

HURRICANE HELENE

Situation Report # 1

Country affected: United States

28 / September / 2024 / 11:43 a.m.

HIGHLIGHTS

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane. With winds of 130 miles per hour, torrential rains, and flooding, the impact has affected several areas, particularly in the states of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. So far, **92 deaths** have been reported, and approximately **4.6 million** people are without electricity.

The disruption of essential services is a major concern. Hospitals, particularly in southern Georgia, have faced power outages, forcing emergency evacuations.

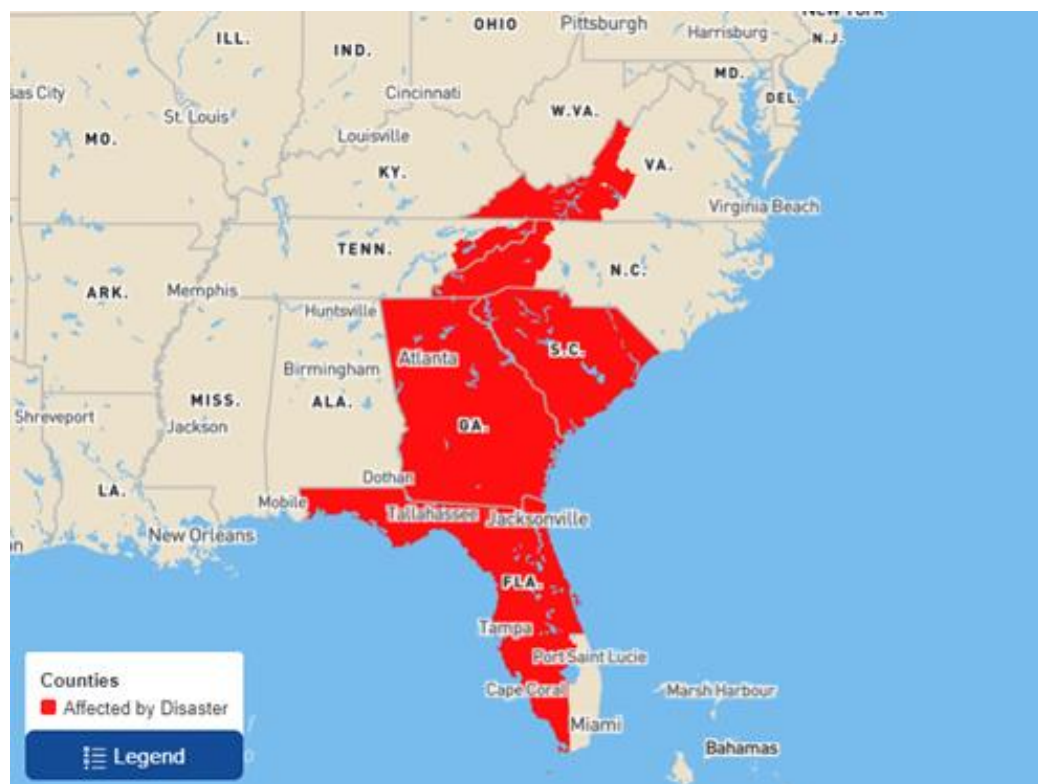
Furthermore, critical infrastructure such as roads and bridges has been severely impacted, making it challenging for first responders to reach affected areas.

Authorities have deployed federal and state-level emergency teams, including FEMA and HHS, to assist with recovery and public health needs.

MAP

Include a map of the country and the specific location of the event if applicable

(Source: [Hurricane Helene | USAGov](#))



IN NUMBERS

Approx 4.6 million Exposed

92 Deaths

Several Injured
(Numbers not yet confirmed)

Missing
(Numbers not yet confirmed)

+1,000 Evacuated

+98 Health Facilities Evacuated
Several hospitals affected with service disruptions, all operational.

Services have been disrupted in several key healthcare centers in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Among the affected facilities are the Naval Hospital Jacksonville and the Naval Hospital Pensacola in Florida, the Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Georgia, and the Lyster and Winn Army health clinics. Medical facilities at MacDill and Moody Air Force bases also suffered damage. Hospitals have activated their emergency response protocols and begun epidemiological surveillance to prevent potential disaster-related outbreaks.

Medical supply shortages: Supply chain disruptions have led to shortages of essential medical supplies.

The **Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)** has activated reporting in the Health Facility Reporting System (HFRS) and has requested that all health care providers report their census, available beds, evacuation status, and generator status information. This information allows AHCA to assist health care providers in transferring patients if needed and ensure that health care providers in impacted areas have the necessary resources and adequate power.

