



National Emergency Management Organization

“Preserving Life and Property”

ADVISORY # 7

FLOOD WARNING FOR CENTRAL BELIZE

FRIDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER, 2020, 6:00 PM

The National Meteorological Services of Belize and NEMO hereby inform the general public that rainfall associated with the remnants of Hurricane Iota continues to contribute to flooding in Central areas of the country.

All major highways are open. The Low Lying Bridge in San Ignacio, Iguana Creek Bridge, and Branch Mouth Hammock Bridge remains closed. The Succotz and Backing Pot Ferry are also closed. In Belmopan the J&W and More Tomorrow areas are inaccessible. In Belize Rural the Maypen, Grace Bank and Crooked Tree villages are all inaccessible.

The Macal, Mopan Rivers in the Cayo District, and the Sibun and Belize Rivers in the Belize district, continues to steadily rise. Belize River, Mount Pleasant Creek, Maya Mopan Creek and Roaring Creek are also rising in the Cayo District. In the Belize Rural area, the water levels are rising in the Crooked Tree Lagoon, Mexico Creek, and Big Falls Creek. The Rio Hondo and New Rivers in the north are rising slowly.

Two hundred and thirty five (235) persons are in shelters throughout the country, primarily in the Belize Rural area (Crooked Tree, Rancho Dolores, Bermudan Landing, Burrell Boom, and Lemonal) and Cayo district (Calla Creek and Bishop Martin School), Orange walk (Trial Farm).

Major relief operations are underway to assist the affected populations and cattle farmers.

NEMO and the National Met Service will keep the general public updated on any further developments. NEMO STRONGLY advises the general public to adhere to the advisories, don't take risks with their life, and move out of flood waters.

..Ends...

FLOOD TIPS

1. Do not venture into rivers and creeks when there is heavy rainfall or there are long periods of rain because those water ways are likely to flood.
2. AS SOON AS YOU HEAR of a Flash flood , tell your neighbor and move away from the water source and MOVE to higher ground or to the upstairs of the nearest solid concrete (cement) building OR climb to the highest point! If where you are is Safe, stay there!
3. Relocate to higher grounds if you live along rivers and streams. DO NOT STAY IN YOUR HOME tonight if you know it is likely to flood during the course of the night. MOVE TO SAFETY, SAVE YOUR FAMILY, LIFE COMES FIRST!
4. If you are caught in your home by rising waters, move to the second floor or onto thereof if necessary. Take warm clothing, a flashlight and a portable radio with you. Then, wait for help. Do not try to swim to safety.
5. If you can shelter in your home, place food and valuable items out of the reach of floodwaters. Farmers are reminded to secure their animals. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. If your home is likely to flood, turn off the main power supply. Beware of the movement of wild animals and snakes in your area due to flood waters.

6. **DO NOT:** remain in areas where latrines are overflowing due to the floodwaters, play or drive in floodwaters and cross flooded creeks and rivers.

7. SIX INCHES OF FLOOD WATERS CAN SWEEP A PERSON OFF THEIR FEET. DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATERS, IT CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS. Do not cross flooded rivers and creeks unless to save a life at risk of drowning. River crossing at night is not recommended but if it must be done include a flotation device and light must be used.

8. When a Flood Warning is issued; DO NOT drive in areas likely to flood, you could get trapped in the low ground when the flood waters arrive .More people drown in their cars than in any other location during flooding conditions. If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it as soon as possible. Floodwaters can rise rapidly and sweep a car (and its occupants) away.

9. Motorists are asked to drive with extreme caution when driving the highways and secondary roads. When it is raining drivers are reminded to put on their hazard light when driving on the roads and highways.

10. If time permits, turn off all utilities at the main switch and close the main gas valve. Do not touch electrical equipment unless it is in a dry area and you are wearing rubber gloves and rubber-soled boots or shoes.
11. Every source of electricity can be dangerous during and after flooding. After the flood, check for structural damage before entering the building. Do not touch power lines and electrical wires. The #2 cause of flood-related deaths is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to BEL. Do not turn on any lights or appliances until an electrician has checked the system for short circuits.
12. Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Do not use matches or an open flame unless you know that the gas has been turned off and you have ventilated the area. Report gas leaks to the appropriate utility provider.
13. Flood prevention efforts depend on your cooperation and assistance. If your property is next to a drain please do your part and keep the banks clear of brush and debris.

ATTACHMENTS- NEMO's Emergency Coordinators Contact Information, COVID 19 Protocols and Preparedness Tips.

Corozal, Mr. Ronnie Hernandez at 614 7140;
Orange Walk, 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:

1. 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!
2. 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.
3. 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 neighborhood 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.