

Thursday, September 13, 2018 – 9:00 am

Florence is currently a CAT2 (110mph) is moving toward the northwest at 15mph. Florence is currently located about 205 miles east south east of Wilmington NC. Florence is forecast to approach the coast of NC or SC on Thursday and Friday and move slowly near the coastline through Saturday. The current track has it approaching the NC coast south of Wilmington before meandering south along the coast towards Myrtle Beach SC and then heading westward across SC and then turning northward.

Our chance of seeing tropical storm force winds has increased slightly this morning with this morning's forecast. While we will could see tropical storm force (39+mph) gusts, our chances of sustained tropical winds is low. The potential for storm surge remains a possibility. The likelihood of tidal flooding in the high-moderate to major stage has increased.

Watches/Warnings - A coastal flood warning is in effect for IOW until 6am Saturday. A coastal flood warning means that flooding is occurring or imminent. No storm surge watches or warnings are currently issued for VA. A tropical storm warning is in effect for north of Duck NC to Cape Charles Light VA. Storm surge watch means there is a possibility of life-threatening inundation, from rising water moving inland from the coastline, in the indicated locations during the next 48 hours. (Additional watches and warnings are to our south, but I have not included them in this update – additional information is available on the NWS website.)

Strength/size – Florence is currently a CAT2(110mph). Little change in strength is expected before the center reaches the coast, with weakening expected after the center moves inland. Florence's wind fields have continued to grow –tropical force winds extend up to 195 miles and hurricane force winds now extend 80 miles from her center. Florence's total wind fields have continued to grow, and her wind bands extend significantly beyond the rings of hurricane and tropical storm wind levels. Her most outer wind fields now spread across a distance almost as wide as NC and SC combined.

While the reduction in strength is good for those in her path, the weakening has caused Florence's outer winds to continue to spread from her center. Her large size will continue to allow Florence to impact well outside the core of the system. This widening of Florence's outer wind bands will impact our area by increasing the amount of water that is potentially pushed up into the rivers, and could also increase the rain totals we see.

Forecast track – Florence is currently located about 205 miles east [south east of Wilmington NC](#). A turn to the west-northwest and west at an even slower forward speed is expected tonight and Friday, and a slow west-southwestward motion is forecast Friday night and Saturday. On the forecast track, the center of Florence will approach the coasts of NC & SC later today, then move near or over the coast of southern NC and eastern SC tonight and Friday. A slow motion over eastern SC is forecast Friday night through Saturday night then Florence is forecast to turn northward. The forecast error cone now includes much of VA west

of Virginia in day 3-5 of the forecast when Florence's turns to the north after passing through SC.

Rainfall – NWS is currently forecasting 2"-3+" for IOW with locally higher amounts. The widening of Florence's outer bands or a could lead to increased rain accumulation in some areas. Depending on the duration of Florence's stall we could also see higher rain totals. Dangerous flash flooding and flooding may occur Friday through the weekend.

Winds – NHC forecast has not changed the wind chances for Hampton Roads significantly from the last update.

- 41% chance of tropical force winds (39+mph) (up from 39%)
- 3% chance of strong tropical force winds (58+mph) (same)
- 0% chance of hurricane force winds (74+mph) (same)

Based on NWS forecast information, we are not forecast to see sustained tropical force winds across IOW. Overall, wind speeds are down slightly in this morning's forecast. We are forecast to see near tropical force gust from Friday morning through early Saturday afternoon. Sustained winds are forecast to be in the high-teens to mid-20s from around 1pm Thursday through Saturday afternoon. Forecast gust are from the high-20s to high-30s. Actual wind timing and extent will be highly dependent on the actual track of Florence. The NWS is currently forecasting winds to increase starting this morning and begin to taper off Saturday morning.

Tidal Flooding – Moderate to major tidal flooding is forecast for IOW. Based on the current tide forecast, looks like the Friday afternoon high tide cycle may see the highest tidal levels for IOW. Tide levels will increase up the James River due to the amount of water that is being pushed inland by Florence. Sewell's Point is forecast to reach moderate flood levels. Forecast are for just over major tidal flooding at Jamestown Friday afternoon. Depending on the length of Florence's stall, the number of higher than normal high tide cycles may be extended.

High tides for:

- Pagan River will occur at 2:09pm today, 2:29am Friday, 2:57pm Friday, 3:17am Saturday, 3:47pm Saturday
- James River Bridge will occur at 1:12pm today, 1:32am Friday, 2:02pm Friday, 2:21 am Saturday, 2:54pm Saturday

Inland Flooding – NWS still has IOW in the moderate risk level for inland flooding. Flooding in low lying areas and ditch overflow will also likely be an issue – especially on the back roads. Flooding due to rainfall could persist through the weekend.

Blackwater River – Potential for flooding along the Blackwater has increased this morning. Due to the potential for higher rain fall amounts from Florence's outer bands and the possibility that she may make her way north through central VA, the forecast models are projecting a worst case maximum river level into the just into the major flood stage (18.8+') on Monday

(9/17). However, THE MOST LIKELY forecast level is around 8' which is well below the minor flooding level through next Thursday (9/20). The forecast information available only projects through next Thursday.

Storm Surge/Evacuation - Factoring in Florence's increasing total size and the forecast stall, NWS has increased the storm surge impacts slightly from this morning. NWS is currently forecasting greater than 1' storm surge along the IOW coast line (especially along the James River). As of 6pm this evening, no storm surge watches or warnings have been issued for Virginia. Storm surge related flooding depends on the relative timing of the surge and the tidal cycle and can vary greatly over short distances. While the hurricane hasn't strengthened in terms of peak winds, the inner-core and outer wind fields have continued to expand, resulting in an increase the storm's total energy, which may also add to the storm surge impact. Additionally, the longer Florence stalls along the NC/SC coast, the higher the actual storm surge may be especially along the James River.

IOW Storm Surge Zone A remains under the Governor's evacuation order. It is important that individuals be aware of their storm surge risk and make preparations to act accordingly.

Shelter – With an overabundance of caution, IOW plans to open an emergency shelter at Windsor High School Thursday at 6pm. Note: the shelter will not be serving dinner to evacuees on Thursday, feeding operations will begin Friday morning.

EOC – Emergency Operations Center will be activated in conjunction with the shelter opening. The EOC will be activated at 5pm Thursday.

Power Outages – there are currently no reported power outages in IOW.

Additional Information - Follow the county's Facebook page (Isle of Wight County Virginia) of for more frequent updates. We've also setup a public inquiry phone line at 757-365-6205.