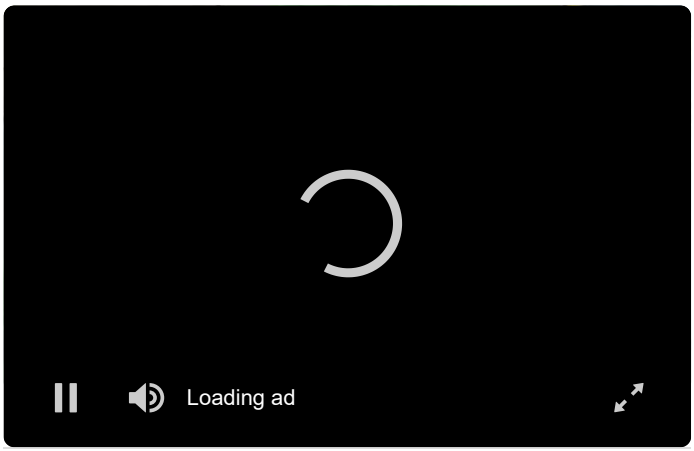


HURRICANE SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

Hurricane Idalia Is Making Landfall In Florida With Catastrophic Storm Surge, Winds

By weather.com meteorologists · less than an hour ago



At a Glance

- Hurricane Idalia is making landfall in Florida's Big Bend region.
- Catastrophic storm surge, hurricane-force winds, heavy rainfall and the threat of tornadoes are concerns.
- Hurricane and storm surge warnings have been posted for portions of Florida.
- Watches and warnings are also in effect along the Atlantic coast from Florida to the Carolinas.

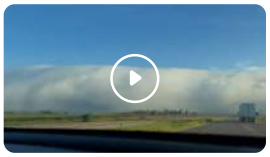
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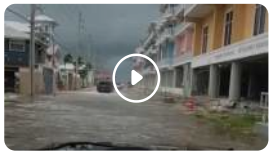
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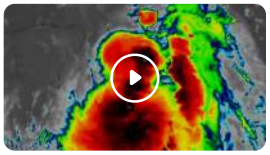
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Fort Myers Beach Floods Again As Idalia Approaches



Video Captures Convective Bursts Within Idalia

- **Idalia will spread heavy rain, strong winds and storm surge along the Southeast coast.**

Sign up for the Morning Brief email newsletter and get the latest news and updates on Idalia's path delivered straight to your inbox each weekday morning.

Hurricane Idalia is beginning to make landfall along Florida's Gulf Coast, where it's likely to bring catastrophic, life-threatening storm surge, hurricane-force winds and flooding rain.

Idalia will then move quickly inland which will bring significant wind and flooding concerns, as well as the threat of tornadoes, into parts of Georgia, as well as South and North Carolina. As a result, hurricane warnings have been posted for portions of the Atlantic Coast.

(MORE: Interactive Storm Tracker)

What's the latest with Hurricane Idalia? The center of Idalia is moving ashore into Florida's Big Bend region.

Idalia has maximum sustained winds of 125 mph, which is a strong Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. It's likely to be the strongest hurricane landfall on record in Florida's Big Bend region.

The hurricane briefly hit Category 4 intensity this morning, but the start of an eyewall replacement cycle has reduced maximum sustained winds slightly. This does not reduce the severity of the hurricane's impacts.

(**MORE: 12 Things You May Not Know About Hurricane Forecasts**)



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Gulf Of Mexico Is Getting Warmer And That's Dangerous



Bands of rain containing strong winds continue to swing into much of Florida, and parts of south Georgia.

The highest wind gusts observed so far include 81 mph at Horsehoe Point, 70 mph at Sarasota and 58 mph in Tampa and St. Petersburg.

An extreme wind warning has been issued for a part Florida's Big Bend region until 9:15 a.m. EDT. This rare type of warning indicates the eyewall of a hurricane is coming ashore and is typically reserved for wind speeds of at least 115 mph.

Cedar Key has so far observed a storm surge over 7 feet as of early Wednesday.

A tornado watch is in effect for parts of Florida and Georgia until 3 p.m. EDT.



Current Radar, Satellite And Winds

Hurricane and tropical storm alerts: A hurricane warning is in effect for the areas shaded in purple in the map below. That includes Gainesville, Tallahassee, Florida, and parts of southern Georgia. A hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions (74+ mph winds) are expected somewhere in this area within 24 hours.



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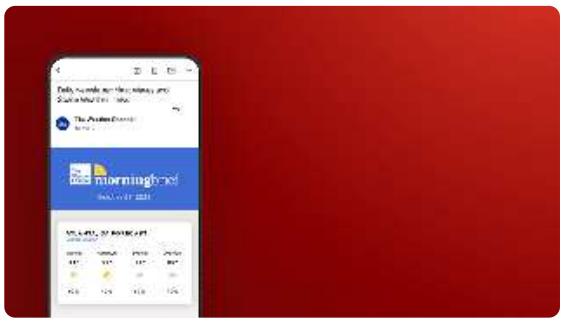
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Hurricane watches, tropical storm watches and tropical storm warnings have been issued for many other parts of Florida into south Georgia and the Carolinas, as shown in the map below.



Watches And Warnings

(A watch is issued when tropical storm or hurricane conditions are possible within 48 hours. A warning is issued when those conditions are expected within 36 hours.)

Storm surge is a major danger in Florida: The National Hurricane Center issued this strong wording in its forecast discussion Wednesday morning, "Catastrophic impacts from storm surge inundation of 12 to 16 feet above ground level and destructive waves are expected somewhere between Wakulla-Jefferson County line and Yankeetown, Florida."

