

Evacuations

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico



Incident Report

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The situation

[Excerpt] red24 alert, 23 October 2015 18:48 GMT, Tropical Storm Patricia is forecast to affect the Pacific Coast states of Jalisco, Colima, Nayarit, Sinaloa and Guerrero as a Category 5 storm as of 23 October. The storm system will bring heavy rains and gale force winds of up to 320km/h to the aforementioned areas. A hurricane warning has been issued for coastal areas from San Blas to Punta San Telmo, including major coastal resort cities of Puerto Vallarta and Manzanillo.

As Tropical Storm Patricia approached the southern coast of Mexico in late October the storm system began to grow in intensity, sparking fears of flooding, tidal storm surges and damage from the strong winds. These concerns escalated as Patricia developed into a Category 5 tropical storm, the highest strength storm system. Patricia was also logged as the strongest Pacific tropical storm on record as the system approached the coast. Motivated by his concerns, our client, which had a number of employees in the area the storm was approaching, contacted red24 and requested an evacuation of all their affected personnel.

How we assisted

As red24 was aware of the approaching storm system and the potential impact on the region, operational protocols were made available for any evacuation requests. Upon approval from the client, members of the red24 Crisis Support and Analyst teams convened to compile a detailed contingency plan, specific to the requested evacuation. The plan outlined areas of concern, safe zones and methods, and available travel routes.

Two in-country consultants were deployed to the client's location at a hotel in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Due to the last-minute nature of the evacuation request, it was considered safest to depart from the hotel once the storm had passed, and avoid being in the open as it made landfall. red24 consultants met at the client's location, to ensure that the insureds were safe. Thereafter they assisted with the evacuation of 32 employees, who were all securely transported to the airport, from where they departed to various destinations in the United States.

Transfers to the airport were conducted over a number of days. Prior to each group departing the hotel, red24's consultants provided a detailed security brief, and regularly fed information to red24's Crisis Response Management (CRM) Centre. This information included general situation updates, departure schedules for vehicles travelling to the airport, and flight departure confirmations. Each flight was tracked to its destination, and its safe arrival was also confirmed. During the evacuations, red24's Analyst team provided prompt updates on the country's status, with regard to the tropical storm, to ensure that evacuation procedures would not be hampered by weather conditions or related factors.

The client was contacted regularly to inform them of their employees' safety, and all evacuations concluded without incident.

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