

September 6, 2017 – 9:00 am

Still too early for a call on potential impacts from Irma in Isle of Wight. The official National Hurricane Center (NHC) forecast and most the major models have tracked eastward since yesterday. This puts the possible easterly scenarios discussed in yesterdays update fully in the realm of possibilities. As we've been saying all week, NOW IS THE TIME TO BE PREPARING FOR HURRICANE IMPACTS. Hoping IOW avoids Irma impacts is not a plan. If you already have a plan, now is the time to review it and make sure you are prepared to put it into action. If you don't have a plan, now is the time to make one (go to www.ready.gov for more information). You should also be making sure that you have a hurricane supply kit (that includes food, water and other supplies) that could support you and your family for at least 3-5 days. Best case scenario, Irma doesn't impact us significantly and you are better prepared for the storms that may follow Irma. Worst case, you'll be better prepared for a potential visit from Irma.

As of the 8am NHC update, is a catastrophic category 5 (CAT5) hurricane with sustained winds of 185 mph. Irma is currently located about 15 miles west of St. Martin. Some fluctuations in intensity are likely during the next day or two, but Irma is forecast to remain a powerful CAT 4 or 5 hurricane during the next couple of days. The forecast for Irma has become more uncertain after 72 hours (3 days) due to the large eastward shift in the hurricane models related to the forecasts of a mid- to upper-level trough over the southeastern US. This trough could block the potential for a more inland movement of Irma as it moves north of Florida and could influence a more easterly northward track.

As noted before, there is considerable uncertainty with regard to Irma's path beyond the NHC day 5 forecast. REMEMBER: **Small track changes can mean BIG impact changes (good and bad)**. We've watched the models trend east, back to the west, and now back eastward over the past few runs and it's likely we will continue to see model track shifts, especially beyond the 5 day track forecast. Any conclusions drawn about Irma's ultimate track beyond the 5-day range are highly speculative and usually serves little useful purpose from a preparedness perspective. We recommend that you continue to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Note: you can find prior tropics updates on the County's Facebook page at Isle of Wight County Virginia and on the County's website at <http://www.co.isle-of-wight.va.us/>.

