

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, August 14, 2004
2 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Charley to bring rain, winds by Saturday afternoon

Campers advised to take precautions

As Charley heads toward Delaware, decreasing winds indicate that the storm will be downgraded to Tropical Storm status before it arrives in The First State. However, sustained winds are forecast to be in the 30 to 35 mph range in the state, slightly higher than earlier forecasts. There is a potential for gusts of 50 to 55 mph in the coastal areas and 30 to 35 inland.

According to the National Weather Service, the state is still expected to get two to four inches of rain throughout, with the possibility of up to six inches where rain bands can bring up to two inches an hour. Rain and winds associated with Charley are forecast to begin in Delaware mid- to late-afternoon and move out of the state by early morning hours of Sunday, August 15.

There is potential for some stream and creek flooding as well as heavy ponding in low-lying areas. Some northern Delaware streams are very near their flood level at this time; Charley rains might raise the streams out of their beds. There is also a potential for slight tidal flooding with winds and rains from Charley. Tides are not expected to be more than one to two feet above normal, with the possibility of tides reaching three feet above normal in some isolated areas.

Delaware Emergency Management Agency and other relevant state agencies continue to monitor the storm and maintain communications with the NWS. Emergency officials recommend that residents and businesses stay informed of weather conditions and take appropriate precautions.

With slightly higher wind speeds now forecast, those with outdoor furniture, decorative items or other loose yard items are advised to secure them or put them under shelter. Unsecured items outdoors can be damaged or cause damage or injuries if blown into houses or vehicles.

Those camping in tents or small camping units are advised to consult staff and managers of campgrounds regarding recommended safety measures. In all camping locations, campers should take care in securing canvas, canopies and awnings. Those in tents and smaller units are encouraged to consider sitting out the storm in an area more secure than an open campground.

State officials remind campers that storm winds can bring down weakened limbs or even trees. Campers should also be aware of their campsite position in relation to slopes and other drainage paths. Care should also be taken that campground equipment, such as picnic tables and fire grills, are adequately secured.

According to the NWS, predicted weather conditions also spawn tornadoes. The public is advised to monitor local weather reports and be prepared to shelter in the central and lowest area of their home, or any structure they are occupying, should funnel clouds be spotted. Those in mobile homes are advised to seek shelter elsewhere if funnel clouds are sighted in their areas.

Because of recent heavy rains in many areas throughout Delaware, waterlogged soil and storm winds might result in some downed trees; appropriate caution is advised. Should downed trees pull down utility lines, individuals should not attempt to move them. The appropriate utility or municipal maintenance crews should be notified.

With the potential for power outages and roads closed by flooding, emergency officials remind people be prepared to enact their home or business emergency plan. They are advised to have a supply of water, batteries, nonperishable foods for people and companion animals, portable radios and emergency cash. Should travel be necessary in periods of heavy rain or following rains, drivers are cautioned to avoid driving through flooded roadways. Also, children should not be allowed to play or walk in areas of flooding.

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