



American Citizen Services Unit
U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo
Warden Message



TO: Consular Wardens

FROM: ACS Unit

DATE: 05 September 2008

SUBJECT: Hurricane Ike Advisory

Following is a Warden Message being transmitted for your information. Please circulate this to your constituents.

This warden message is being issued to alert U.S. citizens residing and traveling in the Dominican Republic that the National Hurricane Center (NHC) www.nhc.noaa.gov is reporting that an advisory remains in effect for Hurricane Ike.

The National Hurricane Center reports that Ike is a dangerous category three hurricane. While the storm's current trajectory keeps the eye of the hurricane to the north of the Dominican Republic, hurricane force winds extend outward up to 35 miles (55 KM) from the center and tropical storm winds extend outward up to 105 miles (165 KM). U.S. citizens are advised to exercise caution regarding storm surge, high winds, and heavy rainfall and to continue monitoring local weather forecasts for further information.

The Dominican National Office of Meteorology (ONAMET) has issued an advisory warning of life-threatening mudslides and flash flooding due to already rain-soaked terrain and the massive amounts of rainfall expected. Persons living near rivers, canyons, and ravines should take extra precautions. ONAMET advises people located in the north and northeast areas of the Dominican Republic to exercise caution and pay attention to official bulletins regarding Hurricane Ike. It has also advised small and medium sized ships to remain in port.

The Embassy's regional security office has asked that U.S. Citizens residing in hotels or apartments along or near the waterfront and anyone living in a low-lying or flood prone area take additional precautions. Past hurricanes have produced storm surges in excess of four feet above the waterfront. Also, upper floors in high-rise buildings are at increased risk of windows being blown out, due to the fact that wind speed increases with height. Further suggestions include identifying a backup location where you might seek shelter in the event that your current residence becomes unsafe and identifying an alternative route to that backup location. Also, be sure to visit <http://travel.state.gov> for further tips on hurricane preparedness.

Travel within the Dominican Republic and throughout the Caribbean may be difficult for the next several days. Extreme caution should be taken when driving through areas of high water. There is also the possibility of road and bridge closures due to rising water and bridge washouts. Currently, all airports are open and operating normally, but flight and ferry operations could be affected depending on the track of the storm. U.S. citizens should confirm scheduled departures with ferry and airline offices.

The Department of State has also issued a Travel Warning for The Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands due to the threat posed by Tropical Storm Hanna and Hurricane Ike:
<http://intranet.ca.state.gov/ALDACS/8158210.html> This Travel Warning was issued to urge U.S. citizens to consider carefully the risks of travel to The Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands, which are expected to take the brunt of Tropical Storm Hanna and Hurricane Ike.

U.S. citizens should monitor local radio, the National Weather Service at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>, and local media to stay aware of any weather developments in their area. For official information from the Dominican Government regarding weather conditions, please visit the ONAMET website at <http://www.onamet.gov.do>. The Dominican Emergency Operations Center (COE) website can be found at www.coe.gov.do Minor tropical storms can develop into hurricanes very quickly, limiting the time available for a safe evacuation. Travelers should apprise family and friends in the United States of their whereabouts, and keep in close contact with their tour operator, hotel staff, and local officials for evacuation instructions in the event of a weather emergency. Travelers should also protect their travel and identity documents against loss or damage, as

the need to replace lost documentation could hamper or delay return to the United States.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the Department of State's travel registration website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. By registering, American citizens can receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during their trip. Registration also ensures that U.S. citizens can be reached should an emergency arise either abroad or at home. While Consular Officers will do their utmost to assist Americans in a crisis, travelers should always be aware that local authorities bear primary responsibility for the welfare of people living or traveling in their jurisdictions.

For emergencies involving American citizens, please contact the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit of the U.S. Embassy. The Consular Section of the Embassy is located at the corner of Cesar Nicolas Penson Street and Máximo Gómez Avenue, Santo Domingo, D.R.; telephone 809-731-4294; after hours emergency telephone 809-221-2171; ACS unit fax 809-689-6142; e-mail acssantodom@state.gov; website www.usemb.gov.do.

Additional information on hurricanes and storm preparedness may be found on the Hurricane Season 2008 page of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' website at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/hurricane_season/hurricane_season_3795.html or in the "Hurricane Season-Know Before You Go" pamphlet at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/hurricane_season/hurricane_season_2915.html. Updated information on travel in hurricane-prone regions may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada, or from overseas, 1-202-501-4444. Travelers to the region are encouraged to check the Internet site of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with consular responsibilities for the territory they will be visiting (accessible via <http://usembassy.state.gov/>). For further information please consult the Country Specific Information Sheet for the country or territory in question, available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>.