

Beverly Eaves Perdue
Governor



Alvin W. Keller Jr.
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North Carolina Department of Correction

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Department helping clean up while still recovering from Hurricane Irene Inmate crews dispatched to remove debris; three prisons remain evacuated

Inmate work crews are helping with debris removal and other emergency requests in areas hit hard by Hurricane Irene. Based on requests from local governments made through N.C. Emergency Management, inmate crews are working in Pasquotank, Tyrrell, Greene, Hertford and Carteret counties.

The inmate crews are from Pasquotank Correction Institution, Duplin Correctional Center and Carteret Correctional Center. The crews are helping sort debris at a landfill in Pasquotank County and assisting with clearing roadways and debris in Columbia, Winton and Snow Hill. Inmates from Carteret CC have already removed hundreds of tires from Atlantic Beach.

Local officials requested help through N.C. Emergency Management, which coordinates disaster response and clean-up following natural disasters. Inmates assigned to the work crews are in minimum-custody and are screened prior to being placed on jobs outside the prison facility. The inmate crews are supervised by correctional staff.

“Even at times when minimal resources are available, our department has a long tradition of maximizing those resources and answering calls for help from communities devastated by storms,” said Bob Lewis, Division of Prisons director. “We are responding to as many requests as we possibly can, but the challenge is that we still have three coastal prisons evacuated due to the hurricane.”

One of those prisons, Tyrrell Prison Work Farm, typically provides many inmate crews for storm cleanup, but those inmates were evacuated hundreds of miles inland. Nearly 1,900 inmates moved to 10 different prisons after Tyrrell PWF, Hyde Correctional Institution and Pamlico Correctional Institution were evacuated.

“Those evacuations required great organization and logistical work, and I cannot praise our staff enough for carrying out the task with such professionalism and teamwork,” Lewis said. “All inmates were moved safely, and now we have the awesome task of getting those prisons repaired and ready for inmates to move back in.”

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