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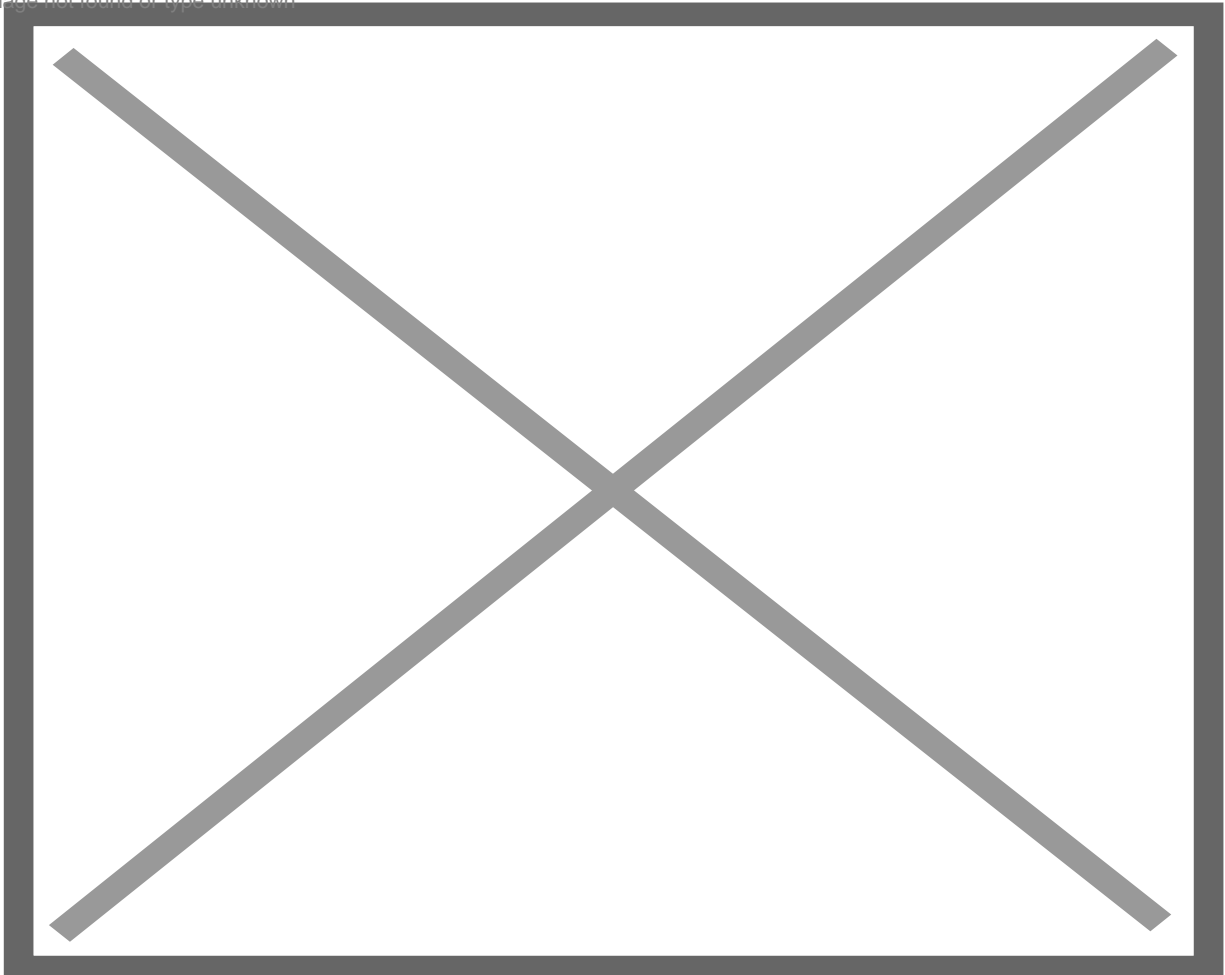
Flood Watch Issued for USVI and Puerto Rico as Wet Pattern Raises Flooding and Marine Risks

A Flood Watch is in effect from 10 a.m. Monday through 8 a.m. Wednesday as forecasters warn of widespread showers, thunderstorms, possible flash flooding, rough seas and life-threatening rip currents in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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A wetter and more unstable weather pattern is expected to affect Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands beginning late Monday and continuing into Tuesday, with the National Weather Service warning that the greatest impacts are expected from Monday afternoon into early Wednesday morning.

According to a Decision Support Briefing issued at 9 a.m. AST Sunday by the National Weather Service in San Juan, the approaching system is expected to bring more widespread showers and thunderstorms, increased flooding risk across the region, and continued hazardous marine and coastal conditions. A Flood Watch is in effect from 10 a.m. Monday through 8 a.m. Wednesday.

The agency said residents should review plans and be ready to act if warnings are issued.

According to the briefing, the weather risk will increase across eastern, northern, and interior Puerto Rico, including Vieques and Culebra, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands. Expected impacts include urban and small stream flooding, isolated flash flooding, rapid river rises, and landslides.

The National Weather Service said saturated soils will enhance runoff, and forecast rainfall totals are expected to range from 1 to 3 inches per day, with higher amounts possible. Forecasters said confidence is increasing, although the exact placement of the heaviest rainfall remains uncertain.

Flood risk is expected to increase late Monday and peak from Monday afternoon into Tuesday.

Marine and coastal conditions are also expected to remain dangerous. The briefing said hazardous conditions will continue because of lingering northerly swell and strengthening winds, producing choppy to rough seas.

A High Rip Current Risk remains in effect through Monday afternoon and may be extended, according to the National Weather Service. Small Craft Advisories are likely beginning Monday night, while life-threatening rip currents will continue along exposed beaches.

The next briefing is scheduled for 9 a.m. AST Monday. The National Weather Service noted that the forecast may change between model guidance runs and will be adjusted as needed.