



# News Release

**US Army Corps  
of Engineers** ®  
Norfolk District

**U. S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tropical Storm Ernesto

## Local Army Corps district takes action... is ready

**NORFOLK, VA** – In anticipation of Tropical Storm Ernesto striking the Hampton Roads and Commonwealth of Virginia, the Norfolk District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has taken several steps to respond to potential flooding and the need for emergency support in the region.

### **Operations and Navigation**

- In anticipation of heavy rain and potential flooding conditions, the district has opened wicket gates at Lake Drummond within the Dismal Swamp. The lake drains into an adjacent “feeder” ditch and subsequently into the Dismal Swamp Canal in Chesapeake. The lake’s water levels are being lowered to 4 ft, 6 inches, from its current level of 5 ft., 3 inches. This will better enable the lake to accept larger quantities of rainwater, lessening the chances of flooding. Spillways along the canal will further enable this water from Lake Drummond to be distributed into area tributaries.
- The Norfolk District Survey and Navigation team remains on-call throughout the weekend to respond to navigation and debris removal requirements.
- In an effort to better enable the Jackson River to handle higher levels of rainwater runoff, the District has reduced the outflow of water into the Jackson River from Lake Moomaw through the Gathright Dam located in Allegheny County. Currently, the lake is six feet below the normal lake level, providing more flood control capacity than normal. The release from the dam is being reduced to its minimum level of 150 cfs (cubic feet per second) from the normal 270 cfs for this time of year.

### **Emergency Operations/Assistance**

The Norfolk District has:

- Deployed its Corps Liaison Officer to the Richmond Emergency Operations Center to provide technical advice and support in the area of flood control and reduction.
- Activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Waterfield Headquarters building in Norfolk; 12-hour shifts, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. It will remain open through the weekend storm period.
- Coordinated with city/county officials and liaison officers on Corps flood reduction projects in the communities of Norfolk, Richmond, Buena Vista, Virginia Beach, Scottsville, Franklin and Chesapeake.

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## **Army Corps prepares for Ernesto**

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- Coordinated with Army installations throughout the Commonwealth in the event structural damage assessment teams are required.

Norfolk District will continue to assess and execute its emergency support mission in the Commonwealth of Virginia throughout the duration of Tropical Storm Ernesto.