



THE ISLANDS OF THE
bahamas

HURRICANE KIT 2021

BE PREPARED FOR THIS HURRICANE SEASON

BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF TOURISM & AVIATION
P.O. Box N-3701, Nassau, Bahamas
(242) 302-2000





Key Points To Remember

The Islands of The Bahamas: Prepared for 2021 Hurricane Season

Regardless of hurricane season, The Bahamas continues to attract an increasing number of visitors. This positive outcome is attributable to several factors, with two of the most important being:

- The Islands of The Bahamas are comprised of 700 islands, about 30 inhabited, spread across 100,000 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean.
- Residents and business people in The Bahamas accept hurricanes as a fact of life in the destination and prepare for the occasional direct threat appropriately.

What should visitors know before planning a Bahamas vacation?

- With 100,000 square miles of ocean, a hurricane within The Bahamas' territorial waters rarely disrupts the experience of a majority of visitors.
- Hotels have well-rehearsed preparedness plans should a hurricane threaten.



Key Points To Remember

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

Yes. The majority of Bahamas vacations are not affected by hurricanes, even during “active seasons.” 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.

Are The Islands of The Bahamas ready for the 2021 summer travel season?

The time to prepare for the 2021 hurricane season is now. In the event of a hurricane within The Islands of The Bahamas, the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation 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.

Please take a moment to review the following:

- **Crisis Management Plan:** The Ministry of Tourism & Aviation maintains a crisis plan for the destination. Draft or revise a crisis management plan specific to your interests.
- **Create/Update Emergency Contact List:** 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 additional numbers for local and national Ministry of Tourism offices, Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), etc.



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

Please take a moment to review the following (cont'd):

- **Designate an offshore website or spokesperson:** In the event of transmission issues, designate an offshore person to collect information and forward to the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation.
- **Damage Assessment Form:** Download and store a **damage assessment form** in advance in case there is a power or phone failure. In the event of a hurricane, these forms are critical tools for the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association and the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation in collecting and evaluating information.
- **Satellite Phone:** If you have a satellite phone, please share the number with the appropriate Promotion Board, Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association and the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation.
- **Prepare for Recovery:**
 - Draft an outline of communications in advance of the storm and fill in pertinent, verified information for distribution after the event. Prepare to distribute update to guests, reservation holders, post update on website, Facebook/Twitter, etc.
 - Create a script for front desk, reservation desk, etc. so, inquiries from the public are responded to accurately and uniformly.



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

In the event of a hurricane:

- The Ministry of Tourism & Aviation will conduct task force conference calls to keep key agencies apprised of preparations and developments.
- Please keep your local Ministry representative and the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association (BHTA) current on the status of your property.
- Post-hurricane – Please complete and return your damage assessment form as quickly as possible.

Answering questions from media and visitors:

- It is very important to communicate only accurate, verified information in times of crisis.
- Please refer media inquiries to the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation as they will collect information as widely as possible.
- Individual properties will receive inquiries from visitors and potential visitors. It is important to establish one spokesperson to direct responses to questions, and ensure that inquiries are answered with accurate information. If you do not know the answer to the question, do not be afraid to record the pertinent details and follow up with the right information.

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



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

Answering questions from media and visitors (cont'd):

Each hotel will need to establish its own policy regarding employees publishing comments or observations – particularly if these “updates” are not vetted for accuracy – that reference the business specifically. 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:

Joy Jibrilu - Director General

Mia Weech-Lange – Executive Director, Global Communications

Clay Saunders - National Development & Special Projects, Office of the Minister (of Tourism & Aviation)

Step 1 - Getting the Facts

The Director General will act as liaison with Communications and obtain the maximum amount of information regarding the hurricane. Clay Saunders, in turn, will contact tourism partners as appropriate.

In all cases, the Director General and Clay Saunders will be the qualified spokespersons and will serve as liaison with the government and private sector.

The Executive Director of Communications will be responsible for contacting consumer and trade media. Any media calls received by others at the BMOTA should be recorded and forwarded directly to Mia Weech-Lange, Bahamas Tourism Office in Plantation, Florida at (954) 888-1069; mlange@bahamas.com.



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

Step 1 - Getting the Facts

The Ministry of Tourism & Aviation's Digital team will monitor social channels during and throughout the storm and will post appropriate updates. The Ministry of Tourism & Aviation's (BMOTA) 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 Clay Saunders on hurricane issues are:

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

Mia Weech-Lange and her team will track and be responsible for the following media activities:

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



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

Step 2 - Notifying Key People

Once the information is gathered, the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation's Communications Department will produce official press communiqués, updates and social posts. In the case of hurricanes, BMOTA Communications will issue statements at intervals appropriate to the situation and in consultation with the Director General and Clay Saunders. Regular updates on media coverage will be forwarded to the Director General and the Ministry of Tourism & Aviation's Executive Team.

Step 3 - Notifying Crucial Publics

Statements should be sent (as appropriate) by Clay Saunders and the Ministry's Global Communications team to the following:

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



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

The Director General's office will contact and liaise with:

- United States Coast Guard
- Royal Bahamas Police Force
- Military (if national disaster declared)
- Embassies and Consulate offices
- Royal Bahamas Defense Force
- Bahamas Air Sea Rescue Association (BASRA)

Step 4 - Assigning One Media Spokesperson

Designate a spokesperson to discuss the situation and the effect that the hurricane has had on residents and on tourism.

