



## **National Emergency Management Organization** *“Preserving Life and Property”*

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### **TROPICAL STORM ETA**

**SUNDAY, 01 NOVEMBER, 2020, 6:00 PM**

The National Meteorological Services of Belize and the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) hereby informs the general public that Tropical Storm Eta located over the western Caribbean Sea south-southwest of Jamaica was centered near latitude 14.9N, longitude 78.9W or about 285 miles east of Cabo Gracias a Dios on the Honduras/Nicaragua Border. The storm was moving to the west at 15 mph with maximum sustained winds of 65 mph and minimum central pressure of 992 mb. The forecast is for Eta to continue moving westward tonight with a decrease in forward speed followed by a slower motion toward the west-southwest on Monday and Tuesday. The system is forecast to rapidly strengthen during the next 24 to 36 hours and is now expected to become a hurricane by tonight. Based on this forecast, Eta is expected to make landfall along the north-eastern coast of Nicaragua late on Monday night or Tuesday morning.

There uncertainty in the forecast after the system reaches the coast of Central America. There is the possibility of the system or its remnants curving west-northwestward then northward and re-emerge over the Gulf of Honduras on Friday. In any event, rapid weakening is forecast once the system moves across the mountainous terrain of Nicaragua and Honduras and even if the system re-emerges over the Gulf of Honduras, it will be significantly weaker. It appears that the most significant impact on Belize will be very heavy rainfall starting as early as Tuesday. Rainfall totals of 10-20 inches with locally higher amounts are possible, especially over southern Belize. These rains could lead to flooding and landslides.

Tropical cyclone watches or warnings are not required for Belize as yet. However, the NMS of Belize will continue to monitor this storm very closely and update you of any changes in the forecast as time progresses.

A flood watch is in effect for the Cayo, Belize, Stann Creek and Toledo districts. Farmers are reminded to secure their crops and assets. People living in flood-prone areas are reminded to put food and valuable items out of the reach of floodwaters. If your home is likely to flood turn off the main power supply. Do not remain in areas where latrines are overflowing due to the floodwaters. If where you are not, safe move to higher ground, move away from streams and riverside. Do not play or drive in floodwaters. Do not cross flooded creeks and rivers.

**SIX INCHES OF FLOOD WATERS CAN SWEEP YOU OFF YOUR FEET. DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATERS, IT CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS.** Motorists are asked to drive with extreme caution when driving the highways and secondary roads. All drivers are asked to put on their hazard light when driving through rain.

NEMO will keep the general public updated on any further developments. The public is advised to stay alert and take action if are at risk to flood. Please adhere to the official release from the National Met Service and NEMO.

..Ends...

**ATTACHMENTS-** COVID 19 Protocols and Preparedness Tips for a tropical cyclone. The NEMO Emergency Hotline is 936. NEMO's Emergency Coordinators can be reached as follows:

**Corozal**, Mr. Ronnie Hernandez at 614 7140;

**Orange Walk**, Mr. Aragon at 615 2264; or Mr. Leiva at 614-7177

**Belize District**, Mr. Alphius Gillett at 614-4735;

**San Pedro**, Ms. Vanessa Parham at 614 5865;

**Belize City**, Mr. Al Westby at 614 8604 or Mr. Pollard at 6143244;

**Belmopan**, Ms. Clare Moody at 614 5705; or Mr. Eiley at 624 2365

**Cayo**, Mr. Al Westby at 6148604 or Mr. Johnny Ramclam at 614 5891;

**Stann Creek -Coastal-** Dangriga including Mullins River to Independence),

Mr. Kevin Flores at 604 3632

**Stann Creek -Interior-** Hummingbird and Southern highway communities, Mr. David Cruz at 614 8514; and for

**Toledo**, Mr. Kenton Parham at 614 2158 or Mr. Dennis Williams at 614 2393

### **COVID 19 SHELTER PROTOCOLS:**

All persons in high-risk coastal areas are reminded IF the need arises for you to evacuate and you are (1) not COVID positive, (2) not in quarantine, (3) not awaiting a test result or (4) being contact traced, and (5) not showing symptoms, move early!

You must wear a mask. Know which shelter you will go to, take along your essential necessities required for you to survive. The elderly and persons with underlying health conditions must not occupy the same space with normal persons. Note, people showing symptoms will be contained in a separate section of the shelter building.

Hand washing /sanitizing must be done before entering a shelter. Shelter Wardens will allocate shelter space. Social distance must be adhered to and shelters must be sanitized on a regular basis. Garbage must be properly disposed of. Proper cleaning and disinfection must be done on a regular basis. Shelter Managers must monitor and correct hygiene and cough /sneeze etiquette. The Ministry of Health (MoH) will conduct daily monitoring of shelters to detect people who are sick and showing signs of COVID19. The Shelter Management Team (Public Officers/ Volunteers) MUST use PPE.

### **PREPAREDNESS TIPS BEFORE A CYCLONE ARRIVAL:**

(1) Avoid being near the coast if your home is not safe if you live on the cayes and along the coast be familiar with the evacuation routes. Know which shelter you will need to go to. Make early preparations.

- (2) Protect windows with plywood or shutters,
- (3) Review your family emergency plan, consider all COVID 19 measures,
- (4) If you can afford to purchase non-perishable foods and water. Store additional water.
- (5) Keep an extra supply of medication. If a member of your household is bed-ridden, seek medical advice. Notify authorities ahead of time if you have persons in your neighbourhood require special assistance to evacuate due to a medical condition.
- (6) Secure your important documents and identification. Save the emergency contact numbers for NEMO, the police, fire, and medical facility in your cell phone. Keep your phone charged.
- (7) Pets are not allowed in shelters, make plans for your pets, continue to trim trees, clear drains, and secure outdoor items. Farmers make plans to move your animals to higher ground and stockpile feed when required.