

THE BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INVESTMENTS & AVIATION

HURRICANE KIT 2023

BE PREPARED FOR THIS HURRICANE SEASON



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER



The Islands of The Bahamas: Prepared for 2023 Hurricane Season

Even during hurricane season (June 1 - Sept 30), The Bahamas continues to attract a record number of visitors. We attribute this to several factors, the two most being:

- The Bahamas spans 100,000 square miles of ocean and comprises 30 inhabited islands, ranging from northernmost Freeport to Inagua in the Southern Bahamas. Even the largest hurricanes won't impact every island.
- Bahamians see hurricanes as a "fact of life" in the islands and prepare appropriately for the occasional threat.

Is it safe to plan a Bahamas vacation during hurricane season?

- Yes. With 100,000 square miles of ocean, a hurricane within The Bahamas' territorial waters rarely disrupts the experience of the vast majority of visitors, as all islands are not normally affected at the same time.
- Hotels have well-rehearsed, preparedness plans should a hurricane pose a threat.
- The Bahamas National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has an Emergency Support Function (ESF) with all Government, Quasi-Government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Private Agencies.

What should visitors know before planning a Bahamas vacation?

The majority of Bahamas vacations will not be affected by a hurricane, even during “active hurricane season.” On the relatively rare occasion that a vacation is disrupted by a hurricane, Bahamian hotels and resorts make every effort to accommodate guests and extend all possible courtesies.

Many hotels participate in the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association hurricane cancellation policy.

Is The Islands of The Bahamas ready for the 2023 summer travel season?

The time to prepare for the 2023 hurricane season is now. In the event of a hurricane within The Islands of The Bahamas, the Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation (BMOTIA) will coordinate communications with representatives throughout the islands to gather information and develop status reports. It is important to communicate accurate and timely information to the media and the public. Effective teamwork between the public and private sectors will facilitate better crisis management and communications.

BAHAMAS HURRICANE PREPARATION TIPS

Please take a moment to review the following:

- **Crisis Management Plan:** The Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation maintains a national Crisis Management Plan for the destination. Draft or revise a crisis management plan specific to your interests.
- **Create/Update Emergency Contact List:** An Emergency Contact List should include current information for key personnel on and offshore, with alternate e-mail addresses where possible. It is helpful to include telephone numbers for local and national Bahamas Ministry of Tourism offices, Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), etc.

- **Designate an offshore website or spokesperson:** In the event of transmission issues, designate an offshore person to collect relevant information and forward to the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation.
- **Hurricane Impact Damage Assessment Form:** Download and print a Hurricane Impact Damage Assessment Form (Pg. 24) in advance in case there is a power outage or phone failure. Following a hurricane, the information you provide on this form is critical to the work of the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation and the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association as they evaluate and disseminate the most accurate information.
- **Satellite Phone:** If you have a satellite phone, please share the number with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation (Mr. Trevor Moss, General Manager, Travel Compliance Department), the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association (Ms. Suzanne Pattusch, Executive Vice President) and the appropriate Promotion Board.
- **Prepare for Recovery:** Draft an outline of communications in advance of the storm and fill in pertinent, verified information for distribution after the storm. Prepare to distribute updates to guests and reservation holders, and to post updates on your website and social media channels.

Create a script for the hotel's front desk, reservation desk, etc. so that enquiries from the public can be responded to accurately and uniformly.

In the event of a hurricane:

- The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation will conduct task force conference calls to keep key agencies apprised of preparations and developments.
- Please keep your local Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation representative and the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association (BHTA) current on the status of your property.
- Post-hurricane – Please complete and return the Hurricane Impact Damage Assessment Form as quickly as possible to the General Manager, Travel Compliance Department.

Answering questions from media and visitors:

- It is very important to communicate only accurate, verified information in times of crisis.
- **Media:** Please refer all media enquiries to the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation
- **Visitors:** It is important to appoint one (1) spokesperson to handle visitor enquiries. If you do not know the answer to a question, explain that you will follow-up when you have the most accurate and up-to-date information.

