

Data from a NOAA Hurricane Hunter plane and satellite intensity estimates indicate that Matthew has weakened a little bit and the maximum winds are 95 kt. The hurricane is heading toward an area of increasing shear, and this should result in gradual weakening. The shear is forecast to continue during the next 5 days, so additional weakening is anticipated and Matthew is expected to be a tropical depression by the end of the forecast period.

Matthew has begun to move northward at about 10 kt. In about 12 hours, the hurricane will encounter the mid-latitude westerlies, and this flow pattern should induce a northeastward and then eastward motion during the next 2 days. During that time the core of the hurricane is expected to hug the coast from Georgia through southeastern North Carolina. The confidence in this portion of the track forecast is high. After that time, the steering flow becomes very complex, and both the GFS and ECMWF models turn the cyclone southward and southwestward embedded within the flow on the west side of a mid-level trough. The NHC track follows these two models, but the confidence in this portion of the forecast is low.

KEY MESSAGES:

1. We have been very fortunate that Matthew's strongest winds have remained a short distance offshore of the Florida Coast thus far, but this should not be a reason to let down our guard. Only a small deviation to the left of the forecast track could bring these winds onshore. The western eyewall of Matthew, which contains hurricane-force winds, is expected to move over or very near the coast of northeastern Florida and Georgia through tonight.
2. Hurricane winds increase very rapidly with height, and occupants of high-rise buildings in the Jacksonville area are at particular risk of strong winds. Winds at the top of a 30-story building will average one Saffir-Simpson category higher than the winds near the surface.
3. The water hazards remain, even if the core of Matthew remains offshore. These include the danger of life-threatening inundation from storm surge, as well as inland flooding from heavy rains from Florida to North Carolina.
4. The National Hurricane Center is issuing Potential Storm Surge Flooding Maps, and Prototype Storm Surge Watch/Warning Graphics for Matthew. It is important to remember that the Potential Storm Surge Flooding Map does not represent a forecast of expected inundation, but rather depicts a reasonable worst-case scenario -- the amount of inundation that has a 10 percent chance of being exceeded.

FORECAST POSITIONS AND MAX WINDS

INIT	07/2100Z	30.2N	80.7W	95 KT	110 MPH
12H	08/0600Z	31.7N	80.7W	90 KT	105 MPH
24H	08/1800Z	33.0N	79.0W	80 KT	90 MPH
36H	09/0600Z	33.8N	76.7W	65 KT	75 MPH
48H	09/1800Z	33.5N	75.0W	60 KT	70 MPH
72H	10/1800Z	30.0N	74.5W	40 KT	45 MPH
96H	11/1800Z	27.0N	76.0W	35 KT	40 MPH
120H	12/1800Z	26.0N	77.0W	30 KT	35 MPH