



September 9, 2019

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## **NEMA MORNING UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

**Carl Smith – NEMA Spokesperson**

- I want to start today's public briefing thanking the local and international non-governmental and private sector partners who have been working with NEMA to support the disaster relief effort.
- Almost 150 representatives from local NGOs turned up for one of our early meetings with NGOs.
- That is a testament to the level of support
- NEMA recognizes the frustrations that arise at times when it comes to coordination. This is a massive operation with many moving parts.
- Despite the challenges, we continue to work hard to bring our vision to life of **ONE VOICE, ONE RESPONSE, MANY MOVING PARTS!**
- People's lives and livelihoods are at stake
- The more we can move in sync, the better we can support the thousands of Bahamians, residents and non-residents who are depending on us in this time
- We will not rest until lives are restored, homes are rebuilt and communities are rejuvenated.

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS UPDATE ON IMMIGRATION UPDATE ISSUES**

1. NEMA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to advise the public that no new arrangements have been established to facilitate entry of Bahamians into the United States or Canada.
2. Bahamians interested in travelling to the United States and Canada should ensure they have all of the usual immigration documents required by those countries for entry.
3. While most inquiries have come in with respect to the United States and Canada, NEMA can confirm that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not aware of any new arrangements for any countries.
4. We are aware of an incident reported on a large passenger vessel headed to the United States from Florida.
5. NEMA has requested that the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs investigate this matter.

#### **NEMA COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

1. NEMA recognizes the need for a more consistent flow of public information
2. We have expanded our public information team to more effectively disseminate and relay pertinent and relevant information to the public at large
3. The team comprises members of Bahamas Information Services, Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance Central Communications Unit and other volunteers and professionals.
4. As we recognize the need for improvements, NEMA is moving as quickly as possible to resource itself and work with partners to ensure we provide the best support to those impacted by the storm.

5. We invite the public to look for regular updates on the NEMA-Bahamas Facebook page (Facebook.com/nema242) Instagram and Twitter.
6. You can also find updates on the social media accounts for The Office of the Prime Minister – The Bahamas, The Office of the Prime Minister – Grand Bahama, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health and EOC Freeport.
7. And tune into our daily press briefings at 11am
8. During our press briefings this week, you can expect updates on the operations of local and international NGOs, who have been invited to answer questions and share important information with the public

## **EVACUATIONS**

- While evacuations continue today and tomorrow, the airports will be opened for commercial flights at some point. NEMA will advise when.
- The number for evacuees to New Providence now stands at approximately 4,800.
- There are several flights from Grand Bahama and Abaco departing today throughout the day by Bahamas Air, Delta Airlines, Trans Island and Airbridge Charters. The flight schedules are posted on the NEMA-Bahamas Facebook Page.

## **NGO COORDINATION & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

- This final update is very important for our NGO partners
- NEMA has invited the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to assist with the flow of information between NEMA and the NGO community

- Information management is critical to operational and tactical coordination
- At NEMA we have a number of data tools to assist in decision-making and the deployment of resources. These include special maps produced by PDC Global and a 3W dashboard that helps us to share information about what is happening, where it is happening and who is doing what. Eventually this database will capture in a consolidated and easily accessible way in which many people are being helped.
- Many things are happening at NEMA and with our partners; however, the use of these information management tools will assist us with communicating to the public and also coordination with NGO partners
  
- **NEMA SATELITE OFFICE**
  - NEMA has set up a satellite office at the National Training Agency on Gladstone Road for NGOs to coordinate with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
  - This office will be open to NGOs starting tomorrow.
  - OCHA works in direct collaboration with the NEMA Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
  - NEMA has directed to support NGOs to ensure there is inclusivity and access to the information they need to assist.
  - Starting tomorrow afternoon (September 10), local NGOs are asked to go to the NTA satellite office and liaise with the OCHA counter-part representatives working with NEMA.
  - They will receive access to the online information management tools and be able to get NEMA updates

- We will reach out directly to NGOs via our mailing list and post updates on Facebook

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**ABOUT NEMA:**

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is a Bahamas Government agency, which operates under the authority of The Cabinet Office.

**Vision:** An organization that anticipates the potential negative impacts of disasters and emergency situations and develops effective and efficient plans, procedures and systems to minimize such impacts, by relying on sound principles of disaster management, community participation and inter-agency collaboration.

**Mission:** To reduce the loss of life and property within the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, by ensuring that adequate preparedness and mitigation measures, and response and recovery mechanisms are established to counteract the impact of natural, man- made and technological hazards.