Please be aware that comments on your hotel's social media channels (or personal social media accounts/platforms that you may also use to comment on Bahamas) will influence the public's perception of conditions on the island. Dramatic overstatements are not helpful.

Each hotel needs to establish its own policy regarding employees publishing comments or observations that reference the business specifically (particularly if the "updates" have not been vetted for accuracy). Updates on current conditions of or around a property should not be published by sources not designated as a spokesperson. As always, speculation should be avoided.

Who To Call:

Mrs. Latia Duncombe

Director General

Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation

(242) 302-2000 Ext. 2032

Mr. Paul Strachan

Executive Director, Global Communications

Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation

(416) 241-6183

Mr. Trevor Moss

General Manager, Travel Compliance Department

Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation

(242) 302-2095

Step 1 - Getting the Facts

The Director General will act as the liaison with the Sr. Director, Global Communications, and obtain the maximum amount of information regarding the hurricane. General Manager, Travel Compliance Department, in turn, will contact tourism partners as appropriate.

In all cases, the Director General and the General Manager, Travel Compliance Department will be the Qualified Spokespersons and will serve as liaisons with the government and private sector.

The Executive Director of Global Communications will be responsible for contacting consumer and trade media. Any media calls received by others at the BMOTIA should be recorded and forwarded directly to **Paul Strachan, Bahamas Tourist Office in Toronto, Ontario at (416) 241-6183; email: pstrachan@bahamas.com.**

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's Digital team will monitor social channels during and throughout the storm and will post appropriate updates. The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's and associate team members should be aware of organizations' social media policies and comply with all policies regarding discussion of events on personal social channels. Speculation, over dramatic or misleading posts on personal channels should be avoided during times of national crisis.

The key facts to be gathered by the General Manager, Travel Compliance Department on hurricane issues are:

1. Will it touch The Islands of The Bahamas?
2. When will the hurricane hit?
3. What is the expected intensity?
4. What islands in the Caribbean will be the most affected?
5. How widespread is the expected damage?
6. Are tourists/residents in danger?
7. Is there cause for evacuation?
8. Will transportation be affected?

Senior Director, Global Communications and his team will track and be responsible for the following media activities:

1. Which media should be notified (TV, print, radio, Internet)?
2. Where did/will all coverage run?
3. How many segments?
4. Obtain segments/articles
5. Arrange interviews

Step 2 - Notifying Key People

Once the information is gathered, the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's Global Communications Department will produce official press communiqués, updates and social posts. In the case of a storm, BMOTIA's Global Communication Department will issue statements at intervals appropriate to the situation and in consultation with the Director General and General Manager, Travel Compliance Department.

Regular updates on media coverage will be forwarded to the Director General and the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's Executive team.

Step 3 - Notifying Crucial Publics

Statements should be sent, as appropriate by the General Manager, Travel Compliance Department and the Ministry's Global Communications team to the following,

- Bahamas Tourist Offices
- Promotion Boards and Hotels
- Media (consumer and trade)
- Tour Operators and Travel Agents

The Office of the Director General will contact and liaise with:

- United States Coast Guard
- Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF)
- Military (if national disaster declared)
- Embassies and Consulate offices
- Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF)
- The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
- The Bahamas Department of Meteorology
- Bahamas Air Sea Rescue Association (BASRA)

Step 4 - Assigning One (1) Media Spokesperson

Designate one (1) spokesperson to discuss the situation and the effect that the hurricane has had on residents and on tourism. **The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism's Director General, Mrs. Latia Duncombe is the primary designated media spokesperson during times of crisis.**

Step 5 - Responding to the Media & Being Accessible

Monitor the media coverage and collect all articles/taped segments. The Global Communications Department will send information to the Director General.

Establish one direct-dial phone number for key contacts. Always have the phone manned with appropriate persons with correct, up-to-date information.

