

State now at OPCON 4,

Prepares for Heavy Rain, Flooding and Hurricane Joaquin

COLUMBIA, S.C. (Thursday, October 1, 2015, 12:20 p.m.) – The South Carolina Emergency Management Division and partner state agencies have upgraded the state’s operational condition to level four. OPCON 4 is the second lowest of five operational conditions and enables state agencies to make preparations for any potential effects from Hurricane Joaquin and predicted heavy rainfall from a separate weather system.

People in potentially vulnerable areas should review their plans and consider actions they would need to take if the storm threatens South Carolina. Residents and visitors in the state should monitor the storm via local news media and through updates from the National Hurricane Center, especially people in low-lying areas throughout the state.

“Even if Hurricane Joaquin heads out to sea, the entire state could experience significant flooding from heavy rains that are predicted,” SCEMD Director Kim Stenson said, “We’ve already seen flooding in many parts of South Carolina, these storm systems could make conditions worse.”

When Flooding Occurs in Your Area:

- **Be aware of potential flash flooding.** If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move to higher ground. Do not wait to be told to move.
- If time allows, **prepare your home for a flood** by moving essential items to an upper floor, bring in outdoor furniture, disconnect electrical appliances and be prepared to turn off the gas, electricity and water.
- **Do not walk through moving water.** Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- **Do not drive into flooded areas.** If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle could be quickly swept away. One foot of water can cause your car to float off the roadway.

Given the uncertainty of Hurricane Joaquin's project path, SCEMD recommends the following:

- **Monitor storm conditions** via local media, the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service offices that serve South Carolina. Follow [@SCEMD](#) social media feeds for emergency information.
- **Understand the difference between a Watch and a Warning.** A Tropical Storm Watch means tropical-storm conditions are *possible* within 48 hours. Stay tuned for additional advisories. A Tropical Storm Warning means tropical-storm conditions are *expected* within 36 hours. If you are advised to take safety precautions, do so immediately.
- **Know Your Zone and review emergency plans:** Residents living in vulnerable areas that might be in a tropical storm's path must make plans now should an evacuation later become necessary. Become familiar with evacuation routes, which are marked with special signs.
- Visit scemd.org/knowyourzone to determine what coastal evacuation zone you are in.
- **Keep supplies in vehicles, top off fuel, secure important documents:** If the storm approaches South Carolina, individuals and families should fill up their cars with gas. Road maps, nonperishable snack foods, a first-aid kit that includes a supply of your family's prescription medications, and convenience items such as diapers should be available in the car. Secure important documents in waterproof packaging.
- **Consider the safety of pets:** Pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters. You should plan to board pets with veterinarians, kennels, or other facilities in non-vulnerable areas. Identification and rabies tags should be attached to the pets' collars.