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation Director General, Mrs. Joy Jibrilu, is the spokesperson during times of crisis.

Step 5 - Responding to the Media and 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 Story

The Ministry of Tourism & Aviation's 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.



Bahamas Hurricane Preparation Tips

Step 5 - Responding to the Media and Being Accessible (cont'd)

B - Crafting the Statement

The Ministry of Tourism & 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.

C - Delivering the Statement

The Ministry of Tourism & 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 p.m. EDT

Next Update Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 6 p.m. 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.

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*All times are Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)



Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 2
HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
Sunday, September 1, 2019, 1 p.m. EDT
Next Update Monday, September 2, 2019 at 12 p.m. 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 neighbors 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 neighbouring Paradise Island, remain open. The Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) remains open as of noon today and will issue another update at 3 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.

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Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS (cont'd)

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

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

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 p.m. EDT.
- Grand Bahama International Airport (FPO) is closed.
- Leonard Thompson International Airport (MHH) in Marsh Harbour, Abaco is closed.



Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS (cont'd)

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 has 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 Tourism Office (BTO) throughout the islands is equipped with a satellite phone to keep in touch with the command centre 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.

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Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 3 - All Clear
HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
Wednesday, September 4, 2019, 12p.m. 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/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 The Hon. **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.

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Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

HURRICANE DORIAN AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS (cont'd)

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.

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 has 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.

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Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ 4
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 & Aviation (BMOTA) 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



Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE EXTERNAL RELEASE:

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

“Maintaining a robust tourism industry will be vital in helping the country to recover and rebuild,” said Bahamas Minister of Tourism & Aviation, The Hon. **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.”

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.

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Hurricane Communications Plan

SAMPLE: Hurricane Recovery Talking Points

HURRICANE DORIAN

Key Updates on Hurricane Dorian

- The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation is vigilantly tracking the progress of Hurricane Dorian as it moves toward the Northwestern Bahamas.
- The safety and wellbeing of our residents and visitors in The Bahamas are 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 has 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.

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Hurricane Communications Plan

Hurricane Recovery Talking Points (cont'd)

- 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 are 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.
- A hurricane watch remains in effect for North Andros.
 - A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions could affect the aforementioned islands within 48 hours.
- Resorts and attractions in 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/Crooked Island, Mayaguana and Inagua.

- more -



Hurricane Communications Plan

Hurricane Recovery Talking Points (cont'd)

Airports

- Nassau's Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) 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 has cancelled all weekend operations and sailings (as of Friday).

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.

- more -



Hurricane Communications Plan

Hurricane Recovery Talking Points (cont'd)

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.
- In the past two years, the tourism sector was the largest source of employment in The Bahamas and the largest contributor to the creation of nearly 15,000 jobs.
- In the last year alone, the tourism sector experienced the greatest job increase, 24 percent, since May 2018.
- 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.



Hurricane Communications Plan

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 Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation (BMOTA) 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. BMOTA stressed that it is not recommended for private entities to travel to the affected areas at this time.



Hurricane Communications Plan

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 en route 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 & 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.

Media contact: Mia Weech-Lange
Email: mlange@bahamas.com
Telephone: 954-236-9292



Hurricane Communications Plan

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 and respond via fax, email or phone to:

Clay Saunders

Email: csaunders@bahamas.com

Tel: (242) 397-2746

Cell: (242) 826-4802

Suzanne Pattusch

Email: spattusch@bahamashoteltourism.org

Tel: (242) 322-8381

Fax: (242) 502-4221

Satellite and Telephone Numbers

Director General's Satellite

Number: 870776127671

Tel: (242) 302-2760

HURRICANE IMPACT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM (Pg. 26)



Hurricane Communications Plan

HURRICANE IMPACT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM

1. HOTEL NAME & ISLAND: _____

2. # of Rooms: _____ # of Rooms Occupied w/Guests 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 (roads, electric, telephone, airport, services):

5. Personal Injuries (please indicate if any, and severity):

6. Anticipated Date to Open: _____

7. Anticipated Date to Full Normal 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: _____

Fax: _____

Alternative Tel: _____

Email: _____

THANK YOU.



Hurricane Communications Plan

Bahamas Hurricane Crisis Contacts

Hon. Dionisio D'Aguilar, Minister of
Tourism & Aviation
[Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation](#)
ddaguilar@bahamas.com
Tel: (242) 302-2019/2034/2058
Cell: (242) 818-5168

Reginald Saunders, Permanent
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Tel: (242) 302-2000
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Joy Jibrilu, Director General
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Hurricane Communications Plan

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Hurricane Communications Plan

Bahamas Hurricane Crisis Contacts

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Hurricane Communications Plan

Bahamas Hurricane Crisis Contacts

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870776127674	Vincent Harris
870776127675	Karen Seymour
870776127668	Mia Weech-Lange
870776127676	June Cartwright, Harbour Island
870776127677	Jacqueline Gibson, Eleuthera
870776127678	Sharmain Deveaux, Exuma
870776127679	Wynsome Ferguson, Abaco
870776127680	Peter Douglas, Central Andros
870776127681	Eurerka Mckinney, South Andros
870776127682	Sandra Russell, Berry Islands
870776127660	Jason Springer, Bimini
870776127661	Jermaine Johnson, San Salvador
870776127662	Dawn Simmons, 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)