A - Taking Control of the Story: The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's Global Communications Department will work with the spokespersons to draft a response to the media, such as a press release, detailing how the situation is being handled. The releases may include key messages and tips for the consumers as well as talking points for the appropriate spokesperson.

B - Crafting the Statement: The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's Global Communications Department will develop an accurate, truthful statement to be delivered by the spokesperson. New releases will be drafted as conditions change. The Global Communications Department will develop an internal and external release.

Internal releases are informational and NOT meant for media distribution.

External releases should seek to provide timely updates and information on the situation and focus on the key messages and tips for consumers.

The format for these releases should specifically address major changes in the movement of the system and the procedures in place.

The five communiqué samples that should be included in the plan are as follows.

1. Tropical Storm Monitoring Communiqué
2. System Upgrade to Hurricane Communiqué
3. System Landfall Communiqué
4. "All Clear" Issued Communiqué
5. The Bahamas is Open For Business Communiqué

C - Delivering the Statement: The Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's Global Communications Department will send release/statement over the wires to local and major markets and make follow up calls to the media.

HURRICANE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 1 TROPICAL STORM DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 1:00 PM EDT

Next Update Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 6:00pm EDT

TROPICAL STORM DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

NASSAU, Bahamas - The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation is closely tracking the progress of Tropical Storm Dorian as it is projected to move toward the Southeastern Bahamas as early as Thursday night and into Friday.

Hotels throughout the islands are activating hurricane preparedness plans, and cruise ships are diverting itineraries accordingly. At this time, all airports and ports in The Bahamas remain open for business; however, residents and visitors are advised to check directly with airlines and hotels regarding possible impacts on travel plans.

Following Labor Day, it is normal for hotels in the Out Islands to close for the fall season. Travellers should check with hotels directly regarding regularly scheduled closures.

The Bahamas is an archipelago with more than 700 islands and cays, spread over 100,000 square miles; there could be a tropical storm or hurricane warning for parts of the country while other parts remain unaffected.

The Ministry continues to monitor Tropical Storm Dorian and will provide updates at www.bahamas.com. For further information visit www.nhc.noaa.gov.

***All times are Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 2 HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 1:00 PM EDT

Next Update Friday, August 30, 2019 at 11:30am EDT

TROPICAL STORM DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

NASSAU, Bahamas – The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation (BMOTA) continues to track the progress of Hurricane Dorian, which is expected to become a major hurricane today, Friday, August 30, and remain extremely dangerous through the weekend as it moves near the Northwest Bahamas and the Florida Peninsula.

A hurricane watch remains in effect for the islands of the Northwest Bahamas: Abaco, Grand Bahama, Bimini, Berry Islands, North Eleuthera, North Andros and New Providence, which includes Nassau and Paradise Island. A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions could affect the aforementioned islands within 48 hours.

Hurricane Dorian is moving toward the northwest at about 10 miles per hour and this motion is expected to continue through today. Maximum sustained winds are near 110 miles per hour with higher gusts.

A slower, west-northwestward to westward motion is forecast to begin tonight and continue into early next week. On this track, Hurricane Dorian should move over the Atlantic well north of the southeastern and central Bahamas today and tomorrow, Saturday, August 31; be near or over the northwestern Bahamas on Sunday, September 1 and be near the Florida Peninsula late Monday, September 2.

Hotels, resorts and tourism businesses throughout the Northwest Bahamas have activated their hurricane response programs and are taking all necessary precautions to protect visitors and residents. Visitors are strongly advised to check directly with airlines, hotels and cruise lines regarding possible impacts on travel plans.

AIRPORTS

- Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) in Nassau is open and operating on its normal schedule.
- Grand Bahama International Airport (FPO) will close at 10 p.m. on Friday, August 30. The airport will reopen on Tuesday, September 3 at 6 a.m., subject to prevailing conditions.

