

# Even in a Pandemic, North Carolina is Prepared for Hurricane Season

Raleigh  
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North Carolina has seen more than its fair share of devastating storms, particularly in the past few years. When hurricane season comes around, we don't have the luxury of sitting back and seeing how it goes — even when we're in the middle of a global pandemic – we have to be ready.

A hurricane on top of the COVID-19 pandemic is double trouble. For months, North Carolinians have been strong to get through this pandemic. As Hurricane Isaias barreled down on North Carolina, North Carolinians had to dig even deeper.

But the people of our state have shown their resilience in handling both of these crises at once, especially our emergency managers and first responders.

During a normal year, they spend months preparing evacuation plans and protocols for sheltering, immediate response and clean up. This year, they did all this while balancing the work responding to the pandemic and getting personal protective equipment and screening plans in place for our shelters.

To say this is a tough balance is an understatement. But when Isaias put North Carolina in its sights, it's clear these months of preparation weren't in vain.

Shelters had social distancing protocols in place. Anyone who came in was screened, and there were plans to help anyone with symptoms isolate safely while sheltering.

Rescue teams and first responders from all across the state stepped up to help, and they were strategically positioned across eastern North Carolina to be ready. When Isaias crossed our shores last week, they were able to get to people who were trapped, rescuing them and getting them to medical care.

Still, no amount of preparation can fully stop the devastation these storms cause. In Bertie County, Isaias spawned a deadly tornado that took the lives of two people and destroyed a neighborhood. We mourn for those we lost and their families.

I visited Bertie County and Brunswick County after the storm. I saw the aftermath of destroyed homes and shattered lives. Just like always, we need to support these communities in the coming months as they rebuild.

In one of the most heavily damaged areas, I met a mom and daughter who were thrown from their mobile home. They weren't hurt but lost most of what they had. And even after facing this devastation, the mom was thanking God for her life and the life of her daughter.

I've seen this glimmer of hope before — it shines brightly every time North Carolinians face a challenge.

We hope there's not another hurricane this year. But we can't wish away future storms. If we could, North Carolinians would have done so long ago.

So our rescue teams and emergency management leaders will stay vigilant. We'll keep working hard to make sure we are ready if disaster strikes again.

And I know the people of our state are going to work together, helping family, friends and neighbors through this hurricane season and any other challenge that comes our way. These hard times – the pandemic and Isaias recovery – they won't last forever. But our strength and resilience will.

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