

# Harvey nears Florida

## Tropical storm builds strength off West Coast

CLEARWATER BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Tropical Storm Harvey strengthened yesterday as it headed for Florida's west coast, threatening to swamp low-lying areas as beachfront hotels and restaurants packed away furniture.

The strengthening storm is expected to bring high winds and flooding to Florida's west coast as it hits land today. But many residents and visitors were strolling and playing on the beach, unconcerned about forecasts that the winds could approach hurricane strength.

"This one isn't really half so bad, is it?" asked David Ray, whose vacation from England included a stay in Orlando last week during Hurricane Floyd.

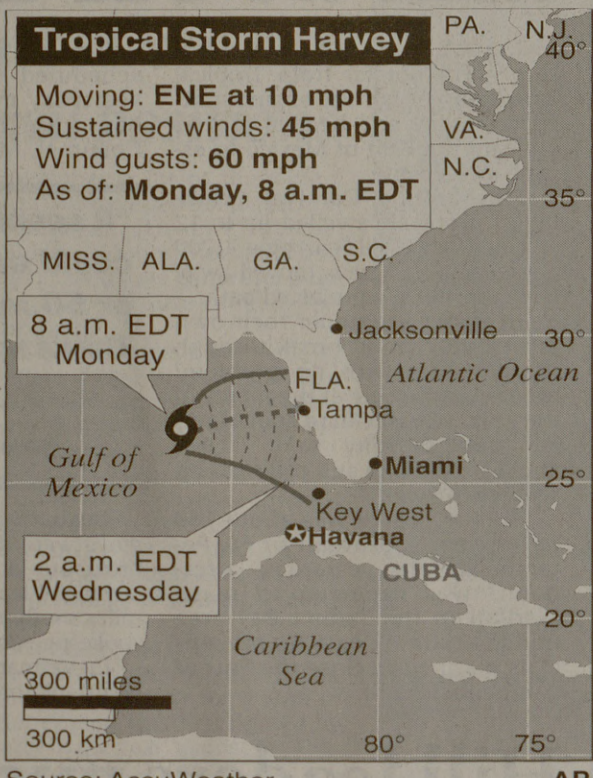
That storm grazed the state's east coast as it swept from the Bahamas to New England — causing dozens of deaths and massive damage.

At 5 p.m. EDT, Harvey was centered about 180 miles west-southwest of St. Petersburg. It moved erratically yesterday afternoon but was expected to head east-northeast at about 6 mph.

Maximum sustained winds increased to near 60 mph, with higher gusts. Tropical storm force winds of at least 39 mph extended as much as 175 miles.

Forecasters expected Harvey would spin across the Florida peninsula and stay offshore as it heads north along the U.S. East Coast, sparing places like North Carolina.

In Florida, a flood watch was posted for much of central, southwest and northeast Florida through Tuesday, including areas soaked last week by Hurricane Floyd.



# Floyd aftermath raises health issues

TARBORO, N.C. (AP) — Rotting livestock carcasses and floating sewage created a mounting public health threat yesterday across eastern North Carolina, still flooded days after Hurricane Floyd forced tens of thousands of people from their homes.

At least 35 people were confirmed dead in North Carolina. The death toll was expected to climb, but of greatest concern was the health of those who survived.

"There are a large number of different risks out there right now," Johanna Reese of the state Division of Environmental Health said. "The most immediate one we have is lack of safe drinking water."

More than 60 people were killed from the Bahamas into New England when Floyd churned up the East Coast of the United States. But the aftermath appears the worst in North Carolina.

Disease has become a growing threat because of the hundreds of thousands of dead hogs, chickens and turkeys laying about the state. Drinking water has been tainted by overflow from sewage plants and animal waste lagoons. Floodwaters are fouled by fuel, farm chemicals and manure.

Contaminated water could cause a host of gastrointestinal illnesses, and dehydration from severe vomiting or diarrhea could be fatal in children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems, Reese said.

National Guard helicopters and trucks delivered clean drinking water to several counties, while crews in Jones County brought in two industrial-size incinerators so workers could begin burning hog carcasses, the stench of which has filled the air.

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