

# #ILMSTRONG

Hurricane Florence | City of Wilmington Storm Response

## Hurricane Florence

Hurricane Florence hit landfall on Sept. 14, 2018 and went on to become a historic storm that is still impacting our community today. While unfortunately the storm resulted in loss of life, wind strength did dissipate before hitting landfall so the number of fatalities and damage to properties was not even greater.

Here is a look back at how City of Wilmington staff responded before, during and after the storm in service to our community. While city staff were hard at work, many volunteers reached out to help fellow community members and continue to do so today.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**768**

**City staff members responded during or after the storm**

**4,748**

**Calls for service responded to by Wilmington Police Department Sept. 11-18**

**541**

**Calls for service responded to by Wilmington Fire Department Sept. 11-18**

**30**

**City buildings/structures damaged**

**2,500**

**Traffic signals damaged**

Hundreds of city staff worked shifts of at least 12 hours and slept at city emergency command centers or other city facilities for multiple days.

# HURRICANE FLO



## A look at the weather during the worst of the storm, September 13-17

- Almost 27 inches of rain fell at one weather station in Wilmington, most others had more than 24 inches – all in four days.
- The peak storm surge downtown from the Cape Fear River was 8.28 feet. This exceeds the record set two years earlier during Hurricane Matthew.
- For several days, all roads into/out of New Hanover County were closed due to flooding, including I-40 and US Hwys 17, 74, 76 and 421.
- Almost 90% of residents in New Hanover County – more than 105,000 customers – were without power
- The highest wind gust was 105 mph with sustained winds of 90 mph.

*Stats from National Weather Service and NC Climate Office*



According to the National Weather Service, wind damage to the community from Hurricane Florence was worse than that from hurricanes Diana (1984), Fran (1996), or Floyd (1999).

# RENCE TIMELINE

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

27



Storm debris removal complete (estimated)

## Neighbors and volunteers

New Hanover County served as the lead emergency response agency during Hurricane Florence and the City of Wilmington worked closely with NHC personnel throughout the storm. The city would like to thank all other law enforcement agencies, volunteers, neighbors, non-profit groups and businesses that helped our community during this historic event.

Wilmington City Manager Sterling Cheatham briefs Mayor Bill Saffo in the Emergency Operations Center.



The city collected more debris in the first 8 days after Florence than the total amount collected for Hurricane Matthew and expect this storm to result in the most debris ever collected, at least in recent history.

## Storm debris

- Vegetative debris collected – 1.2 million cubic yards
- Construction and demolition debris collected – 27,500 cubic yards
- Dangerous/leaning trees removed out of public rights of way – 667
- Dangerous hanging trees limbs removed – 14,358

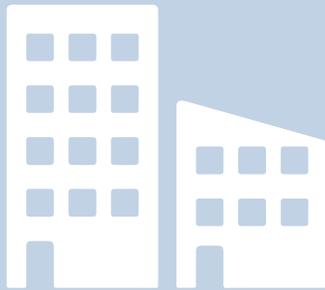
**Note:** Totals preliminary as of Dec. 1. Final totals expected by early 2019.

## COST ESTIMATES:



**\$22**  
million

**City Debris**  
(as of December 1)



**City Buildings**  
**\$2.3 million**

**NOTE:** The city expects to be reimbursed for about 75 percent of its costs from the federal government and may also receive some state funding. The city maintains a strong savings account for these types of emergencies.

Initial total damages  
for all of New Hanover County:  
Almost **\$450 million...**

...including about  
**\$263 million**  
inside the city limits

(preliminary  
estimates,  
likely to be  
much higher  
when  
finalized)