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS (CONT'D)

- Bahamasair will operate its last FPO/FLL flight at 9:10 a.m. on Friday, August 30 and its last FPO/NAS flight at 8:15 p.m. on Friday, August 30.
- American Airlines will depart FPO at 12:13 p.m., Friday, August 30.
- Silver Airways will confirm a time for two post-cleared flights on Friday, August 30.
- Flamingo Air flights on Friday, August 30 may be impacted; travelers should contact the airline directly.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (US CBP) will close at 12:00 p.m., Friday, August 30 until further notice.

HOTELS

Reservation holders should contact properties directly for complete information as this is not a comprehensive list.

- Grand Bahama Island hotels and timeshares have strongly advised guests to leave in anticipation of Hurricane Dorian's arrival.

FERRY, CRUISE AND PORTS

- Bahamas Ferries have canceled all weekend operations and sailings beginning Friday, August 30 until further notice. Passengers seeking further information should call 242-323-2166.
- Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line's Grand Celebration will sail at 2 p.m. on Friday, August 30, and will accommodate any passengers who booked a sailing on Saturday, August 31 or Sunday, September 1. All passengers should be on board by 1 p.m. Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line's Grand Celebration will resume operations immediately following the passage of Hurricane Dorian.
- Balearia Caribbean will sail at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, August 30. All passengers should be on board by 11 a.m.
- Grand Bahama Island's Freeport Harbour will close 2 p.m. on Friday, August 30.
- Nassau ports are open and operating at their normal schedule.

The Bahamas is an archipelago with more than 700 islands and cays, spread over 100,000 square miles; there could be a tropical storm or hurricane warning for parts of the country while other parts remain unaffected.

Each Bahamas Tourist Office (BTO) throughout the islands is equipped with a satellite phone to keep in touch with the command center in New Providence. The Ministry continues to monitor Hurricane Dorian and will provide updates at www.bahamas.com/storms. To track Hurricane Dorian, visit www.nhc.noaa.gov.

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 3 HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

Sunday, September 1, 2019 1:00 PM EDT

Next Update Monday, September 2, 2019 at 12:00pm EDT

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

NASSAU, Bahamas – The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation (BMOTA) continues to track the progress of Hurricane Dorian, which has been upgraded to a Category 5 hurricane. Hurricane Dorian is expected to remain extremely dangerous through Monday, September 2 as it slowly moves west, tracking over parts of the Northwestern Bahamas on Sunday, September 1.

“This is a dynamic weather system that we continue to monitor closely to ensure the safety of our residents and visitors,” said Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation Director General Joy Jibrilu. “The Bahamas is an archipelago with more than 700 islands and cays, spread over 100,000 square miles, which means that the effects of Hurricane Dorian will vary greatly. While we are relieved that most of the nation will be unaffected, we are deeply concerned about our neighbours in The Abacos and Grand Bahama Island. At this time, we are offering every level of support to these islands which will be impacted today.”

Resorts and attractions in the Bahamian capital of Nassau, as well as neighboring Paradise Island, remain open. The Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) remains open as of noon today and will issue another update at 3:00 p.m. EDT. Travellers should check with their airline directly as schedules may vary.

A hurricane warning remains in effect for the Northwest Bahamas: Abaco, Grand Bahama, Bimini, Berry Islands, North Eleuthera and New Providence, which includes Nassau and Paradise Island. A hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions could affect the aforementioned islands within 36 hours

A hurricane watch remains in effect for Andros. A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions could affect the aforementioned island within 48 hours.

Islands in the Southeastern and Central Bahamas remain unaffected, including The Exumas, Cat Island, San Salvador, Long Island, Acklins and Crooked Island, Mayaguana and Inagua.

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS (CONT'D)

Hurricane Dorian is moving toward the west at about 7 miles per hour. Maximum sustained winds have increased to nearly 180 miles per hour with higher gusts.

A slower, westward motion is forecast to continue for the next day or two, followed by a gradual turn to the northwest. On this track, the core of Hurricane Dorian will continue to move over Great Abaco and move near or over Grand Bahama Island later tonight and Monday.

Hotels, resorts and tourism businesses throughout the Northwest Bahamas have activated their hurricane response programs and are taking all necessary precautions to protect visitors and residents. Visitors are strongly advised to check directly with airlines, hotels and cruise lines regarding possible impacts to travel plans.

