



Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Panama City (Panama), Hurricane Otto

Hurricanes

Western Hemisphere > Panama; Western Hemisphere > Panama > Panama City

11/22/2016

U.S. Embassy Panama City alerts U.S. citizens in Panama that the National Hurricane Center has upgraded tropical storm Otto to a hurricane. Heavy rainfall is expected in portions of central and western Panama, accumulating between 4 to 8 inches over the next few days. These rains could result in life-threatening flash floods and mud slides. Swells generated by Otto are likely to cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions over the next several days along the Panamanian coast. The Panamanian National System of Civil Protection (SINAPROC) has planted red flags on beaches in the Caribbean to warn the public of strong currents and waves. Panama has declared a red alert for its Caribbean coast and a yellow alert for the entire country. On November 21, SINAPROC evacuated members of the Guanabano community in Chiriqui and transferred them to a shelter in El Majagual. All operations at Marco A. Gelabert and Panama Pacifico airports have been cancelled for November 22. The Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) has cancelled classes for all public and private schools for November 22 and November 23. Please visit the National Hurricane Center's website for updates and to follow the storm's path. You can also find Panama-specific information on the SINAPROC Twitter.

U.S. citizens may be affected by the storm and are advised to monitor local media for updates or possible changes to the severe weather conditions and to follow any instructions/warnings issued by the Panamanian government. Preparations to protect life and property in any storm or weather-related event should be considered. U.S. citizens should carry their travel documents (i.e. U.S. passport book) with them at all times or secure them by placing them in a secure, waterproof location. If you must travel during this time, please take reasonable precautions such as avoiding swiftly moving water. Drivers should remain vigilant for possible landslides.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Panama enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) on the State Department's website. STEP enrollment subscribes you to receive emails with the latest security updates,

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and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy.

Regularly monitor the State Department's website, where you can find current Travel Warnings, (including the Travel Warning for Panama), Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution. Read the Country Specific Information for the Panama. For additional information, refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad" on the State Department's website.

Contact the U.S. embassy for up-to-date information on travel restrictions. You can also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to have travel information at your fingertips. For all emergencies involving U.S. citizens, contact the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit of the U.S. Embassy's Consular Section, located at Building 783, Demetrio Basilio Lakas Avenue, Clayton, Panama. To speak to an ACS representative please call 011-507-317-5000 (317-5000 in Panama) on the following schedule: Monday-Thursday: 3:00 PM- 4:30 PM. Fax: 011-507-317-5303 (317-5303 in Panama)

In the event of an after-hours emergency involving an American citizen, you can reach a Duty Officer (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) by calling 011-507-317-5000 (317-5000 in Panama).

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