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## Gov. Perry: Rescue Operations Underway in the Wake of Hurricane Ike

Search and rescue top priority in Texas

September 13, 2008



AUSTIN - Gov. Rick Perry today announced that search and rescue (SAR) operations have begun in earnest after Hurricane Ike made landfall overnight on the Texas Coast. The Category 2 hurricane has caused extensive flooding and knocked out utilities in several Texas counties. The governor also urged Texans all along the storm's path to remain vigilant.

"For the past few days, our top priority was evacuating our citizens from the strike zone. Today, we are focused on search and rescue," Gov. Perry said. "In anticipation of this moment, we pre-positioned the largest search and rescue capability in Texas history in advance of this storm. Elements of this task force are re-entering Orange County, east Harris County and Galveston by air, boat and ground."

Hurricane Ike was preceded by a storm surge estimated at roughly 12 feet that caused massive flooding and stranded a number of citizens in the area. Working with the U.S. Coast Guard, a detachment of Texas Task Force One executed an air evacuation of four patients from UT Medical Branch in Galveston on Saturday morning. Additional members of the 1,000-strong search and rescue team, including Department of Public Safety troopers and pilots, Texas Military Forces personnel, Texas Parks and Wildlife game wardens and members of Texas Task Force One, are conducting ongoing rescue operations in the area.

In addition to stranding area residents, Ike's high winds and flooding have knocked out power in several Texas counties including Galveston, Harris, Chambers, Orange and Jefferson. An estimated 2.8 million customers in the area are currently without power. Efforts to restore power are underway, but utility crews have been unable to enter some areas because of flood waters and debris.

According to the National Weather Service, the storm will continue to work its way across the eastern part of the state until it crosses the border into Arkansas late in the day. As the effects of the storm and rescue operations continue, Gov. Perry cautioned Texans that the challenge is far from over.

"As the storm recedes from the coast, we are focusing on our efforts on search and recovery. If Ike is headed your way, keep your head down. If you are still in the affected areas, we are headed your way with help," said Gov. Perry. "If you evacuated, please remain where you are until local officials determine that it is safe to return."

The Emergency Management Council and State Operations Center continue operations around the clock. The

State Operations Center is closely monitoring Hurricane Ike, and holding twice daily conference calls with federal, state and local officials, private industry partners, volunteer organizations, and the National Weather Service.

Visit [www.governor.state.tx.us/hurricane](http://www.governor.state.tx.us/hurricane) to contribute to hurricane relief efforts and for the latest information on Hurricane Ike.

Previous Press Release: [Update on Hurricane Ike](#)