

**POLK COUNTY, TEXAS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: August 24, 2020

Time: 6 p.m.

Contact: Polk County Office of Emergency Management
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TROPICAL STORM MARCO & TROPICAL STORM LAURA

Tropical Storm Marco’s impacts to Polk County are expected to be minimal. Marco is forecasted to impact our area as a tropical depression early Wednesday morning.

A landfall of Laura as a hurricane along the southwest Louisiana coast is increasingly likely. A westerly shift in the track, which would bring more impacts to Texas, cannot be ruled out. Laura is forecast to strengthen to hurricane after it crosses the western tip of Cuba and tracks across the Gulf of Mexico.

Confidence is increasing in Laura’s track into eastern portions of the upper Texas coast or southwest Louisiana. Intensity at landfall is forecast to be 90 knots or 105 mph, which would make Laura a category 2 on the Saffir Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Laura could arrive in our area early Thursday morning.

According to the National Weather Service, we have a 50-80% chance of seeing tropical storm force winds from Laura. The arrival of tropical storm force winds on the Texas coast is expected Wednesday evening.

There is still uncertainty about the track and intensity of Tropical Storm Laura, but confidence is increasing.

Hurricane watches are in effect from Port Bolivar, TX to Morgan City, LA. Polk County and other southeast Texas counties have been placed under a Tropical Storm Watch until 12 a.m. Tuesday.

The Polk County Office of Emergency Management will continue to monitor the development and track of Tropical Storm Laura.

We encourage you to make preparations. Please review the following hurricane preparedness tips:

- Know your hurricane risk: Our area is at risk for high winds, thunderstorms, tornados, flooding, and power outages during a hurricane.
- Have an evacuation plan that you have discussed with your family. The evacuation routes in Polk County are: State Highway 146, US Highway 59, and US Highway 287 West.
- Assemble disaster supplies including food, water, medication, batteries and cash *before* an emergency. Be sure to keep your gas tank full through the hurricane season which ends November 30th. Watch this video to prep a Go Bag, it’s scary simple: <https://youtu.be/Htgqb0pwrlQ>.
- Prepare financially: Set aside a small amount from each paycheck for your emergency savings.
- Check your insurance coverage: Are you covered for high winds, damage, and flooding? It takes 30 days for flood insurance to begin <https://www.floodsmart.gov/>. Don’t wait until it’s too late! Flood insurance is also an option for renters.

- Snap photos of important documents and save them in a secure place to access during an emergency. <https://youtu.be/i3MfRpND5gk>.
- Snap photos of your home and property prior to the arrival of a forecasted storm.
- Strengthen your home: Trim trees and shrubs. High winds can turn branches into projectiles during a storm. Make sure the roof of your home and business is properly maintained. When constructing consider elevating, using flood damage resistant materials, and installing storm shutters. Prepare now by cleaning out drains, gutters, and ditches to keep water from backing up into your home.
- Check on your neighbors: Almost half of Americans expect to rely on their neighbors after a disaster...do you know yours?
- Make an emergency plan: Preparing the family for an emergency is as simple as a conversation over dinner. Get started now.
- Sign up for local emergency alerts: Visit <https://alertmepolkcounty.bbcportal.com/> today to sign up for alerts from Polk County.

Please look for further updates on the Polk County Emergency Management Facebook page (www.facebook.com/PolkCountyEmergencyManagement).