



Saturday, September 9, 2017 – 1:30 p.m. EST

Hurricane Irma Draws Closer to South Florida; West Coast Most at Risk

Hurricane Irma is currently battering the northern coast of Cuba, while South Florida begins to feel the rain and wind effects of the storm that is now less than 24 hours from making landfall in Florida as a Category 4 or 5 hurricane, the state's strongest hurricane strike since Charley in 2004.

"Right now the first priority is the safety of people in the path of the storm," said Ken Tolson, CEO of Crawford's U.S. Property & Casualty division. "Our thoughts and prayers are with those who already have been impacted and those who are preparing for the effects."

The latest computer models suggest that the areas that will be hardest hit include those on Florida's west coast, although shifts may still occur. The Florida Keys, Naples, Fort Myers and Tampa are forecasted to be the most severely impacted, although damaging winds are likely to cause havoc across the entire Florida peninsula.

Irma is comparable to Hurricane Andrew in intensity, which devastated parts of South Florida in 1992, but is much larger in size. The storm will test the new infrastructure of cities that rebuilt following Andrew.

Simultaneously, Hurricane Katia made landfall in Mexico's Gulf Coast Friday night and Hurricane Jose is also developing. Jose may impact some of the Southern Caribbean islands already hit by Irma, including Antigua and Barbuda.

"We have already received claims from the destruction in the Caribbean and have deployed adjusters to these island nations," said Tolson. "We also continue to respond on claims coming in from Harvey while also preparing our U.S. induction center for Irma. Our focus continues to be on honoring client commitments."

Crawford's initial induction center for Irma will be in Atlanta, with the expectation that it will move to Northern Florida by the week's end.

"We are committed to deploying our resources into Florida, Southern Georgia and other affected areas once travel restrictions are lifted," said Tolson. "We'll continue to use our

complete suite of solutions that include desk and field adjusting, as well as our WeGoLook® Lookers® and drone operators, which are proving to be very successful in Texas post-Harvey.”

We will continue to keep our clients updated on our efforts and the impact of the storm.

For assistance with Hurricane Irma, Harvey, or other catastrophic events, contact our 24-hour ClaimsAlert® call center at 1-877-346-0300.

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