



NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 27255
Raleigh, NC 27611-7255

Phone: (919) 814-0700
Fax: (919) 715-0135

NUMBERED MEMO 2018-11

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Kim Strach, Executive Director
RE: **Hurricane Preparations**
DATE: September 11, 2018

Hurricane Florence

Recent forecasts suggest Hurricane Florence will make landfall as a Category 4 hurricane and will have significant and widespread effects on our state later this week. Forecasters expect extreme storm surge on the coast and inland flooding from heavy rain. Impacts may be life threatening and extensive power outages are anticipated. It is important that we are all making preparations for any potential impacts from the storm. Many of you were impacted by Hurricane Matthew back in 2016 with severe flooding that limited access to your office or voting sites. The rainfall amounts anticipated with this storm could be in excess of 15 to 20 inches in some areas. This could result in flooding in places that normally do not flood. For those counties on the coast, the effects of the storm could begin as early as Wednesday so all preparations need to be made as soon as possible. Delayed river flooding is likely next week.

Preparations

County board offices are not created alike. Some of you have offices that have previously experienced flooding and some of you are new to your county and may be unaware if the office has previously flooded, in which case it may be helpful to make inquiries within county government regarding past instances. Predictions indicate that our entire state could receive massive amounts of rainfall that will likely lead to flooding in many areas. Do not take any chances. If your office has flooded or has any potential for flooding, please ensure all voting equipment, electronic equipment, files, and other essential items are protected from the storm. If you have the ability to secure equipment or files on a higher floor, please make arrangements to do so. Please make sure the SEIMS server is raised off the floor as high as possible, is not near windows, and is protected from wind and rain. If you plan to take your SEIMS backup drives offsite, please ensure the drives are secure and not accessible to any unauthorized individuals. In the event that a power loss is expected or the SEIMS server needs to be moved, please notify the HelpDesk so that arrangements can be made to shut the server down properly. If you have

access to email, please copy my email address at kim.strach@ncsbe.gov. It is important for us all to remember that our emergency plans must also maintain the highest security safeguards.

Ballot preparation is under way and many of you have received all required approvals and are ready for ballots to be printed and shipped. We will continue to work until all counties have received final approvals and ballots are printed and shipped. Based on our experience with Hurricane Matthew, we will work to mitigate the effects of any postal service delays. Please do your utmost to stay updated on the status of mail and commercial carrier delivery at your office. It will be important to track any ballot shipment(s) throughout the week. Please complete the survey in the accompanying email and stay in contact with your ballot printer and with us through the Help Ticket system, so we all are aware of any issues that could delay your receipt and distribution of printed ballots.

September 22 Deadline

If your ballots for the general election have cleared the State Board's final approval stage and your UOCAVA ballots have been posted to the Printelect workflow site, please take steps to begin issuing absentee ballots to military and overseas voters who have requested to have their ballots transmitted by email or fax. This means that you should enable your ballot styles, link each UOCAVA image to the correct ballot style in the application, and then run your absentee tasks to create the balloting packet for these voters. You may wait to issue the by-mail ballots once you receive your printed ballots from your ballot print vendor. When your printed ballots are received, it will be important for you to test your ballots independently of any preliminary testing that your print vendor may have performed, before you issue ballots to voters by mail. In the event you are unable to independently test your ballots before mailing, please include an indicator after the absentee application number that will alert you that the ballot was not tested in the event an issue is discovered and the ballot needs to be duplicated onto a new ballot that can be tabulated. If you have any questions regarding any of these steps, please contact the HelpDesk for support.

We are going to make every effort to meet this deadline next week. As indicated in [Numbered Memo 2018-08](#), if we determine that your county is unable to mail printed ballots on September 21 or September 22, we will institute an emergency plan for your county. It is my hope that this will be unnecessary for all 100 counties.

The following links should be helpful to you regarding UOCAVA voters:

How to create absentee requests for UOCAVA voters:

<https://int.ncsbe.gov/seimsweb/help/plus/VoterView/AdminTasks/CreateAbsenteeRequests.htm>

How to link UOCAVA and sample ballot images:

<https://int.ncsbe.gov/seimsweb/help/plus/BallotStyle/LinkBallotImage.htm>

How to create UOCAVA packets:

<https://int.ncsbe.gov/seimswb/help/plus/VoterView/Absentee/AbsenteeLabelsPackets.htm>

Personal Safety and Communication

Your personal safety is top priority. This is a dangerous storm. Please do all you can prior to the storm to prepare but **do not jeopardize your safety at any time**. Communication concerning the status of your office before, during, and after the storm, to the extent possible is extremely important. Please do your best to communicate with the HelpDesk and/or directly with me by email or phone to let us know, positive or negative, your office status.

We are receiving information from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety’s Emergency Management team and will update you with any additional information we receive.

The following is from the 8am advisory:

HAZARD	DETAILS	IMPACTS	THREAT
Storm Surge	S of Cape Fear: 4-6' Cape Fear-Cape Lookout: 6-12' (Neuse & Pamlico Rivers) Cape Lookout-Ocracoke Inlet: 5-8' N of Ocracoke Inlet: 3-5'	Very dangerous inundation amounts are expected along the NC coast Thu-Sat.	Extreme
Inland Flooding	Portions of Eastern NC: 15-20+" Central/Eastern: 6-15" (Up to 30" along track)	Sig. threat to life and property; impassable roads; road wash-outs. Heavy rain will begin Thu and could continue through the weekend. Longer-term river flooding likely, and mountain landslides possible.	Extreme
Damaging Winds	Hurricane-Force winds are likely near the coast Tropical Storm-Force winds likely across much of state	Significant downed trees and widespread/prolonged power outages across the state; significant structure damage possible as Florence could make landfall as a Category 4 hurricane.	Extreme
Tornadoes	A few tornadoes are possible Thu and Fri, especially across eastern NC. Tornadoes in tropical systems are typically short-lived and weak.		Moderate
Marine & Coastal	Life-threatening surf and rip currents will continue for much of the week.		Extreme

Threat Levels: None Low Moderate High Extreme

Please be safe. Do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.