

Hurricane watch goes up for Florida as Floyd heads toward Bahamas

[MIAMI](#) -- Hurricane watches were posted for parts of Florida Monday as Hurricane Floyd raced toward the Bahamas packing winds nearing 155 mph (248 km/h).

The East Coast of Florida from Hallandale north to south of Flagler Beach was put under a hurricane watch at 5 a.m. Monday. Northwest and central Bahamas were under a hurricane warning.

"It is very powerful hurricane -- you don't get much more powerful," said Todd Kimberlain, a meteorologist at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. As its sustained winds neared 155 mph, Floyd was on the threshold of becoming a Category 5 storm -- the strongest category there is.

By 8 a.m. Monday, the Category 4 storm was centered 195 miles (315 km) east of San Salvador island in the central Bahamas. It was headed west at 14 mph (22 km/h).

If it keeps its track, Floyd would pass Monday night or early Tuesday 120 miles (192 km) east of Nassau, the Bahamian capital, Kimberlain said.

The Hurricane Center said it looked as if Floyd would reach Florida on Wednesday. Forecasters said it was on course to hit land in central Florida, though it was possible it would turn to the north, either skirting the coast or lashing Georgia and the Carolinas.

"I think the northern Bahamas are under the gun. It is a little less certain for the central Bahamas. It (Floyd) should be moving through the northern Bahamas on Tuesday," an NHC spokesman, James Franklin said.

"South Florida is not out of the woods yet," Kimberlain added.

Florida's Division of Emergency Management warned Florida residents to start getting ready for a visit by Floyd. Many people were already heeding the warning, stocking up with water and supplies in supermarkets and heading to hardware stores for plywood to shutter windows.

Miami TV stations also ran advisories telling people how to protect their homes.

Floyd was designated a Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir Simpson scale on Sunday, meaning it can rip off roofs on small residences, damage doors and windows, tear down trees and signs, destroy mobile homes and cause severe flooding.

Hurricane Andrew, which devastated swaths of south Florida in August 1992 and killed more than 40 people, was Category 4.

The Atlantic season's sixth tropical storm, Floyd formed on Wednesday and reached hurricane strength early Friday.

Meanwhile, another tempest, Tropical Storm Gert, was roiling in the central Atlantic. Gert, the seventh named storm of the season, was located about 1,500 miles east of The Lesser Antilles and moving westward late Sunday.

September 13, 1999

Web posted at: 8:22 a.m. EDT (1222 GMT)



Satellite image taken Monday at 5:44 am EDT



Orlando, Florida, residents set boards up to their windows, anticipating the arrival of Hurricane Floyd

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FLOYD INFORMATION:

8 a.m. EDT Monday

POSITION:

23.9 N, 71.4 W -- 195 miles (315 km) east of San Salvador in the central Bahamas

MOVEMENT:

Moving west at nearly 14 mph (22 km/h)

WIND SPEED:

155 mph (250 km/h) maximum sustained winds

HURRICANE WATCH:

East Coast of Florida, from Hallandale north to south of Flagler Beach

HURRICANE WARNING:

Central Bahamas, including Cat, Rum Cay, Long and San Salvador islands and the Exumas Islands; northwest Bahamas, including Andros, Bimini, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama and New Providence islands, and the Abaco and Berry island chains.

TROPICAL STORM WARNING:

Turks and Caicos Islands, southeastern Bahamas.



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