

Baja California residents watching for Hurricane Rick

October 16 2009



The Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite, GOES-11, captured an infrared image of Tropical Storm Rick this morning, October 16 at 2:00 a.m. EDT (0600 UTC). Credit: NASA GOES Project.

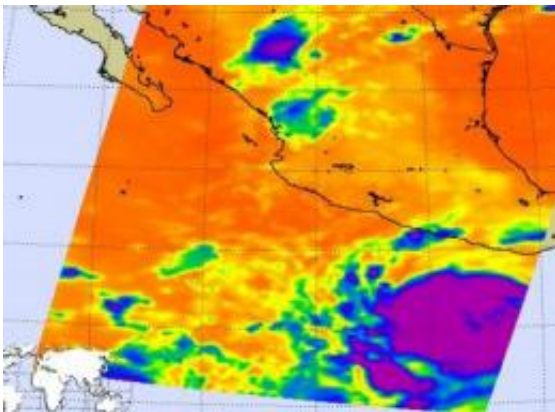
Based on computer forecast models, the residents of southern and central Baja California should prepare over the weekend for now Tropical Storm Rick. Rick formed late yesterday, October 15, and is expected to become a major hurricane over the weekend. NASA satellite imagery captured the storm this morning as a strong tropical storm off the western Mexican coast. NASA infrared satellite imagery suggests an eyewall forming indicating the storm is powering up.

Tropical Depression 20-E formed last evening (around 5 p.m. EDT) and rapidly intensified into [Tropical Storm Rick](#). Rick is forecast to

strengthen into a [hurricane](#) over the weekend, and may become a major hurricane (Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson Scale) by the end of day on Sunday, October 18.

So what's powering Rick? Warm sea surface temperatures and light wind shear are promoting Rick's strengthening. Those conditions appear to be favorable for maintaining and strengthening Rick over the weekend (the next 2 or 3 days). Wind shear is light, with winds less than 11 mph (10 knots). Sea surface temperatures in Rick's path are near 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit). Tropical cyclones need ocean surface temperatures of at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit to maintain strength.

At 5 a.m. EDT on October 16, Rick's maximum sustained winds were already at 65 mph, just 9 mph shy of a Category One Hurricane. The center of Tropical Storm Rick was located near latitude 12.5 north and longitude 98.7 west or about 315 miles (505 kilometers) south-southeast of Acapulco, Mexico. Rick is moving west-northwest near 9 mph, and had a minimum central pressure of 994 millibars.



This NASA infrared Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) satellite image captured high, cold thunderstorms (purple) in Tropical Storm Rick as he was intensifying on October 16 at 4:41 a.m. EDT (1:41 PDT). AIRS is an instrument that flies aboard NASA's Aqua satellite. Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

The Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite, GOES-11, captured an infrared image of Tropical Storm Rick this morning, October 16 at 2:00 a.m. EDT (0600 UTC). Although the storm stretches for a couple of hundred miles, tropical storm-force winds currently extend outward up to 60 miles from the center, but are expected to reach farther outward as Rick intensifies.

The NASA infrared Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) satellite image captured high, cold thunderstorms in Tropical Storm Rick as he was intensifying on October 16 at 4:41 a.m. EDT (1:41 PDT), and Rick continues to intensify quickly, according to the National Hurricane Center. Infrared imagery during the early morning hours today, October 16, shows increased intensity and area of deep convection, wrapping three-quarters around Rick's center. The National Hurricane Center, who uses the infrared data, noted that "There are indications of a ragged eyewall developing in the last few infrared images."

The storm will head west, later northwest and could pose a danger for Baja California beyond the 5-day scope of the National Hurricane Center's forecast. Therefore, residents of southern and central Baja California should make preparations over the weekend. Evacuations from coastal areas may be called for early next week if the forecast holds.

Source: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

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