

Severe Weather Advisory for Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin

Islands - Major Hurricane Irma

Issued on Tuesday, 05 September 2017 at 15:45 local time.

Major Hurricane Irma will affect the islands of Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands from 0000UTC Wednesday until 0600UTC Thursday.

Irma will likely still be a category 5 hurricane with 1 minute sustained winds of more than 170 miles per hour and gusts close to 200 miles per hour as it tracks through the northern Leeward Islands towards Puerto Rico between 0000UTC Wednesday until 0600UTC Thursday.

There is a high risk of strong hurricane force winds to affect all these islands. Winds of this strength will pose a risk of severely damaging buildings and bringing down power lines.

These winds will produce very dangerous sea states with waves as high as 11 metres in the seas around the islands. This will be a significant hazard to marine traffic.

A 2 to 3 metre storm surge is expected, especially for Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. This storm surge could coincide with high tide to bring extensive flooding to lower lying parts of these islands. Anguilla is particularly low lying and looks most at risk from the storm surge flood risk.

Another source of flooding will be the very heavy rainfall. Up to 150 millimetres of rain could fall in a 24 hour period. This equates to over a months worth of rain in a day.

This could result in flash flooding, especially on more mountainous islands such as the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat. These more mountainous islands will also be at risk of landslides due to the heavy rainfall falling on potentially unstable slopes.

So, flooding is a significant risk to property and transport infrastructure, with landslides and additional risk.

All these hurricane elements will pose a significant risk to life on these islands.

Impacts from Irma are likely to be more severe than from Hurricane Georges that affected the islands in 1998.



Figure 1: 05/1245 UTC colour enhanced satellite image.

Note the large, clear eye on Irma (450km east of Montserrat) which is indicative of a major hurricane. National Hurricane Center estimation of 150 knots 1 minute sustained winds at this time.

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Meteorologist: Paul Hutcheon

Global Guidance Unit

This forecast may be amended at any time

mailto: GGU@metoffice.gov.uk

Phone Duty Forecaster, Global Guidance Unit (GGU), Operations Centre, Met Office, Fitzroy Road, Exeter
VPN n6225 4319, BT 01392 884319

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