

South Carolina governor calls deadly rain a 'thousand-year' event

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South Carolina Gov. Haley: Rain is '1,000-year level'



Governor Haley: 'This is dangerous, this is very real'

Flash flood emergencies spread in South Carolina

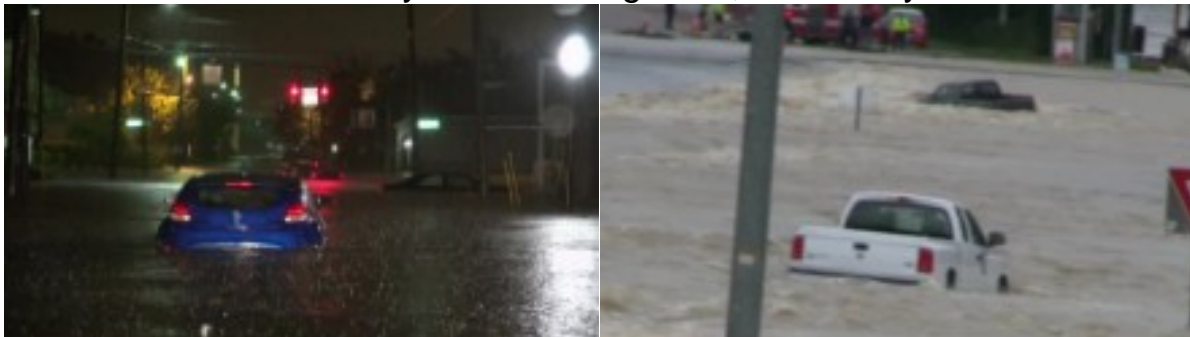
What does a '1-in-1,000-year event' mean?

President Obama declares emergency in South Carolina

East Coast soaked by expansive, crawling storm

At least 6 dead after flash flooding hits town

Governor Haley: 'This is dangerous, this is very real'



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- All highways closed in the capital, Columbia, which had wettest day on record Sunday
 - 5 deaths in S. Carolina blamed on weather

Charleston, South Carolina South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley didn't mince any words Sunday about just how dangerous a situation the weather -- which was blamed for five deaths in the state by Sunday night -- had become in her state.

"We are at a 1,000-year level of rain," Haley said at an afternoon news conference. "That's how big this is."

Since weather records don't go back far enough to know if it's rained this much in South Carolina in a 1,000 years, a "thousand-year rainfall" means that the amount of rainfall in South Carolina has a 1-in-1,000 chance of happening in any given year, explained CNN meteorologist Taylor Ward.

Certain areas of South Carolina had never before been deluged with such eye-popping rainfall tallies: more than 24 inches in Mount Pleasant, nearly 20 inches in areas around Charleston and more than 18 inches in the Gills Creek area of Columbia, according to Ward.

Steven Pfaff of the National Weather Service said the "phenomenal amount of rainfall" was "a very dangerous situation."

Haley: keep off the roads

But the torrential rain was more than just dangerous. It was deadly.

The weather is being blamed for five deaths along South Carolina roadways, according to Derrec Becker of the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

Three of those deaths were reported by the South Carolina Highway Patrol, and two by the Richland County Sheriff's Department, according to Becker.

"Regardless of where you are in the state, stay home," implored the governor. "Stay off the roadways."

Becker said that 315 vehicle collisions occurred in one 12-hour period on Sunday, and Haley said that more than 750 motorists called for assistance during that same stretch.

Perhaps that is why Haley went beyond simply urging South Carolinians to stay off the roads in some areas. In Columbia, for example -- a city that had the rainiest day in its history Sunday according to the National Weather Service -- Haley made sure of it by closing all interstates in and around the capital city.

National Guard deployed

Haley announced Sunday that in addition to the eight swift water rescue teams and 11 aircraft, 600 National Guardsmen had been deployed to assist in rescues and evacuations, and that hundreds more were on standby.

The day before, President Barack Obama signed a statewide emergency declaration retroactive to Thursday, authorizing federal aid in anticipation of more rain.

Haley also said several fellow states; including North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida had lent resources as well.

The weather service forecast "catastrophic flash flooding" overnight into Monday in Berkeley County in South Carolina, where more than 18 inches of rain had fallen in 24 hours, according to the CNN Weather Center.

Northeast on deck

The wet misery isn't just limited to South Carolina; as of Sunday evening, Carolinas, New Jersey and Virginia were under states of emergency, and the weather service has issued flood watches stretching from Georgia to Delaware.

But Hurricane Joaquin, downgraded to Category 3 strength earlier in the day Sunday and only expected to continue to weaken, isn't necessarily the culprit -- it's coming from two sources.

The low pressure area associated with the rain soaking the Carolinas is funneling heavy tropical moisture into the region, creating the torrential rainfall, the CNN Weather Center said.



While Hurricane Joaquin is predicted to miss the U.S., water connected to the storm is feeding torrential rain on the East Coast.

The moisture the storm is pulling in is also associated with Hurricane Joaquin, but the two systems shouldn't be confused.

Joaquin inched northward in the Atlantic on Sunday, but luckily away from U.S. shores. However, the storm is expected to push in a storm surge in the Northeast as it passes, resulting in a one-two water punch.







NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WILMINGTON NC

135 PM EDT SUN OCT 04 2015

THE FOLLOWING ARE UNOFFICIAL OBSERVATIONS OF TOTAL RAINFALL
BETWEEN
12 AM ON FRIDAY OCTOBER 2ND AND 8 AM ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 4TH. THIS
SUMMARY IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON OUR HOME PAGE AT WEATHER.GOV/ILM

*****STORM TOTAL RAINFALL*****

LOCATION	STORM TOTAL RAINFALL /INCHES/	TIME/DATE OF MEASUREMENT	COMMENTS
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NORTH CAROLINA

...BRUNSWICK COUNTY...

CALABASH 1 NNW	16.13	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS
LONGWOOD 1 NNW	13.63	800 AM 10/04	CO-OP OBSERVER
SUNSET BEACH 2 WNW	12.64	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS
SUNSET BEACH 3 NNE	11.03	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS
LELAND 2 SW	10.95	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS
SUPPLY NATURE CONSER	7.72	800 AM 10/04	RAWS
LELAND 6 WSW	6.98	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS
SOUTHPORT 6 W	5.98	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS
SOUTHPORT 1 NE	5.88	800 AM 10/04	COCORAHS