the east coast and Bermuda are now much more in play than they were thought to be even yesterday and the chances are increasing. **If** we were to see any east coast impacts from Florence (and it's a HUGE IF at this point), it will likely be 7-10 days from now. Florence's rapid intensification to a CAT3 storm has added even more unpredictability into her forecast. Again, with all the forecast variability associated with Florence, it is much too early to pin down where Florence will be a week from now – hopefully, she will be floating somewhere out in the Atlantic and not be headed towards the east coast. That said, we'll be watching Florence's track closely and will provide updates as warranted.

The other two systems the NHC are currently tracking have a 90% and a 30% chance of developing into a named tropical system in the next 5 days. As they are just now exiting off Africa we will likely be watching them for the next week or two and potential impacts are unknown at this time.

And for this season in particular, don't rule out a "home-grown" storm before hurricane season ends in November. Home-grown refers to tropical systems that develop nearer the US mainland as opposed to traveling across the Atlantic. The sea temperatures near the coast this year are very warm, which assists in the development of this type of storm. While they don't usually reach the magnitude (category wise) of some storms that travel across the Atlantic, we have much less warning time to prepare for this type of storm because they develop so close to the coast.

Again, now is the best time to make sure you are prepared for hurricane season instead of when we have a storm bearing down on us. For more information on making a plan and what supplies you may need you can go to: <https://www.ready.gov>.