



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Walla Walla District

News Release

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Corps power team helps FEMA prepare for Tropical Storm Hanna

WALLA WALLA, Wash. – Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, sent a nine-member emergency power team to Richmond, Va., today, to help FEMA respond to power losses anticipated to occur as Tropical Storm Hanna moves toward U.S. states along the Atlantic Ocean.

At about 5 p.m. Thursday, Walla Walla District received FEMA's request to send a power team to provide emergency power technical assistance. Walla Walla District's power team departed at about 1 p.m. today. Emergency management officials anticipate the team will support FEMA operations there for about one to two weeks.

Walla Walla District's emergency power team consists of an action officer, a mission manager, two mission specialists, a mission liaison, a logistics specialist, a contract specialist and two power quality assurance specialists. The all-volunteer team can provide backup electrical power generation anywhere an emergency makes the service needed. Team members agree to be in an on-call status, ready to deploy on short-notice when disaster strikes.

Power Team Action Officer Rich Hilt, of Colfax, Wash., will operate out of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management Operations Center, providing a direct line of communication for the state's emergency power needs to his team.

Power Team Mission Liaison, Bob Williams, a Walla Walla, Wash., resident, will provide a similar link at the Corps' Norfolk District Emergency Operation Center in Norfolk, Va.

Other power team members will directly support a FEMA staging area in Richmond, Va. – Mission Manager Rob Wall, of Walla Walla; Mission Specialist Sue Walton and Contract Specialist Mary VanSickle, both from College Place, Wash.; Quality Assurance Specialist George Peck, from Kennewick, Wash.; Logistics Specialist Ron Gosselin, of Clarkston, Wash.; Mission Specialist Marcus Smith, of Kendrick, Idaho; and Quality Assurance Specialist Ken Wanderscheid, a Goldendale, Wash., resident.

The National Weather Service updated its severe weather warning about Hanna at 2 p.m. EST today, cautioning

“Hanna nearing hurricane strength.” The center of the storm was located about 160 miles east-northeast of Daytona Beach, Fla., and traveling northward at about 20 m.p.h. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 315 miles from the center. Maximum sustained winds have increased to near 70 m.p.h. with higher gusts.

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Forecasters expect Hanna to increase in forward speed on Saturday as it nears the East Coast. Storm warnings and hurricane watches were issued covering Altamaha Sound, Ga., northward along the Atlantic Coast to Sandy Hook, N.J.

Hanna is expected to cause coastal storm surge flooding of 4 to 6 feet above normal tide levels, 3 to 7 inches of rainfall, and the possibility of tornadoes and power outages from coastal South Carolina northward through North Carolina into Central Virginia, Maryland and Southeastern Pennsylvania, according to the NWS.

The governors of Virginia and North Carolina declared states of emergency Thursday, directing state agencies to take all reasonable actions necessary to protect their citizens from the potentially damaging effects of Tropical Storm Hanna.

A news release issued today by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management said Hanna is forecast to hit Virginia Saturday, bringing with it the possibilities of flash flooding and tornadoes along coastal areas as well as in southeastern and central Virginia.

"The potential for tornadoes and flash floods with this storm is very real," said Michael Cline, state coordinator for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. "Falling trees could also cause widespread power outages, so (residents) should be prepared to be without power, telephone, water or other utilities."

The National Weather Service is also tracking two other storms that appear to be following Tropical Storm Hanna toward the Eastern Coastline of the United States: Hurricane Ike and Tropical Storm Josephine.

For more information about Hanna and other storms headed toward the United States, go online to the NWS-National Hurricane Center's Web site at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Photographs of Walla Walla District's Power Team preparing to deploy to Virginia can be downloaded at www.nww.usace.army.mil/html/offices/pa/NR/NR08_files/NR08-76PIX/NR08-76PIXPage.htm

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