

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

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Department of Juvenile Justice Prepares for Hurricane Matthew Commissioner Niles Orders Storm Preparations as Governor Deal Declares State of Emergency

(STATEWIDE - GA) A team of state juvenile corrections professionals is busy making behind-the-scenes preparations at Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) secure facilities throughout Georgia following Governor Nathan Deal's declaration of a state of emergency due to the potential impact of Hurricane Matthew. DJJ Commissioner Avery D. Niles issued orders for his agency to prepare for the potential interruption of essential services in the event that the storm causes weather-related problems at departmental facilities.

Georgia governor Nathan Deal has ordered a mandatory evacuation east of Interstate 95 for six coastal counties (Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Glynn, Liberty and McIntosh counties). A voluntary evacuation order is in effect for coastal county residents west of I-95.

DJJ safety officers are making emergency weather preparations at short-term Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDCs) that may lie in the storm's path, including Savannah RYDC in Chatham County, Waycross RYDC in Ware County and Claxton RYDC in Evans County.

Commissioner Niles said, "We are following the lead of Governor Deal and taking precautionary measures. We are working to ensure the safety of our youth and staff in these secure juvenile facilities in case the storm strikes Georgia as predicted." Back-up power generators have been tested and fuel tanks were filled at DJJ secure facilities in anticipation of possible power outages.

DJJ operates an Office of Planning and Preparedness, created to maintain readiness for inclement weather events like this hurricane. With professional guidance from a career public safety expert, DJJ maintains constant contact with both the Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency and the National Weather Service to monitor ongoing emergency conditions.

DJJ's Planning and Preparedness Director has confirmed that our facilities in the affected areas are prepared to implement their contingency plans to ensure the security of our youth and staff.

As a general safety precaution due to weather-related driving hazards encountered by teaching staff, DJJ has cancelled its own daily education classes in coordination with public school systems in the affected counties. However, the Department makes every effort to ensure that appropriate staffing levels of essential POST-certified juvenile corrections officers maintain watch at DJJ secure facilities during all emergency events.

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