



## **TS PAULETTE PRESS BRIEFING**

**The Hon. Renee Ming, JP, MP**  
*Minister of National Security*

**September 12, 2020**

Good afternoon all:

Our last weather update indicates that Paulette is a strong tropical storm with maximum sustained winds of 60 knots and higher gusts, located at 3PM about 440 nautical miles to the east southeast of Bermuda.

Paulette is expected to reach hurricane strength tonight, and continue its movement towards Bermuda.

Currently, predictions have Paulette's centre moving through the local area on Monday morning. If the forecast holds true, we can anticipate a direct hit by a Category 2 hurricane at that time. Accordingly, Bermuda is now under a Hurricane Warning.

The public will need to prepare for a long duration of tropical storm force winds beginning late Sunday afternoon and then ramping up to hurricane strength by the early hours of Monday morning.

The hurricane conditions should last up to 9 hours.

The worst conditions are anticipated for the timing of the closest point of approach, which is forecast to be less than 25 miles from the island at 8AM on Monday morning.

A significant surge of potentially greater than 3 feet above normal sea level is likely to have an impact, given that the increase of hurricane winds will be coincident with the rising tide on Monday morning.

This is also because we already have sea levels that are up to about a half a foot / 15 cm higher than normal, due to localized oceanographic conditions.

As those who have experienced hurricanes before can attest, a small change in the track forecast can make a big difference for the expected conditions.

So, BWS will continue to monitor this forecast closely and update the public with increasing frequency until the storm passes.

Now that we are under a Hurricane Warning, official updates from the US National Hurricane Center and the Bermuda Weather Service will be made at least every three (3) hours.

A US Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter Aircraft has been tasked to conduct reconnaissance on this storm tonight and BWS will continue feeding data to NHC throughout the storm's passage.

Following today's EMO Meeting, here are some critical decisions which we wish to advise the public of.

**As it relates to Government services, please note the following:**

Schools will be closed Monday and Tuesday. The Ministry of Education will be sharing updates with parents and teachers regarding any updates.

As a note, on Tuesday all schools will be assessed for any damage or major utility outages and following that assessment a determination will be made regarding the reopening of schools.

The L.F. Wade International Airport will close tomorrow, Sunday evening at 6.00 p.m. and reopen on Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup> at 12noon.

The Causeway will close tomorrow, Sunday at 9.00 p.m. and following an assessment once the storm has passed, a determination will be made regarding its reopening.

For those in the East End, the Lamb Foggo Clinic will be operational if persons require medical assistance.

All Government buildings will be closed on Monday and Tuesday.

However, where possible, Public Officers should continue working remotely on Tuesday, utilizing the remote working facilities put in place in response to the pandemic, circumstances permitting, of course.

Buses will cease operation at 7.00 p.m. Sunday evening.

Regarding the Ferry Service:

- The blue route Hamilton to Dockyard will be suspended from 10am Sunday
- The pink route Hamilton harbor ferry will be suspended from 12 noon Sunday.
- It is anticipated that ferry service will return on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> subject to a full assessment.

The Government Shelter at CedarBridge will be open as 3.00 p.m. tomorrow.

Any individuals who require the shelter can make their way there as of 3pm on Sunday.

Also, regarding trash, the Tynes Bay Public drop will close at 5.00 p.m. Sunday evening. For those whose trash day is Monday – **PLEASE** do not put your trash out for collection on Monday or Tuesday.

If you need to drop your trash you can do so until 5.00 p.m. tomorrow at Tynes Bay.

As a note, our EMO Operations Group will be located at the Hamilton Fire Station and anyone who needs to report any storm related damages can call 261-4366 or (261-4EMO).

The Police, Regiment, Fire Service, Parks Department and Works & Engineering have mobilized their services and equipment to aid in emergency situations.

The Emergency Broadcast Station - 100.1fm will be operational as of 7.00 p.m. tomorrow, Sunday. It will be sharing key information and updates on the half hour.

Regarding the COVID – 19 testing:

- Southside will be open on Sunday as per normal.
- There will be no testing at Perot on Monday.
- An assessment will be completed Monday to determine when or if it will open on Tuesday.
- An assessment will be completed on Monday to determine when or if Southside will be open Tuesday.
- The Call Centre will close on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September at 3:00pm and be closed on Monday. An announcement will follow if it will reopen on Tuesday.
- Those travelers due for testing that will be affected by the closures should not make their own appointments. Appointments will be rescheduled and sent to the travelers by the Ministry of Health after the assessments completed on Monday.

Lastly, regarding Advanced Polling, there will be no Advanced Polls on Monday or Tuesday. Following an assessment of the polling stations, the Parliamentary Registry Office will update when the resumption of Advance Polling will be.

Bermuda, our weather experts indicate that this will be a sustained storm with serious winds, so we are asking people to ensure that their preparations are completed **by tonight.**

**And for public safety reasons we are urging people to be off the roads by 7.00 pm. Sunday evening.**

For those individuals who are in low lying coastal areas please note that we are expecting considerable storm surge associated with this storm, so we are urging you to take the necessary safety precautions to protect you and your homes.

To all of our residents, please remember as I have said – we are in the midst of a pandemic. Please remember to exercise caution and common sense. Please remember to engage in the right health and safety activities during this storm.

The EMO will meet again tomorrow and soon after its conclusion, we will provide another public update.

Thank you.