



Hurricane Helene Update

As of 5 p.m. Oct. 5, 2024

Overview

- We have about 2,050 DOT employees responding to this storm:
 - 1,475 from the affected divisions (11-14)
 - 375 from our Central Units
 - 200 transfers from all other divisions
- We have more than 1,100 pieces of heavy equipment in the affected areas (dump trucks, backhoes, loaders, graders, etc.)
- Multiple states have offered assistance and materials, including Kentucky, Florida, Arkansas and Virginia. We have over 50 personnel on the ground from these other states.
- Communications is steadily improving in the affected areas, which is helping with our efforts. As a result, we're getting a clearer picture of the number of roads and bridges that are truly impacted.
- As of 6 a.m. Saturday, we've identified over 3,200 damage sites.
- We're currently reporting about 650 road closures – 109 to primary routes.
- About 300 bridges identified for further investigation. We've already determined about 1/3 will require replacement. That number is likely to go up.
- Most of the closures are areas where the roadway is impassable due to flooding, land/rockslides, downed

power lines, pipe failures and fallen trees.

- Access to or within the area should be limited to essential travel. Any other traffic in this area is hindering relief efforts.
- We have a detour map on our website (ncdot.gov/helene-detours) to show motorists how to get around closures on I-40 and I-26 at the Tennessee border.

Latest News

- We continue to make steady progress reopening roads in response to this storm. We have now reopened more than 130 roads. [Click here](#) to view photos of our crews working in the field.
- We expect to have N.C. 93 and N.C. 18 open today in Alleghany County.
- We continue working with Duke Energy to reopen roads leading to their substations to restore power.
- NCDOT, TDOT, and FHWA staff are collaborating on a long-term plan for reconstruction of I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge. Our staff is preparing to let a contract to stabilize the westbound lanes of I-40 where the eastbound lanes no longer exist. We're working to expedite these repairs to restore mobility to that area as soon as possible.
- Cut and shove operations continue in areas of Haywood, Henderson, and Polk counties.

- We will be working to stabilize N.C. 88 in Ashe County to ensure access to Tennessee as U.S. 421 will be closed for an extended period.
- Several routes in Western N.C., including N.C. 208 in Madison County, are closed to prevent trucks from getting stuck on roads not equipped to handle those large vehicles.
- We have seen several instances where trucks have gotten stuck – and in at least one instance a truck carrying cars overturned (U.S. 441) – because they can't maneuver around on these smaller roads.
- As a result, NCDOT and others are forced to redirect resources to help these trucks when those resources could be used for storm response.
- To help the response effort and keep the public safe, we started issuing alerts on [DriveNC.gov](https://www.driveNC.gov), and we are also reinforcing this message using tools such as digital overhead signage, messages sent directly to truckers, barriers in front of closed roads, and cellular alert messages for travelers in the region.

DMV + Modes

- On Friday, 16 driver license offices and 11 license plate agencies were closed in Western N.C. DMV plans to reopen 9 driver license offices on Monday and 2 more on Wednesday. The Asheville driver license office will remain closed until water service can be restored.
- Air traffic has increased 300% in Western N.C. since Helene recovery started. Aviation is working with its

partners to ensure flight operations are safe coming into and out of airports.

- The Division of Aviation implemented several critical safety strategies Saturday and we [issued a press release](#) to alert the public.
- NCDOT has provided support to public transportation agencies and helped coordinate relief efforts for many agencies near or in storm-impacted areas. As of Friday, 472 evacuation trips have transported 2,003 people. There have been 523 trips provided to shelters that have transported 2,076 people. IMD staff is reaching out daily to assess impacts, service capabilities and agency needs in impacted areas.

Social Media Outreach

As of Saturday afternoon, more than 170 posts were sent across 6 platforms and 19 accounts, with over 20M impressions and 2.3M engagements.



Crews like this one in Bat Cave, NC are working around the clock conducting in-depth assessments of infrastructural damages to roads, bridges, and culverts.

#HeleneNC



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