

Railway Alert Network (RAN) Situational Awareness Message: Update – Hurricane Florence Rumor Control Information Site

September 14, 2018 – 9:00 am Eastern time

Executive Summary:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established a “Hurricane Florence Rumor Control” site.

The purpose is to highlight erroneous information that has gained profile in postings on social media or in news reporting and to provide accurate context and references.

The site may be accessed at:

<https://www.fema.gov/florence-rumors>.

Set out below is the current delineation of each “Rumor” with the accurate information.

FEMA established similar sites during the 2017 hurricane season for the same purpose.

Detailed Discussion:

Rumor: There are reports that all emergency shelters and hotels are required to accommodate pets for people who have evacuated.

FACT: Service animals are not pets. The Americans with Disabilities Act generally requires hotels and evacuation shelters to accommodate service animals.

Private businesses, such as hotels, are not required to accept pets. Not all shelters accept pets. Check local media, or contact your local emergency management agency for shelters that do allow pets.

Pet-friendly shelters may have requirements and restrictions for pets. Check their requirements before arriving at the site.

Check out www.ready.gov/animals for more tips on evacuating with your pet.

Hurricane Florence Rumor Control

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> [Rumor: There Are Reports That All Emergency Shelters And Hotels Are Required To Accommodate Pets For People Who Have Evacuated.](#)

> [Rumor: Service Animals Are Not Allowed In Shelters.](#)

> [Rumor: Nearly \\$10M Was Diverted From FEMA's Hurricane Relief Fund To U.S Immigration And Customs Enforcement.](#)

> [Rumor: EPA Does Not Have Budget To Respond To Natural Disasters](#)

> [Rumor: FEMA Does Not Have Enough Commodities On The Ground In Preparation For Hurricane Florence.](#)

> [Rumor: There Are Rumors That FEMA Has A Role In Enforcing Evacuation Orders. This Is FALSE](#)

> [Rumor: There Are Reports That Beach Sand Should Be Used If Sand Bag Distribution Sites Are Out Of Sand. This Is FALSE](#)

Last Updated: 09/13/2018 - 14:35

Rumor: Service animals are not allowed in shelters.

FACT: All service animals are allowed in shelters. Service animals are not pets. Service animals, which are individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability, are authorized to relocate to survivor shelters per the "Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990."

Rumor: Nearly \$10M was diverted from FEMA's hurricane relief fund to U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

FACT: Funding was diverted from FEMA's operational budgets for travel, training, public engagement and information technology. The amount diverted is less than 1 percent of FEMA's annual operating budget.

Rumor: EPA does not have budget to respond to natural disasters.

FACT: EPA does have the budget and the staff to respond to natural disasters. The budget increased over the last two fiscal years by \$5 million.

Rumor: FEMA does not have enough commodities on the ground in preparation for Hurricane Florence.

FACT: The private sector is the first source for goods in the potentially affected areas. When their supply chain is disrupted, or stores are unable to open, then state, local and voluntary agencies will provide needed supplies. FEMA, working in coordination with those officials, will augment state and local resources as needed and requested.

At all times, FEMA maintains commodities, including millions of liters of water, millions of meals and hundreds of thousands of blankets, strategically located at distribution centers throughout the United States and its territories.

FEMA is forward staging meals, water, cots, blankets and other resources at Incident Support Bases in the Carolinas, Georgia, Virginia, and West Virginia to supplement the needs following Hurricane Florence. The quantity of supplies on hand will fluctuate as supplies are continuously moving.

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Rumor: There are rumors that FEMA has a role in enforcing Evacuation orders. This is FALSE.

FACT: FEMA does not have authority to issue or enforce evacuation orders. Only local and state public safety and emergency management officials have authority for issuing and enforcing voluntary and mandatory evacuations.

Rumor: There are reports that beach sand should be used if sand bag distribution sites are out of sand. This is FALSE.

FACT: Local emergency management in coastal areas is warning residents not to use beach sand for sandbagging. Residents should NOT be heading toward the beach. Also, sand at the beach is a vital barrier, acting as the first line of defense against the storm.

Updates will continue as reporting on preparations for Hurricane Florence and, eventually, storm impacts and response actions warrant.

Distribution: Please feel free to disseminate this message, and to use all or portions of its content, as you deem most appropriate to inform situational awareness throughout your respective railroads and industry organizations.

You may also share this information with colleagues in local and State law enforcement, State fusion centers, and Federal security and law enforcement agencies.

Association of American Railroads

Railway Alert Network

425 3rd Street, S.W.

Washington DC 20024

202-639-2910 Emergency

866-494-4353 "

202-639-2950 Non-Emergency

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