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Hurricane Erin Batters North Carolina's Outer Banks

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Hurricane Erin, a Category 2 storm with winds reaching 105 mph, moved slowly away from the North Carolina coast Thursday morning after striking the Outer Banks with strong winds, high waves, storm surge, and flooding.

While the hurricane is not expected to make additional landfall, officials warned that dangerous conditions continue along the East Coast. Coastal communities are facing life-threatening rip currents, flooding, and hazardous surf, with impacts expected to persist into Friday.

North Carolina Governor Josh Stein declared a state of emergency on Wednesday, mobilizing resources and personnel to assist affected communities. Mandatory evacuation orders were issued for Ocracoke and Hatteras islands, prompting more than 2,000 residents to leave their homes.

Highway 12 on Hatteras Island was closed on Wednesday evening due to severe flooding, and sections remain submerged on Thursday morning. Videos and photos from earlier in the week show large waves crashing into homes along the Outer Banks.

The National Weather Service (NWS) warned that coastal North Carolina could see water levels two to four feet above ground in some areas, causing roads to become impassable and vehicles to be submerged. Officials advised residents to move cars to higher ground.

NWS offices in Newport and Morehead City noted that the storm's impacts would peak on Thursday, particularly during high tide cycles. However, significant effects could linger into Friday due to residual swells and elevated water levels.

Tropical storm conditions are also expected along portions of the Virginia coastline, and parts of Bermuda could experience tropical storm conditions on Thursday. Wind gusts reaching tropical storm force may occur along the mid-Atlantic and southern New England coasts through early Friday.

Hazardous beach conditions have been forecast along the East Coast, prompting authorities in several states, including New York City, to close beaches to swimming. Coastal flood alerts remain in effect for low-lying areas in Delaware, New Jersey, and other states.

Residents are urged to exercise caution and follow guidance from local authorities, as Erin continues to produce dangerous surf, flooding, and strong rip currents. Emergency services remain on high alert to respond to any incidents resulting from the storm.