

Hurricane Rita

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This NOAA satellite image taken Thursday, Sept. 22, 2005 at 2:45 AM EDT shows clouds associated with **Hurricane Rita** in the Gulf of Mexico. The storm is expected to make landfall over the Texas coast early Saturday. Clouds associated with Tropical Storm Philippe can be seen far northeast of Puerto Rico. Clouds associated with a cold front can be seen streaking through the Upper Midwest through the Central Plains. An area of thick clouds can be seen over Wisconsin and is associated with intense showers and thunderstorms. (AP Photo/NOAA)
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This satellite image taken by NASA's MODIS Rapid Response System at 12:10 p.m. EDT Wednesday Sept. 21, 2005 shows **Hurricane Rita** over the Gulf of Mexico. Gaining strength with frightening speed, **Hurricane Rita** swirled toward the Gulf Coast a Category 5, 165-mph monster Wednesday as more than 1.3 million people in Texas and Louisiana were sent packing on orders from authorities who learned a bitter lesson from Katrina. (AP Photo/NASA)
[AP - Sep 21 7:28 PM](#)

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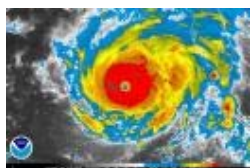
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[Hurricane Rita Forces Further Evacuations](#)

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This infrared satellite image provided by NOAA and taken at 9:45 p.m. EDT Wednesday Sept. 21, 2005 shows **Hurricane Rita** over the Gulf of Mexico. Gaining strength with frightening speed, **Rita** swirled toward the Gulf Coast a Category 5, 165-mph monster Wednesday as more than 1.3 million people in Texas and Louisiana were sent packing on orders from authorities who learned a bitter lesson from Katrina. (AP Photo/NOAA)
[AP - Sep 21 7:16 PM](#)

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NOAA satellite image of **Hurricane Rita** taken at 1115 EDT on September 21, 2005. (NOAA/Handout/Reuters)
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Traffic flows on the Seven Mile Bridge in Marathon, Florida, September 21, 2005. Wednesday marked the first day resident evacuees could return to Florida Keys after **Hurricane Rita** lashed the Keys Tuesday but did little damage to the vulnerable Florida Islands. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a potentially catastrophic Category 5 storm on Wednesday and took aim at Texas as officials began evacuating more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. NO SALES NO ARCHIVES
 REUTERS/Andy Newman/Florida Keys News Bureau/Handout
[Reuters - Sep 21 6:40 PM](#)

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A flood storm barrier placed on the 17th Street Canal of Lake Pontchartrain is seen in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 21, 2005. The levees were reinforced Wednesday on the 17th Street Canal and the London Bridge Canal as New Orleans officials brace for the possibility of another storm, **Hurricane Rita**, hitting the Gulf Coast. REUTERS/Jessica Rinaldi
[Reuters - Sep 21 6:20 PM](#)



Galveston residents Tabatha Little, right, and her grandmother Juanita Hatter, wait to board a bus to evacuate the island as **hurricane Rita** headed for the Texas Gulf Coast Wednesday. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[Canadian Press - Sep 21 5:56 PM](#)



Shrimp boats make their way further inland along the Houston Ship Channel ahead of the landfall of **Hurricane Rita** Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Houston. (AP Photo/Houston Chronicle, Brett Coomer)
[AP - Sep 21 5:44 PM](#)



Senior citizens from the Edgewater Retirement Community wait to board a bus during evacuation in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, in Galveston, Texas, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 5:34 PM](#)



Senior citizens from the Edgewater Retirement Community wait to board a bus to evacuate the city, in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, in Galveston, Texas, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 5:36 PM](#)



Jasey, left, and Karen McDonald tie down some of their belongings on top of their car as they prepare to evacuate from the coastal town of Texas City, Texas, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** is expected to hit the Texas Gulf Coast. (AP Photo/Pat Sullivan)
[AP - Sep 21 5:28 PM](#)



A senior citizen (L) from the Edgewater Retirement Community receives help in boarding a bus to evacuate the city in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, in Galveston, Texas, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 5:19 PM](#)



