



National Emergency Management Organization

“Preserving Life and Property”

ADVISORY # 8

FLOOD WARNING FOR BELIZE

SATURDAY, 21 NOVEMBER, 2020, 6:00 PM

The National Hydrological Service of Belize and NEMO hereby inform the general public that major flooding is affecting most of the country due to Hurricane Iota.

A FLOOD WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT Significant areas of the Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Belize districts are experiencing severe flooding. The Belize and Sibun rivers are spilling their banks due to the fast down stream flow associated with secondary flooding. There is little or no debris blocking the flow path which was cleared out by the first flood so the waters are rising much faster. This is compounded by the fact the rivers were already at flood state. Residents living along or near to these rivers are called upon to take the NEMO advisories seriously. Move to safety to save lives and protect property.

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!** If you can shelter in your home place food and valuable items out of the reach of floodwaters. Ensure you have an emergency kit, secure your documents and valuables. Farmers are reminded to continue to secure their livestock. **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.

Water contamination is a major threat to health. The public is advised by BWS to store water. The treatment of water for human consumption in flooded areas is compulsory before it can be used for drinking purposes. **DO NOT DRINK DISCOLOURED WATER OR WATER WITH A SMELL.**

As advised by public health one (1) tablespoon of bleach can purify 5 gallons of water but allow it to settle for thirty minutes before using. **DO NOT:** remain in areas where latrines are overflowing due to the floodwaters, play or drive in floodwaters and cross flooded creeks and rivers. **SIX INCHES OF FLOOD WATERS CAN SWEEP YOU OFF YOUR FEET. DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATERS, IT IS DANGEROUS.** Motorists are asked to drive with extreme caution when traversing the highways and secondary roads. Drivers are reminded to put on their seat belt and hazard light when driving through rain and to report dangerous areas.

CEMO activated today to review the flood situation in Belama and decided that shelters will not be opened tonight. The Mayor did a site visit where he concurred with the NEMO Coordinator that the biggest concern at this time is access for most of the affected residents in Belama. Divine Mercy church provided assistance to two persons with coordination from the Belize Red Cross and NEMO. NEMO is activated and responding with full support from the government, its international partners, national committees and uniform services.

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

...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 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.