The following is a status update on airports, hotels, airlines and cruise schedules at this time.

AIRPORTS

- Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) in Nassau remains open. Travellers should contact their airlines directly for any schedule changes. The next update will be issued at 3:00 p.m. EDT.
- Grand Bahama International Airport (FPO) is closed.
- Leonard Thompson International Airport (MHH) in Marsh Harbour, Abaco is closed.

HOTELS

Reservation holders should contact properties directly for complete information, as this is not a comprehensive list.

- Hotels in The Abacos and Grand Bahama Island have strongly advised guests to leave and have assisted with evacuation procedures in anticipation of Hurricane Dorian's arrival.

FERRY, CRUISE AND PORTS

- Bahamas Ferries have cancelled all weekend operations and sailings until further notice. Passengers seeking further information should call 242-323-2166.
- Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line's Grand Celebration has cancelled weekend operations and will resume immediately following the passage of Hurricane Dorian.
- Grand Bahama Island's Freeport Harbour is closed.
- Nassau ports are open and operating on their normal schedule.

Each Bahamas Tourist Office (BTO) throughout the islands is equipped with a satellite phone to keep in touch with the command center in New Providence. The Ministry continues to monitor Hurricane Dorian and will provide updates at www.bahamas.com/storms. To track Hurricane Dorian, visit www.nhc.noaa.gov.

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 4 HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

Wednesday, September 4, 2019 12:00 PM EDT

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

NASSAU, Bahamas – Hurricane Dorian has moved out of The Islands Of The Bahamas and an all clear from hurricane effects has been issued for the country. Relief teams have been deployed to The Abacos and Grand Bahama Island.

Islands that were not impacted by Hurricane Dorian remain open and are receiving visitors. In the Northwest Bahamas, these include The Bahamas' capital of Nassau and neighboring Paradise Island, as well as Eleuthera and Andros. Islands in the Southeastern and Central Bahamas remain unaffected, including The Exumas, Cat Island, San Salvador, Rum Cay, Long Island, Acklins and Crooked Island, Ragged Island, Mayaguana and Inagua.

“There are no words to convey the grief we feel for our fellow Bahamians in The Abacos and Grand Bahama,” said Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation Minister Dionisio D’Aguilar. “Now is the time to come together for our brothers and sisters in need, and help our country get back on its feet. Anyone who wishes to provide relief support should go to www.bahamas.com/relief for verified ways to help. We also implore travellers to continue visiting the Bahamian islands that were not impacted by Hurricane Dorian as this will help our people tremendously.”

The following is a status update on airports, hotels, airlines and cruise schedules at this time. This is not a comprehensive list, and visitors are strongly advised to check directly with airlines, hotels and cruise lines regarding possible impacts to travel plans.

AIRPORTS

- Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) in Nassau remains open. There have been flight cancellations and travellers should contact their airlines directly for any schedule changes.
- Grand Bahama International Airport (FPO) is closed.
- Leonard Thompson International Airport (MHH) in Marsh Harbour, Abaco is closed.
- All other airports throughout The Bahamas are open and operational.

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS (CONT'D)

HOTELS

- Hotels in Nassau and Paradise Island remain open.
- Hotels in The Abacos and Grand Bahama Island are closed.
- Reservation holders should contact properties directly for complete information.

FERRY, CRUISE AND PORTS

- Nassau ports are open and operating on their normal schedule, although cruise line schedules may be altered.
- Grand Bahama Island's Freeport Harbour is closed.
- Bahamas Ferries have cancelled all sailings until further notice. Passengers seeking further information should call 242-323-2166.
- Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line's Grand Celebration remains closed and has cancelled September 3 and September 5 sailings.

For information on Bahamas Hurricane Dorian relief efforts, please visit www.bahamas.com/relief.



SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 5 HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

Monday, September 9, 2019

14 ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS ARE READY TO WELCOME VISITORS WITH OPEN ARMS

NASSAU, Bahamas – The Islands Of The Bahamas are an archipelago with more than 700 islands and thousands of cays spread out over 100,000 square miles of ocean, starting just 50 miles southeast of the coast of Florida. While the country grieves the devastation Hurricane Dorian brought upon two of the most northern islands, Grand Bahama and The Abacos, there is a silver lining. The majority of The Bahamas, including 14 of the most commonly visited islands, remains unaffected by the storm. The warm and friendly people of The Bahamas, along with hotel and travel partners, from Bimini to Nassau and Paradise Island and The Exumas to Inagua, are ready to welcome travellers with open arms.

As the public seeks information on how they can best help the country recover, the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation (BMOTIA) urges consumers to know that the best thing they can do for the country, now more than ever, is simple: visit The Bahamas.

Airports, cruise ports, hotels and attractions throughout the Northern, Central and Southern Bahamas are open and operating. These islands include:

- Nassau and Paradise Island
- The Exumas
- Eleuthera and Harbour Island
- Bimini
- Andros
- The Berry Islands
- Cat Island
- Long Island
- San Salvador
- Rum Cay
- Acklins and Crooked Island
- Mayaguana
- Inagua

“Maintaining a robust tourism industry will be vital in helping the country to recover and rebuild,” said Bahamas Minister of Tourism & Aviation Dionisio D’Aguilar. “We are grateful for the outpouring of support and love for our islands, and we would like everyone to know that the best thing they can do for us right now is visit Nassau, Paradise Island and the Out Islands. Our beautiful island nation is ready to welcome you.”

14 ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS ARE READY TO WELCOME VISITORS WITH OPEN ARMS (CONT'D)

Travellers should visit www.bahamas.com to learn about the unique characteristics of each Bahamian island and find the one, or two or three, that best suits them.

Bahamas.com is a portal to vacation discovery with a wealth of resources for planning a trip. Travellers can start with the Island Finder – an interactive tool that measures personal preferences to match consumers with the island for them – then explore a pre-approved list of Places to Stay and an always-updated database of Deals & Packages to book. For island cuisine, upscale resorts and endless family activities, Nassau and Paradise Island are where turquoise waters and culture collide. For a quaint boutique getaway where the sand is as pink as the colonial cottages, visit Eleuthera and Harbour Island. The options are infinite.

In addition to planning a trip to The Bahamas, monetary donations to a reputable relief organization are most critical at this time. Those who wish to contribute can find a list of The Bahamas' verified partners at www.bahamas.com/relief.



SAMPLE:

HURRICANE RECOVERY TALKING POINTS

KEY UPDATES ON HURRICANE DORIAN

- The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism is vigilantly tracking the progress of Hurricane Dorian as it progresses toward the Northwestern Bahamas.
- The safety and wellbeing of our residents and visitors in The Bahamas is our number one priority.
- All hurricane safety measures are in place and we are prepared for Hurricane Dorian.
- Hotels on The Abacos and Grand Bahama Island assisted visitors with evacuating.
- As of Saturday evening, 66 visitors remain in The Abacos and 14 in Grand Bahama Island.
- Hotels on these islands have activated their hurricane response programs and are taking all necessary precautions to protect visitors and residents.

GEOGRAPHY

- Many dwellings and structures in The Bahamas have been built to code to withstand hurricanes. Our organization have worked extensively with the National Hurricane Center, FEMA and U.S. emergency response experts to prepare for hurricanes and natural disasters.
- We also hosted an annual Weather Conference with experts from around the world to build up our preparedness measures and infrastructure.
- The Bahamas is an archipelago with more than 700 islands and cays, spread over 100,000 square miles; there could be a hurricane warning or watch for parts of the country while other parts remain unaffected.
 - The Abacos is a chain of islands measuring 650 square miles with a population of approximately 17 thousand (17,224) residents.
 - Grand Bahama Island, also known as Freeport, is 96 miles long and 17 miles wide and has a population of approximately 51 thousand (51,756) residents.
- A hurricane warning remains in effect for the Northwest Bahamas: Abaco, Grand Bahama, Bimini, Berry Islands, North Eleuthera, and New Providence, which includes Nassau and Paradise Island.
 - A hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions could affect the aforementioned islands within 36 hours.

