

Matthew to blast Florida but may bypass Northeast

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October 6, 2016; 10:04 AM ET

Thursday, Oct. 6, 2016

1. Hurricane Matthew, a Category 3 storm with top winds of 125 mph, was centered 30 miles SSW of Nassau, Bahamas, at 8 a.m. EDT. At its current speed toward the northwest of 12 mph, it would reach West Palm Beach, Florida, after midnight tonight. It is important to realize that high winds and heavy rain can reach that area long before the center arrives. This hybrid cloud and precipitation map shows the setup: The storm has shown strengthening tendencies this morning.

2. The storm could actually come ashore near Cape Canaveral. Whether it moves inland or stays offshore will affect the maximum winds. The winds would remain strongest if the center stays offshore. Ahead of the storm, there was still recreation going on (where people did not have responsibility for completing last-minute preparations). See the kite surfers: [EarthCam](#) has an amazing array of web cams around the U.S.

3. Away from Matthew, a high pressure area stretching from Maine to Tennessee is maintaining sunny, pleasant weather (aside from areas of dense late night and early morning fog). This high will break down then be replaced by a stronger one from the Plains this weekend. As the new high moves into the east, it will tighten the pressure gradient between it and Matthew. This can lead to coastal flooding at the times of high tide well away from the storm. Countering this somewhat will be our status with respect to the lunar cycle (lower tidal range than during full and new moons). In the transition zone/ cold frontal zone between the highs, some showers and thunderstorms will occur. across the Appalachians and Northeast. Early this morning, showers and thunderstorms ahead of the front were affecting the Chicago area:

4. I want to stress that with a storm as strong and massive as Matthew affecting a region with millions of people, we need to keep current with the latest information. Remember these notes are only done once a day. I am really proud of the efforts and accomplishments of our Wichita and State College staffs in storm situations.

5. I compiled a collection of items related to the challenges faced in recovering from a storm like this. Please let me know of other things that should be added and I will do so in a future edition.

In the wake of a devastating storm like Matthew, the people who live in the affected area have to deal with big disruptions in their lives. Little things we take for granted become major inconveniences and some of them are potentially dangerous. These effects last long after the TV crews have departed and the sound bites are stored away for station promos. Some examples:

a. The hurricane winds and flying debris cut thousands of power lines. These have to be restrung one and at a time... and in cases where houses and buildings have been destroyed, there's nothing to string them to.

b. In early days, buildings in the Deep South were constructed to take advantage of breezes. There was no air conditioning, and so cross ventilation in southern homes was essential for any hope of comfort. The main population surge in the South did not occur until air conditioning became available. Once air conditioning became widespread, the old designs were abandoned and now many buildings have inadequate ventilation if the air conditioning goes out. In the existing heat and humidity heat, this is not only uncomfortable, but potentially life-threatening.

c. At the same time, many water systems are affected by contamination from flooding and seawater.

- Pollution from overtaxed storm sewers enters waterways, lakes and beach areas

- In the hardest-hit areas, just the simple act of finding a bathroom and maintaining cleanliness becomes a major chore.

d. Without power, of course, there is no refrigeration, and tons of food wind up worthless. Restaurants without backup power have the same problem, and health officials have to monitor to make sure tainted food is not served.

- Sump pumps don't work and basements get flooded.

e. In the puddles and ponds left behind by the storm rains, extra insects flourish, and these become extra annoying. In areas with heavy damage or no power, people cannot close their windows, and so extra mosquitoes and other pests become a real nuisance. Improper handling of rotting food creates an extra attraction for these unwelcome visitors and causes additional health hazards.

f. Snakes, some poisonous, come out of nowhere to terrorize and threaten pets and people.

g. Millions of carpets, drapes and articles of clothing receive water damage, and now mold and mildew become widespread where the items can't be dried fast enough.

h. Where businesses have been destroyed, employment is disrupted as well as schedules for just about all other activities.

i. There's a daycare nightmare. Parents have even more to do because of the cleanup and the efforts to secure food and water. At the same time, all the debris adds extra danger for children picking through the rubble and shattered shards of glass. The normal routine of calling friends and relatives or getting a baby sitter becomes a frustrating experience as cell service is disrupted. (Imagine the fun of a driverless car!). For all these reasons and many more, effective disaster relief is so important. The days and weeks after the storm will bring trying times to those affected by Matthew.

j. The building trades and home improvement stores enjoy boom times as repairs get underway.