The National Weather Service in Tallahassee noted in their Tuesday morning discussion, "Widespread deep inundation with storm surge flooding will be greatly accentuated by powerful battering waves. Locations may be uninhabitable for an extended period of time. Near-shore escape routes and secondary roads may be washed out or severely flooded."

A storm surge warning is in effect for Englewood to Indian Pass, including Tampa Bay. This means there is a danger of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline within the specified area.

Storm surge watches and warnings are in effect for other parts of the Florida coast to southeast Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina.

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- Not a thing. I don't have kids.
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- My kids have fur.

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Here are some water levels that could reach 6 feet or higher if the peak surge coincides with high tide. Other peak storm surge forecasts along the coast are shown in the map below:

-Wakulla-Jefferson County line, Florida, to Yankeetown, Florida: 12-16 feet

-Ochlockonee River, Florida, to Wakulla-Jefferson County line, Florida: 8-12 feet

-Yankeetown to Chassahowitzka, Florida: 7-11 feet

-Chassahowitzka, Florida, to Anclote River, Florida: 6-9 feet

-Carrabelle, Florida, to Ochlockonee, Florida: 5-8 feet

-Anclote River, Florida, to middle of Longboat Key, Florida: 4-6 feet

-Tampa Bay: 4-6 feet

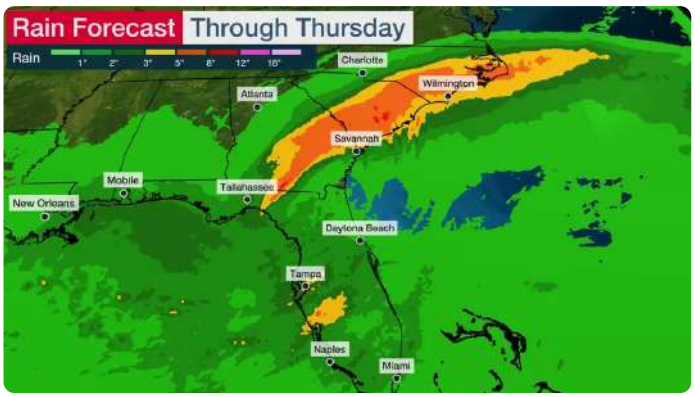


Storm Surge Forecast

Flooding rain is expected in Florida and the Southeast: Heavy rain will continue into Thursday from Florida into parts of Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. That will likely trigger local flash flooding in some areas.

Parts of the west coast of Florida, the Florida Panhandle, southeast Georgia and the eastern Carolinas may receive 4 to 8 inches of rainfall, with isolated higher amounts of 12 inches possible, a ccording to the National Hurricane Center.

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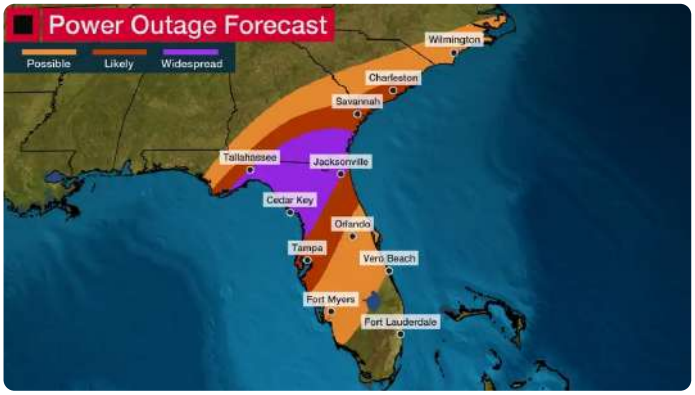


Rainfall Forecast

(This should be interpreted as a broad outlook of where the heaviest rain may fall and may shift based on the forecast path of the tropical cyclone. Higher amounts may occur where bands of rain stall over a period of a few hours. This also includes some rain that may fall apart from the storm in the Southeast.)

Damaging winds will reach far from the center: Locations where hurricane warnings are in effect could have numerous power outages and downed trees. Those more numerous outages may extend far inland from northern Florida into southern Georgia.

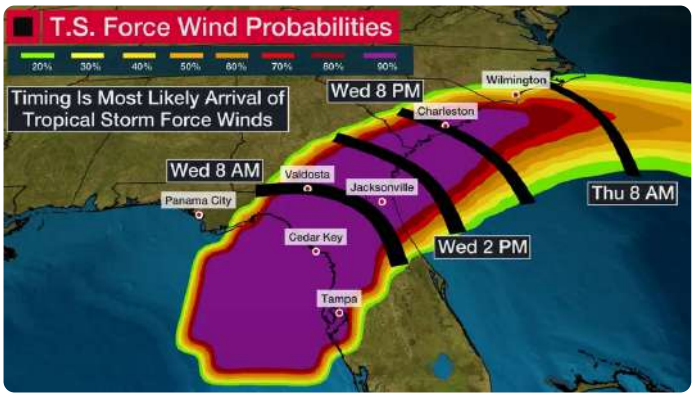
Elsewhere, at least scattered power outages and some tree damage can be expected from other parts of Florida to the coastal Carolinas.



Hurricane force winds are expected to spread through the hurricane warned areas of Florida Wednesday morning.

These hurricane force winds may extend into southern Georgia and parts of coastal South Carolina Wednesday and Wednesday night, due to how fast the hurricane is moving and its intensity at landfall.

Otherwise, tropical storm conditions are expected to begin Wednesday in the warning area along the east coast of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. Tropical storm conditions will spread into North Carolina Wednesday night and Thursday.



Tornadoes are also a threat. A few tornadoes may develop Wednesday morning across west-central and northern Florida into southeast Georgia.

The threat for a few tornadoes will shift toward the coastal Carolinas Wednesday afternoon and Wednesday night.



Severe Thunderstorm Forecast

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