HURRICANE RECOVERY TALKING POINTS (CONT'D)

- A hurricane watch remains in effect for North Andros.
 - A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions could affect the aforementioned island within 48 hours.
- Resorts and attractions on the Bahamian capital of Nassau, as well as neighboring Paradise Island, remain open.
- Islands in the Southeastern and Central Bahamas remain unaffected, including The Exumas, Cat Island, San Salvador, Long Island, Acklins and Crooked Island, Mayaguana and Inagua.

AIRPORTS

- Nassau's Lynden Pindling International Airport remains open and operating at its normal schedule.
- Grand Bahama International Airport (FPO) is closed (as of Friday).
- Abaco's Leonard Thompson International Airport in Marsh Harbour is closed (as of Saturday).
 - North Bimini Airport and South Bimini Airport are closed (as of Friday).
 - Central Andros airport remains open.
 - North Eleuthera airport will close (date TBC).
 - Eleuthera's Rock Sound and Governor's Harbour airports remain open.
 - Bahamasair will suspend all flights departing for the U.S. as of Sunday. The airline will provide updates on service resumption periodically.

FERRY, CRUISE AND PORTS

- Nassau ports are open and operating at their normal schedules, although cruise lines schedules may be altered.
- Grand Bahama Island's Freeport Harbour is closed (as of Friday).
- All cruise ports in the Out Islands are closed.
- Bahamas Ferries have cancelled all weekend operations and sailings (as of Friday).

HURRICANE RECOVERY TALKING POINTS (CONT'D)

HOTELS

- All hotels and resorts in the affected areas have activated their hurricane response programmes and are taking all necessary precautions to protect visitors and residents.
- Visitors are strongly advised to check directly with their hotel or resort for information on closures.
- Hotels have well-rehearsed preparedness plans should a hurricane threaten.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

- Residents and business people in The Bahamas accept hurricanes as a fact of life and are prepared for the occasional direct threat.
- We are liaising with our partners throughout the destination to gather updates and ensure preparedness for Hurricane Dorian.
- We maintain regular contact with the Bahamas Department of Meteorology, National Emergency Management Agency, Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, Nassau Airport Development Company, the Port Authority and other authorities.
- We encourage anyone currently visiting, or, with plans to visit The Bahamas in the coming days to follow the progress of Hurricane Dorian at www.nhc.noaa.gov.
- Please also visit our website at Bahamas.com/storms for regular updates on Hurricane Dorian and The Bahamas.

HURRICANES AND TOURISM

- The Ministry of Tourism has an extensive hurricane preparedness plan with ample resources in place.
- When hurricanes do occur, on occasion, the country is prepared to bounce back.
- Tourism represents roughly 28 percent of the GDP in The Bahamas. The safety of our visitors is paramount, and we also take measures to communicate which islands remain open for business.
- In this case, we wish to stress that Nassau and Paradise Island remain open for business. We remind visitors to check regularly with their airlines and hotels for updates.
- Many resorts in the Out Islands proactively close for business during the fall months and reopen beginning October.

SAMPLE:

HURRICANE DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS

The Ministry of Finance advises the public that where disaster relief operations are carried out by charitable and non-profit organizations, provisions exist under the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act for exemptions and refund of Value Added Tax (VAT) expenses. Charities must register online and obtain a TIN or tax identification number from the Value Added Tax (VAT) Department. They must ensure that the TIN is quoted on all of their local expense receipts.

Most relief organizations have already received a TIN. Others are encouraged to register. In most cases, the process of getting a TIN takes less than 24 hours.

All donations of relief supplies shipped from outside The Bahamas are eligible for exemptions of both the Value Added Tax (VAT) and Bahamas Customs duties, once advance notice and documentation are given to the Ministry of Finance, or National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) sanctions the request.

