

5am Friday 8/24/12

Summary:

- At 5am EDT Friday, Tropical Storm Isaac was located about 230 miles southeast of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, or approximately 940 miles southeast of Miami, Florida.
- Hurricane Hunter aircraft found a more southern circulation position last night, but that center is moving a little north of due west at 15 mph. Another Hurricane Hunter plane is currently enroute to Isaac and will give a better position estimate and track later this morning. Nonetheless, a general west-northwest motion is expected later today, followed by a turn to the northwest tonight.
- High pressure responsible for steering Isaac is weakening and shifting east. Computer model track guidance is in good agreement and many of these, along with the official NHC forecast, take Tropical Storm Isaac on a northwest course across southern Haiti tonight and then across eastern and central Cuba on Saturday.
- Isaac is then forecast to emerge into the Florida Straits early Sunday morning and move over or near the Lower Florida Keys late Sunday night. Isaac should continue a northwest motion into the eastern Gulf of Mexico before making a turn more towards the north on Wednesday, eventually making landfall somewhere between the Florida Panhandle and southeastern Louisiana.
- Maximum sustained winds are near 45 mph. Although Isaac remains poorly organized, there is still time for Isaac to strengthen a little today before starting to get disrupted by land.
- Any land interaction with Haiti tonight and Cuba tomorrow will likely weaken the storm, and there is a 30% chance that Isaac could weaken to a depression. However, if Isaac remains intact, warm water in the Florida Straits will allow for some re-strengthening once it emerges from Cuba.
- There is a 25% chance that Isaac could become a hurricane before reaching the U.S. Gulf Coast and a 40% chance it stays a tropical storm.
- Isaac remains a large storm, with tropical storm force winds extending as far as 185 miles from the center.
- Several Hurricane Hunter reconnaissance missions will be deployed again today that will help further increase confidence in the long-range track and intensity. It is important to note that computer model guidance, especially beyond 72 hours, can still be unreliable.
- Tropical Storm Joyce weakened to a tropical depression Thursday night.
- At 5am Friday, Tropical Depression Joyce was located 1110 miles east of the Leeward Islands.
- Maximum sustained winds remain near 35mph. Little change in strength is expected as Joyce remains in a hostile environment of dry air and wind shear. However, if current trends continue, Joyce could become a post-tropical remnant low today or tomorrow.
- T.D. Joyce is moving northwest at 14mph and this motion with an increase in forward speeds is expected to continue through Sunday before turning more to the north on a track towards Bermuda.
- A tropical wave in the far eastern Atlantic, designated as invest area 97L, is producing a large area of showers and thunderstorms. Additional development is possible over the next few days as it moves west or west-northwest at 15mph, and the National Hurricane Center is now forecasting a medium (30%) chance of becoming a tropical cyclone within the next 2 days.
- Initial computer models take 97L westward through the central Atlantic through the next 5 days and have it intensifying into a tropical storm in 2-3 days. The next name on the 2012 storm list is Kirk.

Florida outlook:

- Tropical Storm Watches could be issued as early as this afternoon or tonight for portions of southern Florida. The Florida Panhandle and much of West Central and South Florida remains within the 5 day error

cone. Remember that the cone does not necessarily forecast impacts. Everyone in and near the error cone should continue to closely monitor this system and continue to review their preparedness plans.

- There is now a 40% chance that the middle and lower Keys could receive tropical storm force winds within the next 5 days. Other areas of South and Southwest Florida have a 20-40% chance. Tampa currently has a 30% chance of receiving tropical storm force winds, Tallahassee has a 24% chance and Pensacola has a 28% chance. All of Florida still has less than a 5% chance of seeing hurricane force winds within 5 days.
- It is too early to forecast the extent of any affects Tropical Storm Isaac will have on Florida. However, the large nature of Isaac could bring areas of heavy rainfall to South Florida and West Central Florida, and then eventually Northwest Florida which could lead to flooding issues. Flood Warnings are in effect for 6 Florida rivers. Storms in the eastern Gulf are also prone to producing tornadoes and large waves.

More information on Tropical Storm Isaac, T.D. Joyce, and 97L can be found at www.nhc.noaa.gov. Briefing slides are attached. Another update will be issued Friday afternoon.