

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Tennessee Sends Critical, Life-Saving Response Teams to the Carolinas for Hurricane Florence Help**

**Nashville, Tenn.** – The State of Tennessee deployed multiple teams of state and local emergency management, medical, and swift-water rescue teams to the Carolinas today to support emergency officials readying for life-safety impacts when Hurricane Florence makes landfall Friday.

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) is coordinating Tennessee's Hurricane Florence deployments through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), with organizational support from the Tennessee Association of Fire Chiefs' Mutual Aid System and the Tennessee Department of Health.

"Tennesseans have a volunteer spirit to step up and help our neighboring states in times of need and I thank the men and women from these various teams who will be on the ground in the Carolinas when the storm hits to immediately provide needed services and relief," Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam said. "I also commend TEMA for coordinating the resources while monitoring Hurricane Florence's possible impact to Tennessee."

### **Tennessee Provides Swift-Water Rescue Support**

Tennessee's Hurricane Florence swift-water rescue team has a total of 103 members, coming from each region of the state, with representatives from the following agencies and departments:

- City of Atoka Fire
- City of Brentwood Fire
- City of Franklin Fire
- City of Franklin Police
- City of Gatlinburg Fire
- City of Germantown Fire
- City of Hendersonville Fire
- City of Knoxville Fire
- City of Lebanon Fire
- City of Millington
- City of Murfreesboro Fire & Rescue
- City of Pigeon Forge Fire

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- City of Sevierville Fire
- Metro Nashville Fire
- Metro Nashville Police
- Rutherford County Fire & Rescue
- Shelby County Fire
- Williamson County Emergency Management Agency
- Williamson County Sheriff's Office
- Wilson County Emergency Management Agency

"Tennessee is sending well-trained and dedicated emergency managers, first responders, and health professionals to help South Carolinians through what could be a devastating disaster," said Director Patrick Sheehan of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA). "We are all *One Emergency Management* when any of us provide assistance in an emergency situation. It doesn't matter that we're federal, state, or local responders. What matters is we are there to help when help is needed."

Tennessee's Hurricane Florence swift-water rescue team will stage operations in Columbia, S.C., for up to one week, possibly longer. The swift-water rescue personnel will conduct missions to save Hurricane Florence survivors from perilous conditions involving fast-moving or fast-rising flood waters. Team members have specialized training in conducting dangerous water rescue operations and transporting survivors to safety.

### **Tennessee's Nurse Strike Teams Providing Medical Support & Relief**

The Hurricane Florence force deployment from Tennessee also includes two nurse strike teams with 22 personnel who will stage in Charlotte, N.C., and provide medical care and support to local officials helping Hurricane Florence survivors.

The nurse strike teams include local and regional health department professionals from Tennessee's east, southeast, and upper Cumberland regions and representing the counties of Benton, Bedford, Decatur, Gibson, Henry, Knox, Lawrence, Madison, Morgan, Overton, Putnam, Weakley, and White.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone impacted by Hurricane Florence, including our own first responders at the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), highly trained nurses, and emergency professionals serving on strike teams and deploying to North Carolina today," said TDH Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH. "We know that along with other Tennessee volunteers they will be vital and welcome care providers and support for our neighbors affected by what could be a massively disruptive storm."

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TEMA expects the nurse strike teams to be deployed in North Carolina for up to seven days.

### **Tennessee Communication and Ambulance Teams Deploy for Hurricane Florence**

Rutherford County, the Tennessee Advanced Communications Network, and TEMA sent four communications personnel to North Carolina on Wednesday with assets and resources to augment the ability of first responders to communicate with each other during hurricane incident operations.

The State of Tennessee deployed an ambulance strike team of 23 state and local personnel to Charlotte, N.C. on Tuesday to support the movement of patients before Hurricane Florence makes landfall. The ambulance strike team includes emergency medical services professionals from the counties of Benton, Cheatham, Henderson, McNairy, Madison, Robertson, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson, and Metro Nashville. A representative from TDH also deployed with the ambulance strike team to coordinate activities of the deployed team members.

On Monday, two ambulance bus teams with seven personnel deployed to South Carolina to assist in the evacuation of health care facilities in South Carolina's Myrtle Beach and Charleston areas. The ambulance bus teams include staff from Anderson and Washington counties, the Knoxville Fire Department, and TDH.

### **TEMA Coordinates Deployments & Sends Emergency Support Personnel**

Additionally, TEMA has deployed seven staff members with the deployed teams to the Carolinas to provide incident, logistics, and resource support for missions involving the communications, nurses, and swift-water rescue teams. TEMA staff members are also working in South Carolina's Emergency Operations Center in Columbia, S.C. to support response operations and incident management.

TEMA began assembling the response teams Monday as Hurricane Florence strengthened to a Category 2 storm with maximum sustained winds of 130 mph.

Hurricane Florence strengthened Tuesday with winds of 140 mph, and may become more powerful before hitting the Carolina coast as a Category 4 storm Thursday night or Friday morning.

More than 1 million people are under mandatory evacuation orders in the coastal areas of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

TEMA's 24-hour Watch Point is monitoring Hurricane Florence's path and forecast for any potential Tennessee Impact.

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**About the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency:** TEMA's mission is to coordinate preparedness, response and recovery from man-made, natural and technological hazards in a professional and efficient manner in concert with our stakeholders. Follow TEMA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#), and, at [www.tn.gov/tema](http://www.tn.gov/tema).

**About ReadyTN:** ReadyTN is a mobile device application from the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) providing emergency preparedness, response, and recovery information to Tennesseans. Ready TN is available for mobile devices running Apple and Android operating systems. For more information on ReadyTN's features and on downloading, visit [www.tn.gov/tema/ready-tn.html](http://www.tn.gov/tema/ready-tn.html).

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