



This photo shows the level of flooding in Naples, nearly 400 miles south of where Hurricane Helene made landfall in Florida.

Hurricane Helene is responsible for at least 90 deaths across six states after slamming into Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 4 hurricane with winds up to 140 mph on Thursday, September 26.¹ Florida, Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee experienced record-breaking amounts of rainfall, heavy winds and tornadoes, causing catastrophic flooding and landslides through the weekend. Millions of customers remain without power from Florida to as far north as Ohio.

Hurricane Helene is the third major hurricane to hit Florida's Big Bend region in the past 13 months. Early assessments report that the damage caused in Florida by Helene is more than 2024's Hurricane Debby and 2023's Hurricane Idalia combined. FEMA has deployed eight Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) teams to the state to assist with relief efforts. Ten special needs shelters are still open across the state, three hospitals had been evacuated, 47 healthcare facilities closed or were evacuated, 47 healthcare facilities are reporting damage and scores are operating on generator power, while some remain completely without power. The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has declared a public health emergency in both Florida and Georgia.^{2,3} FEMA is coordinating a response of 3,200 personnel.⁴

The breadth of Hurricane Helene was unusually large, impacting a large swath of communities from Florida to Indiana. Communities up to 400 miles north of the Big Bend region in Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee were inundated with torrential rain—some areas receiving up to 30 inches of rainfall. Entire towns in western North Carolina were isolated due to catastrophic landslides from heavy rainfall, resulting in the closure of more than 400 roads and dozens of main highways. South Carolina has reported at least 25 deaths, making Hurricane Helene the deadliest storm to hit the state since 1989, while Atlanta, Georgia, received the most rain in two days on record.⁵ In Tennessee, where the storm hovered over the weekend, patients and staff from one hospital required helicopter rescue from the rooftop due to floodwaters.

Despite the quick downgrade to a post-tropical cyclone by Saturday morning, Helene has continued to release a deluge over the Tennessee Valley and as far as Ohio, Indiana and parts of Virginia, crippling power and cell systems across multiple states.⁶ As the full impact of Hurricane Helene unfolds, what may be Potential Tropical Cyclone 10 is now rapidly

FAST FACTS

- **Hurricane Helene** made landfall in Florida on September 26 as a Category 4 hurricane.
- The most powerful storm ever to hit Florida's Big Bend region, Hurricane Helene is responsible for more than 60 confirmed deaths across six states and power outages for millions of customers.
- In 2024, there have been **10 named Atlantic storms**, including **five hurricanes** that have made landfall in the United States and Territories, totaling more than **100 deaths** in the US and Territories alone.

OUR RESPONSE

- In response to **Hurricane Helene**, International Medical Corps has deployed teams to both Florida and Georgia.
- In Florida, International Medical Corps is coordinating closely with the Florida Department of Health to support state- and region-wide response efforts as needed.
- In Georgia, International Medical Corps' teams are coordinating with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to support immediate response and recovery efforts.
- Across the region—including in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee and the Carolinas—International Medical Corps teams are also coordinating with federally qualified health centers and community health clinics to meet the needs of healthcare providers and the communities they serve.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/hurricane-helene-wreaks-havoc-us-southeast-death-toll-rises-2024-09-29/>

² <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/09/26/hhs-secretary-xavier-becerra-declares-public-health-emergency-aspr-deploys-personnel-florida-respond-hurricane-helene.html>

³ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/09/27/hhs-secretary-xavier-becerra-declares-public-health-emergency-georgia-additional-aspr-personnel-resources-deployed-region-response-hurricane-helene.html>

⁴ <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20240928/fema-federal-family-helene-response-update>

⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/hurricane-helene-florida-georgia-north-carolina-south-carolina-92d5caa4e40644e1db687cf6431395f>

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/09/28/us/helene-storm-florida-north-carolina#>

developing in the western Caribbean Sea and tracking along a very similar path to Hurricane Helene—a significant concern, as affected communities have depleted capacity to withstand another storm.⁷

