



Charleston County Emergency Operations Center News Release

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Charleston County Moves to OPGON 1, Issues Voluntary Evacuation Order, and Announces Shelter Openings for Tropical Storm Hanna

Based on the information learned during the 5:30 p.m. conference call with state officials and officials from other counties and the National Weather Service, **Charleston County will move to Operating Condition (OPGON) 1 at 6:30 p.m. today, Thursday, Sept. 4.** The OPGON 1 level means a disaster or emergency situation is in effect, full-fledged emergency response operations are on-going, and Charleston County is in the highest state of emergency operations.

Charleston County is issuing a voluntary evacuation effective at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4. The voluntary evacuation is being issued for people living east of Highway 17 in vulnerable or low-lying areas, and anyone who lives in a mobile home anywhere in Charleston County.

In order to accommodate those who wish to leave but do not have a safe location outside of the Charleston County area, a limited number of shelters have been opened.

Shelters (open at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4)

Stall High School
7749 Pinehurst Street
N. Charleston, SC 29420

Midland Park Elementary
2415 Midland Park Road
N. Charleston, SC 29418

Morningside Middle School
1999 Singley Lane
N. Charleston, SC 29405

Special Medical Needs Only

Alice Birney Middle School
7750 Pinehurst Street
N. Charleston, SC 29420

Pet Shelter

North Charleston Coliseum
5000 Coliseum Dr
N Charleston, SC 29418

REQUIREMENTS: Pets are only allowed in the designated animal emergency shelter at the North Charleston Coliseum. Only one person per pet is allowed to stay, and one person must stay with a pet because animals cannot be dropped off. You must bring all supplies needed for your pet: crate, collar, leash, food, identification, veterinarian/immunization records, etc.

Residents needing transportation to a shelter may call the Citizens Information Line at (843) 202-7100 or the Spanish Information Hotline, (843) 202-7191.

A voluntary evacuation is targeted toward people who are most vulnerable to the threat, including people living on barrier islands and in manufactured homes.

Charleston County is currently under a Tropical Storm Warning and a Hurricane Watch. The public needs to monitor their local news media and be prepared as Tropical Storm Hanna moves toward the state's coastline. Tropical storm force winds are expected to reach the county's coast mid-day Friday, with a potential for winds up to 50 mph Friday evening. Gusts of up to 60 mph could be seen in the extreme north end of the County Friday evening. The threat of tornadoes is low due to being on the west side of the storm. The storm surge is expected to be one to two feet above normal tide levels. Some areas could get up to four inches of rain.

Officials from Charleston County will stay in close communication with state agencies and other counties and organizations.

Closure Information

Schools

Charleston County School District announced that schools will be closed on Friday, Sept. 5, and all school activities will be cancelled on Friday as well.

Charleston County Government

All non-essential Charleston County Government offices will be closed on Friday, Sept. 5.

Charleston County Solid Waste & Recycling

The solid waste administrative office will be closed on Friday, Sept. 5, and will reopen for normal hours on Monday, Sept. 8. The Bees Ferry Landfill will be open on Friday, Sept. 5 as long as weather allows. The landfill will have normal operating hours on Saturday, Sept. 6. There will be curbside recycling collection on Friday, Sept. 5. The Incinerator (Waste-to-Energy Facility) will be open to receive garbage during normal hours on Friday, Sept. 5 and Saturday, Sept. 6. The Charleston County rural convenience centers will be open on Friday, Sept. 5 and Saturday, Sept. 6 during normal operating hours.

Libraries

Charleston County Public Library's 16 locations and all library book drops will close Friday, September 5, 2008, in anticipation of winds and rain associated with Hurricane Hanna. All branches will close at their normal times today, Thursday, September 4, 2008. At this point, plans call for branches to resume their regular schedules and reopen on Saturday, September 6, 2008. If there are any changes to Saturday's schedule because of the impact of Hanna, that information will be released to the local news media and posted on the Library's Web site – www.ccpl.org. With branches reaching both the northern and southern points of Charleston County - from Edisto to McClellanville - the Library System will close to ensure safety to patrons and workers.

Emergency Information for the Public:

- The **Charleston County Citizen Emergency Information Line, (843) 202-7100**, and the **Spanish Information Hotline, (843) 202-7191**, have been activated so citizens can call in and get answers to any questions relating to Tropical Storm Hanna. The emergency information lines opened at 8 a.m. today and will remain open 24 hours a day until further notice.
- The following organizations can help anyone with special medical needs make a plan and register for emergency assistance:
 - Special Medical Needs:
S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) staff are now part of the Charleston County Citizen Emergency Information Line and can be reached at (843) 202-7100
- Charleston County residents can register for Alert Charleston County, a free program that allows the public to receive phone and text message notifications about emergency situations, such as a chemical spill, an escaped convict, a missing person or a hurricane evacuation order. When notified, citizens will hear a message that gives details on the emergency and includes instructions on any actions they should take. Alert Charleston County. Register online at: <http://alert.charlestoncounty.org>

2008 Charleston County Hurricane Guide:

To download the 2008 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide, and to keep up to date with County news releases concerning Tropical Storm Hanna, visit www.charlestoncounty.org. Click on the "Are You Ready?" banner on the front page of the Web site to download, print and share:

- The 2008 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide
- The 2008 Disabilities Emergency Guide

The Operating Condition (OPCON) levels of readiness run from five to one in level of severity, with one being the most severe. This is opposite of how hurricane severity levels run, from one to five, with five being the most severe.

The following is an explanation of each OPCON level, and Charleston County moved to OPCON 1 at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4:

- 5: Day-to-day operations to include normal training and exercises.
- 4: Possibility of an emergency or disaster situation that may require a limited or full activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center.
- 3: Disaster or emergency situation likely or imminent. Full or partial activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center; activate County Emergency Operations Plan.
- 2: Disaster or emergency situation in effect; maximum preparedness level; full activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center.
- 1: Disaster or emergency situation in effect; full-fledged emergency response operations on-going; highest state of emergency operations.**

Visit www.charlestoncounty.org for updated information, news and instructions related to Tropical Storm Hanna.