



National Emergency Management Organization

"Preserving Life and Property"

ADVISORY #4

CATEGORY 5- HURRICANE IOTA

MONDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER, 2020 as at 1:00 PM

The National Meteorological Services of Belize and NEMO hereby inform the general public that Iota has intensified into a Category 5 hurricane, this morning. At 9:00 am local time, Iota was centered near latitude 13.5N, longitude 82.0W or about 100 miles east-southeast of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. The hurricane was moving to the west at 9mph with maximum sustained winds of 160mph and a minimum central pressure of 917 millibar(mb).

Iota is forecast to continue moving on a westward track until landfall over the northeastern coast of Nicaragua, tonight. A west to west-southwestward track is expected, thereafter. The system is expected to maintain its intensity as a major hurricane until landfall; then weaken rapidly thereafter and dissipate over the mountainous terrain of Central America by Wednesday.

Hurricane Iota may likely produce heavy rainfall across Belize, with rainfall activity peaking on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Storm total rainfall amounts of 10 to 20 inches are possible, especially over southern Belize. This may result in flooding with possible landslides, especially over mountainous areas of the country. Additionally, winds may become gusty producing rough sea conditions that could become a threat to mariners. Hurricane Iota is within Belize's zone of concern; therefore, the public is advised to remain alert and to continue to monitor the hurricane. A flood warning remains in effect for the Belize district, and a flood watch is in effect for the Toledo, Stann Creek and Cayo districts.

Despite the current track, the public is advised to be prepared to take actions that could save lives, such as, informing vulnerable family members of the impending threat, clear drains, trim trees, secure your home, purchase necessary survival items (food, water, medication), secure important documents, among others. When a storm is approaching always be prepared to evacuate to a safe building or shelter, store water, charge cell phones before landfall, and keep some form of emergency lighting, first aid kit (bandages, rubbing alcohol, ointments etc.) and tools, close by.

Flood assessments and relief operations continue, (amidst COVID 19 risks) as the flood waters recede in the Cayo, Belize and Stann Creek districts.

NEMO will keep the general public updated. The public is advised to stay alert for possible flooding and to note that another Tropical Wave has the potential for development, later in the week, within the Central Caribbean. Please adhere to the official release from the National Met Service and NEMO. **Attached are** NEMO's Emergency Coordinators Contact Information, COVID 19 Protocols and Preparedness Tips.

...Ends...

NEMO's Emergency Coordinators Contact Information

Corozal, Mr. Ronnie Hernandez at 614 7140;

Orange Walk, Mr. Aragon at 615 2264; or Mr. Leiva at 614-7177

Belize District, Mr. Alphius Gillett at 614-4735;

San Pedro, Ms. Vanessa Parham at 614 5865;

Belize City, Mr. Al Westby at 614 8604 or Mr. Pollard at 6143244;

Belmopan, Ms. Clare Moody at 614 5705; or Mr. Eiley at 624 2365

Cayo, Mr. Al Westby at 6148604 or Mr. Johnny Ramclam at 614 5891;

Stann Creek -Coastal- Dangriga including Mullins River to Independence), Mr. Kevin Flores at 604 3632

Stann Creek -Interior- Hummingbird and Southern highway communities, Mr. David Cruz at 614 8514; and for

Toledo, Mr. Kenton Parham at 614 2158 or Mr. Dennis Williams at 614 2393

COVID 19 SHELTER PROTOCOLS:

1. All persons in high-risk coastal areas are reminded IF the need arises for you to evacuate and you are (1) not COVID positive, (2) not in quarantine, (3) not awaiting a test result or (4) being contact traced, and (5) not showing symptoms, move early!
2. You must wear a mask. Know which shelter you will go to, take along your essential necessities required for you to survive. The elderly and persons with underlying health conditions must not occupy the same space with normal persons. Note, people showing symptoms will be contained in a separate section of the shelter building.
3. Hand washing /sanitizing must be done before entering a shelter. Shelter Wardens will allocate shelter space. Social distance must be adhered to and shelters must be sanitized on a regular basis. Garbage must be properly disposed of. Proper cleaning and disinfection must be done on a regular basis. Shelter Managers must monitor and correct hygiene and cough /sneeze etiquette. The Ministry of Health (MoH) will conduct daily monitoring of shelters to detect people who are sick and showing signs of COVID19. The Shelter Management Team (Public Officers/ Volunteers) MUST use PPE.

PREPAREDNESS TIPS BEFORE A CYCLONE ARRIVAL:

- (1) Avoid being near the coast if your home is not safe if you live on the cayes and along the coast be familiar with the evacuation routes. Know which shelter you will need to go to. Make early preparations.
- (2) Protect windows with plywood or shutters,
- (3) Review your family emergency plan, consider all COVID 19 measures,
- (4) If you can afford to purchase non-perishable foods and water. Store additional water.
- (5) Keep an extra supply of medication. If a member of your household is bed-ridden, seek medical advice. Notify authorities ahead of time if you have persons in your neighbourhood require special assistance to evacuate due to a medical condition.
- (6) Secure your important documents and identification. Save the emergency contact numbers for NEMO, the police, fire, and medical facility in your cell phone. Keep your phone charged.
- (7) Pets are not allowed in shelters, make plans for your pets, continue to trim trees, clear drains, and secure outdoor items. Farmers make plans to move your animals to higher ground and stockpile feed when required.