Where charities incur direct expenses on their relief operations, whether for supplies or charter operations, they can apply to the Value Added Tax (VAT) Department for refunds. Refunds, however, cannot be provided to private individuals for goods donated to charities, whether purchased or used. However, where monies are donated, the relief organizations qualify for the Value Added Tax (VAT) refund, when they use these funds.

To avoid being victims of fraudulent schemes, it is strongly recommended that persons making donations to relief organizations request proof that the organization has a tax identification number and are registered with NEMA.

The Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation has issued a notice to industry partners advising them to allow National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the appropriate Government agency, to conduct the initial damage and needs assessment in all the affected areas so that offers of assistance are appropriate. BMOTIA stressed that it is not recommended for private entities to travel to the affected areas at this time.

HURRICANE DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS (CONT'D)

Once the reconnaissance has been done, a State of Emergency will be declared, and that will, then, determine the next step in a well-established protocol on how to donate items and assess various concessions. Upon completion of the needs assessment, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will advise aid distribution protocols, as well as manpower needs.

Six Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) officers have been deployed to Acklins. Five Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) officers are enroute to Crooked Island. A RBDF team left for South Long Island this morning, while another team is on standby for deployment to North Long Island. A team of Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) officers was sent to San Salvador and Rum Cay.

The Bahamas Red Cross Association is accepting supplies and donations at their Headquarters on Mackey Street. Contact The Bahamas Red Cross.

Address

John F. Kennedy Drive

P.O. Box 8331 Nassau, Bahamas

Tel: +1 (242)-323-7370, +1 (242)-328-4415

Fax: +1 (242)-323-7404 Email: redcross@bahamas.net.bs

The Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation's crisis management team continues to liaise with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), Nassau Airport Development Company, the Port Authority and other relevant authorities.

Paul Strachan

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(416) 576-72852

HURRICANE IMPACT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM

It is essential that we quickly gauge the initial impact of the hurricane on the hospitality industry. This will best position us to respond to media and travel partner inquiries as well as to assess the industry's readiness to return to business. Please take a moment to complete this form (Pg. 24) and respond via email or phone to:

Mr. Trevor Moss

General Manager, Travel Compliance Department
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(242) 376-5669

Ms. Suzanne Pattusch

Executive Vice President
Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association
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(242) 427-2164

HURRICANE IMPACT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM

1. HOTEL NAME & ISLAND:

2. # of Rooms # of Rooms Occupied w/Guests during Storm

of Guest during storm # of Staff during Storm

3. Damage Assessment (rate on a scale of 1,2,3 – 1 being minimal; 3, extensive).
Briefly describe any major damage to structure and surrounding property:

4. Overview of Island infrastructure (roads, electricity, telephone, airport(s),
seaport(s), hotel building(s)):

5. Personal Injuries to guests or staff (please indicate if any, and severity):

6. Anticipated Date to Re-Open

7. Anticipated Date to Full Operations (normal room capacity):

8. Is there any other storm-related matter impacting or potentially
impacting the industry, which we should be aware of?

Name: Tel:

Email: Alternative Tel:

BAHAMAS HURRICANE CRISIS CONTACTS

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THE BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INVESTMENTS & AVIATION SATELLITE PHONE NUMBERS

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870776128177	Latia Duncombe Director General
870776763610	Trevor Moss ESF12
870776146850	Paul Strachan Toronto, Ontario, Canada
870776100562	Vincent Harris New Providence
870776403935	Grand Bahama Island
870776386576	Harbour Island
870776148028	Eleuthera
870786484102	Exuma
870786484101	Abaco
870776405863	Central Andros
870776405864	South Andros
870776178985	Bimini
870776127696	San Salvador
870776751637	Long Island

Ensure that the Sat phone on screen instructions are followed

011 + Sat number (Land or Cell phone to Sat phone)

00 + Sat number (Sat phone to another Sat phone)

001+ Area Code + Land or Cell number (Sat phone to Land or Cell Phone)