- As of this morning, 98 health care facilities have reported evacuations. This includes:
 - 46 assisted living facilities
 - 27 nursing homes
 - 8 hospitals
 - 1 hospital emergency department
 - 10 residential treatment facilities
 - 3 residential treatment centers for children and adolescents
 - 2 adult family care home, and 1 intermediate care facility for developmentally disabled
- 100% of operating long-term care facilities have a generator on-site. The Generator Status Map for long-term care facilities is available [here](#).
- As of this morning, there are 54 health care facilities on generator power across the state. This includes:
 - 5 hospitals
 - 26 assisted living facilities
 - 17 nursing homes.
 - 1 adult family care home
 - 1 hospice
 - 1 hospital emergency department
 - 3 intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled

The most severely affected areas include:

- **Florida:** Hospitals in the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend regions have experienced severe disruptions due to power outages, flooding, and structural damage, especially in Tallahassee, Gainesville, and Panama City.
- **Georgia:** Southern Georgia hospitals, such as those in Savannah and Brunswick, have also experienced significant disruptions.
- **South Carolina:** Coastal areas, including Charleston, have experienced health service interruptions due to flooding.

Power outages: Approximately 4.5 million customers have been affected, making the operation of medical equipment in hospitals difficult, according to [PowerOutage.us](#).

- South Carolina: 1,361,565 customers without electricity.
- Georgia: 1,067,825.
- Florida: 1,049,381.
- North Carolina: 817,977.
- Virginia: 104,038.

Infrastructure damage: Roads, bridges, and other infrastructure have been damaged, hindering access to emergency medical services.



WASH

Water contamination: Flooding has contaminated drinking water sources, posing a significant public health risk.

- The **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** is actively working to provide any needed assistance to drinking water, wastewater and hazardous waste facilities. Outreach to these facilities to determine operational status is ongoing.



AFFECTED PEOPLE

Millions of people reside in the path of Hurricane Helene. While exact figures are still being confirmed, it is estimated that a significant number of individuals have been impacted by the storm. Many have been displaced either as a precaution or due to damage to their homes, leaving them with limited access to essential services, including healthcare, in the hardest-hit areas.



SHELTERS

Displacements: A significant number of people have been forced to leave their homes, many of whom now face restricted access to healthcare services in affected areas.

Shelters: No official preliminary reports on the availability or status of shelters have been provided at this time



HEALTH NEEDS

The disruption of healthcare facilities has strained access to essential services, particularly in severely affected areas. There is also an urgent need for medical supplies, including clean water, medications, and equipment for chronic disease management. Public health surveillance is critical to prevent potential outbreaks of waterborne diseases, and mental health support is needed for displaced populations coping with trauma and loss. However, exact numbers regarding the impacted healthcare infrastructure, patient needs, and supply shortages have not yet been confirmed as assessments are ongoing.



RESPONSE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:

Federal, state, and local governments are coordinating efforts to provide assistance and relief to affected communities.

- **FEMA** resources deployed in the field or available as needed:
 - Over 858 generators
 - Nearly 49 pumps
 - Over 262 pieces of heavy equipment and trucks are actively in the field for response efforts
 - 43 Drone team members staged to make assessments where needed
 - 5 ITS trailers leading a coordinated federal response effort involving over 3,200 personnel, each bringing specialized skills to support Hurricane Helene recovery. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas has activated the Surge Capacity Force, mobilizing federal employees to bolster FEMA's efforts.
- **Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)** has deployed 24 teams (1,270+ personnel), equipped for swift water rescues, across affected states. Eight teams are currently operating in Florida, with additional teams in Georgia and North Carolina. More teams and specialized rescue units are en route to assist.
- **The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)** is conducting search and rescue missions using both vessels and aircraft. Their personnel are assessing damage, ensuring rapid port reopening, and supporting Coast Guard families affected by the storm.
- **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** is providing emergency power and assessing critical infrastructure, including water treatment plants, debris management, and road/bridge conditions. They've activated six regional emergency operation centers to coordinate efforts.
- **The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** has declared Public Health Emergencies in Florida and Georgia, granting flexibility for Medicare and Medicaid providers. Their teams are on the ground, conducting health infrastructure assessments and deploying medical responders, including Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) with medical supplies.
- **The Department of Energy (DOE)** is actively monitoring power and fuel supply issues, deploying responders to emergency operations centers in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina to coordinate restoration efforts.
- **The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** is assisting water systems and providing guidance on debris management. Their teams are ensuring public health protection at critical facilities, including Superfund sites.
- **The American Red Cross (ARC)** has deployed 540 responders, with 350 more on the way, providing shelter for around 1,900 people. They are transitioning evacuation centers into emergency shelters and deploying over 30 Emergency Response Vehicles. ARC is also prepared to support mass casualty and reunification efforts.
- **The Salvation Army** is distributing meals at shelters and feeding units across Florida, Georgia, and other affected states. They are also supplying cleanup kits, blankets, and other essential aid to impacted communities.

Source: <https://www.fema.gov/> , FL Government: <https://www.flgov.com/2024/09/28/governor-ron-desantis-issues-updates-on-response-and-recovery-efforts-to-hurricane-helene-2/>

PAHO RESPONSE:

. PAHO continues to closely monitor the situation, including the evolving data on those affected by the hurricane, as well as healthcare accessibility and overall recovery efforts. Current reports and figures are being updated as more information becomes available

OTHER AGENCIES RESPONSE:

- **Emergency teams:** Emergency medical services, disaster relief organizations, and the National Guard are providing aid in the affected areas.
- **Healthcare providers:** Hospitals and clinics are implementing emergency protocols to ensure continuity of patient care.