International Medical Corps' Response

International Medical Corps is responding to the impacts of Hurricane Helene across four states: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. We deployed a team to Florida on September 26 in advance of the storm's landfall to liaise with the Florida Department of Health (FDoH) and Department of Emergency Management and support their response. The team has coordinated the shipment of wound-care kits and individual hygiene kits for distribution to local partners, and has connected with two Florida federally qualified health center (FQHC) networks to identify emergency supply, medical staffing and behavioral health needs in response-and-recovery efforts. Several FQHC partners already have utilized recovery supplies provided by International Medical Corps last year, including generators, portable showers and washing machines, hygiene kits and more, as part of their emergency management plans. Partners have expressed the need for additional supplies, especially those that will enable staff to get back to work quickly, including bottled water, blankets, hand sanitizer, flashlight, batteries, water purification devices and tabs, tents, coolers, mosquito repellent and more. International Medical Corps is procuring these items for health facility staff and patients, and will continue to coordinate closely with partners to identify additional urgent needs for health center staff and the communities they serve.



International Medical Corps distributes kits like these individual hygiene kits to all community partners in the immediate response to hurricanes.

The team is visiting High Springs and Horseshoe Beach to meet with representatives of Palms Medical Group, as well as Cedar Key, a region devastated by Helene. With higher poverty, disability, and uninsured rates than the state average, these communities are particularly vulnerable to extreme economic, housing and health challenges following the storm.

International Medical Corps also deployed a team to Savannah, Georgia, on September 29 and is shipping hygiene and wound-care kits to support communities in that state, working closely with the Georgia Emergency Management Association (GEMA) to assist in their response to the hardest-hit areas of Valdosta, Douglas, and Augusta. In Tennessee and North Carolina, International Medical Corps is working with primary care associations and FQHC partners to support response efforts.

International Medical Corps anticipates community needs will continue to be significant (particularly for the elderly, bedridden and those with chronic disease or dependent on powered medical devices), especially recognizing the challenges that repeated disasters have on communities' capacities to recover. Across the response, we are offering medical and behavioral-health surge staffing and support, as well as urgently needed supplies. We are facilitating procurements of emergency and recovery supplies for staff and patients of healthcare centers, working with FQHC partners. Identified urgent needs include emergency medical bags, blood pressure cuffs, respiratory therapy machines, adult diapers, small ice packs and coolers for medication, and glucometers. Additional supplies include battery-operated fans, solar powered lanterns, cots, outdoor showers, mosquito repellent and hand sanitizers, among others.

International Medical Corps in the US and Territories

International Medical Corps has been an emergency responder in the United States and Caribbean since 2005, when we partnered with local community clinics overwhelmed by Hurricane Katrina. In the US, International Medical Corps works with national, state and local partners in the healthcare system to address the significant challenges that face domestic healthcare services and deploys emergency response teams in response to disasters.

In 2024, International Medical Corps has responded to five hurricanes across six states and territories, working closely with 19 local partners, in addition to the Florida Department of Health, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency and the National Association of Communities Health Centers. In 2024, International Medical Corps has distributed more than 15,000 units of emergency and recovery supplies to 21 partners and is helping healthcare facilities and their staff meet the needs of their communities.

Across the Caribbean and the US, International Medical Corps was a first responder during 2010's Haiti earthquake; 2012's Superstorm Sandy; 2016's Hurricane Matthew in Haiti; 2017's Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and Dominica; 2018's Hurricane Michael in Florida; 2019's Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas; 2020's earthquakes in Puerto Rico; and 2021's Hurricane Ida, 2022's Hurricane Ian and 2023's Hurricane Idalia in Florida, among other emergency response efforts. Over the past seven years, International Medical Corps has engaged partner networks of more than 275 hospitals,

⁷ <https://weather.com/storms/hurricane/news/2024-09-28-tropical-interest-area-caribbean-helene>

clinics and health-related facilities and NGOs across 18 states and territories, supporting more than 6 million patients and healthcare providers in the US.

2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season Response*

