

Typhoon pelts Guam with winds, rain; residents take shelter

May 15 2015, by Grace Garces Bordallo



Charles Henry, 28, Clayton Faubion, 25, Charles Harstad, 23, and Jamal Arurag, 19, observe barreling waves behind the University of Guam Marine Lab on the island's eastern coast during a powerful Pacific typhoon on Friday, May 15, 2015. The National Weather Service said the center of Typhoon Dolphin had passed through a 50-mile-wide channel between Guam and the island of Rota. (AP Photo/Grace Garces Bordallo)

More than 1,100 people took refuge in shelters early Saturday as the center of a powerful Pacific typhoon glanced off Guam, hammering the U.S. territory with high winds, rain and huge waves.

The storm knocked out power, downed trees and canceled flights Friday as it lumbered through a channel between Guam and the tiny tropical island of Rota. It packed maximum winds of 110 mph (177 kph).

The National Weather Service said gusts were expected to gradually decrease to "non-damaging" winds by sunrise.

One injury resulted from Typhoon Dolphin, and that person was taken to a Guam hospital, Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman Jenna Gaminde said. She had no additional information on the injury.

There also were reports of broken power transformers, said Oyaol Ngirairikl with the Joint Information Center. Ngirairikl said more would be known about damage from the [typhoon](#) Saturday.

Weather service meteorologist Patrick Chen said earlier that the [weather service](#) lost radar, but based on satellite imagery, he said the storm's center was moving away from the Marianas Islands, which includes Guam.

He advised residents to stay indoors: "Don't venture outside because of down power lines or trees."

Guam is home to about 160,000 people. It is known for white beaches and historic World War II battle sites, and it depends heavily on tourism.

Residents began seriously preparing for the typhoon Thursday when Gov. Eddie Calvo ordered agencies to take special precautions. That set off longer lines at service stations and increased sales of bottled water.

Eight public schools served as emergency shelters. Three were at capacity early Saturday.



Trees bend and sway in the increasing winds at the Paseo during the approach of Typhoon Dolphin on Friday, May 15, 2015, in Hagatna, Guam. Residents in Guam are bracing for potentially damaging winds and flooding as Typhoon Dolphin approaches the U.S. territory Friday. (Rick Cruz/The Pacific Daily via AP)

Twenty-four pregnant women checked into Guam Memorial Hospital as a precaution, according to Calvo's office.

Dayann Henry, 28, and 15 family members sought refuge in an emergency shelter at George Washington High School in central Guam.

"When they said the typhoon is going to be big, we went to the mayor

and asked for help. The mayor brought us here," said Henry, who lives in a wood- and tin-framed house.

Charleen Betwell, 30, also checked in at George Washington with several family members.

"I've been through typhoons, but this is my first time in a shelter," she said. "I'm just enjoying looking at the kids play around. It's good they're not scared."

Earlier in the day, Guam was getting some surf, with a beach on the eastern coast reporting 16-foot waves.

National Weather Service meteorologist Genny Miller said the agencies likely will maintain high-surf advisories for 24 hours after the typhoon passes.

Airlines canceled flights scheduled to arrive or depart the island Friday, though Guam International Airport stayed open for stranded passengers. Gaminde said she did not know when flights would resume.



Shelter seekers sleep in their assigned spaces at the Astumbo Elementary School during the early morning hours of Friday, May 15, 2015, in Dededo, Guam. The school was designated as a typhoon shelter for residents needing a safe place of refuge during the passage of Typhoon Dolphin. (Rick Cruz/The Pacific Daily via AP)

Authorities warned residents in low-lying areas to be on the lookout for flooding and to move to higher ground if necessary.

Typhoons are the same as hurricanes and cyclones. Distinctive terms for the storms are used in different parts of the world.

Tropical weather frequently affects Guam, so much so U.S. military officers like to say it's in "Typhoon Alley." Two typhoons and one tropical storm have affected Guam in the past eight months, including Dolphin.

The island rarely gets direct hits from typhoons because its land area is so small. The last direct hit was in 2002, when a super typhoon, Pongsona, killed one person and caused about \$250 million in damage.



Mike Rendall, left, gets help from his friend, Cliff Crisostomo, in securing a 46-foot boat named "Flying Fish" at the Hagatna boat basin as weather condition worsen during the approach of Typhoon Dolphin, in Guam, on Friday, May 15, 2015. (Rick Cruz/The Pacific Daily via AP)

There are two U.S. military bases in Guam, Andersen Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam. Both were closed Friday to everyone except for essential personnel.

Anderson reported maximum gusts of 106 mph (170 kph).

Guam and Rota, 50 miles (80 kilometers) away, share a common

heritage and native language. Rota has about 2,500 residents, and many buildings there are made of concrete.



Children play basketball at the emergency shelter at George Washington High School gym in central Guam during a powerful Pacific typhoon on Friday, May 15, 2015. The National Weather Service said the center of Typhoon Dolphin had passed through a 50-mile-wide channel between Guam and the island of Rota. (AP Photo/Grace Garces Bordallo)

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