

## Irene Draws a Bead on NC Coast

Written by Steve Frank  
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Hurricane Irene is visible on North Carolina radar, churning off the coast. Winds dropped to 110 miles per hour overnight from 115, but more strengthening is expected today as the storm approached the North Carolina coast. As of 5:00 am the storm is still moving north at 13 mph and is expected to continue moving that direction throughout the day. The storm is forecast to make landfall as a category 3 storm on the North Carolina Coastline between Onslow County and Cape Hatteras. The most likely landfall will be along the crystal coast. Irene's track moved slightly to the west Thursday to the point the National Hurricane Center was prompted to issue a hurricane warning for the more southeastern North Carolina coast.

Hurricane Irene is a large storm. Hurricane force winds extend up to 90 miles out from the center of the storm. The latest official forecast track has the storm increasing to 120 mph wind speeds by early Saturday morning. The National Hurricane Center says the storm surge could raise water levels up to 11 feet above ground level on the North Carolina coast, including the Albermarle and Pamlico Sounds. On its current path the mid Atlantic and northeast US could be facing their worst hurricane in 50-60 years.

As individuals in the Southeast begin to prepare for the possible impact of Hurricane Irene, the American Red Cross is urging immediate blood donations prior to the storm's arrival. "It's the blood that is already on the shelves that helps save lives before, during and after a disaster," according to Joyce Brendel, chief executive officer of the American Red Cross Carolinas Blood Services Region. She said "If people will donate blood immediately, before the storm, then blood will be available in the aftermath should conditions prohibit people from traveling or coming to blood drives."

Friday, August 26

Linville Land Harbor Blood Drive held at Linville Land Harbor Recreational Complex  
(Hwy 221 South, Linville, NC)

12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Please call 828-733-8316 for further information or to schedule your appointment. And one sponsored by Avery EMS at 456 A Street; Newland, NC from 2:00 pm – 6:30 pm Please call 828-733-8286 for further information or to schedule your appointment.