A FEMA search and rescue worker dries his clothing and gear after being decontaminated in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** is not expected to re-flood New Orleans if it stays on its current course, which is expected to take the storm to Texas, a federal official said on Wednesday. REUTERS/J.P. Moczulski
[Reuters - Sep 21 5:17 PM](#)



Randall Reynolds nails a piece of plywood to protect his windows in preparation for **Hurricane Rita** in Galveston, Texas, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 4:58 PM](#)



In this photo, provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, traffic flows back into the Florida Keys near Key Largo, Fla., Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, a day after **Hurricane Rita** skirted the Keys. Wednesday marked the first day that resident evacuees could return to the Keys. The Keys were spared of widespread serious damage. (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)
[AP - Sep 21 4:59 PM](#)



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, a front-end loader scrapes a Florida Keys resort beach of seaweed Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Islamorada, Fla. Tidal surge from **Hurricane Rita**, when it skirted by the Keys on Tuesday, caused the seaweed to be pushed up on the beach. Wednesday, Keys resorts were cleaning up and undoing **hurricane** preparations in anticipating the return of visitors Friday, Sept. 23. (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)

[AP - Sep 21 4:55 PM](#)



In this photo, provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, front-end loaders work to clear sand and seaweed from the Overseas Highway in Islamorada, Fla., Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, a day after **Hurricane Rita** skirted the Florida Keys. Tidal surge flooded this section of the highway causing a temporary closure during the storm. Wednesday marked the first day that resident evacuees could return to the Keys and Friday, Sept. 22, is the day recommended by officials for visitors to return to the island chain. (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)

[AP - Sep 21 4:44 PM](#)



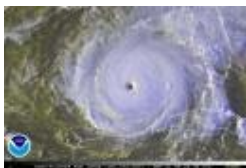
This photo provided by the Department of Homeland Security shows Secretary Michael Chertoff, center, and Federal Emergency Management Agency acting director R. David Paulison, left, as they meet Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, with Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour in Washington. They met to discuss **Hurricane Katrina** response and recovery efforts and ongoing preparations for **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Barry Bahler)

[AP - Sep 21 4:33 PM](#)



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, traffic flows on the Seven Mile Bridge near Marathon, Fla., Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, after the core of **Hurricane Rita** skirted the Florida Keys Tuesday. Wednesday marked the first day that resident evacuees could return to the Keys, which were spared of widespread, serious damage. (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)

[AP - Sep 21 4:29 PM](#)



This satellite image provided by NOAA and taken at 18:45 EDT Tuesday Sept. 20, 2005 shows **Hurricane Rita** over the Gulf of Mexico. Forecasters said **Rita** could intensify in the Gulf of Mexico into a Category 4 storm with winds of at least 131 mph. The most likely destination by week's end was Texas, although Louisiana and northern Mexico were possibilities, according to the **hurricane** center. (AP Photo/NOAA)

[AP - Sep 21 4:27 PM](#)



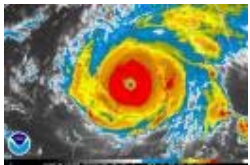
Bumper to bumper traffic heads out of Galveston, Texas towards Houston, September 21, 2005. Evacuation of Galveston becomes mandatory on Wednesday night in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, taking as long as 5 hours to travel 45 miles. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 4:28 PM](#)



Bumper to bumper traffic heads out of Galveston, Texas towards Houston, September 21, 2005. Evacuation of Galveston becomes mandatory on Wednesday night in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, taking as long as 5 hours to travel 45 miles. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 4:27 PM](#)



Traffic is bumper-to-bumper in Texas City, Texas on Interstate 45 northbound as people evacuate the Texas Gulf Coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, ahead of **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/Pat Sullivan)
[AP - Sep 21 4:30 PM](#)



This infrared satellite image provided by NOAA and taken at 18:45 EDT Wednesday Sept. 21, 2005 shows **Hurricane Rita** over the Gulf of Mexico. Forecasters said **Rita** could intensify in the Gulf of Mexico into a Category 4 storm with winds of at least 131 mph. The most likely destination by week's end was Texas, although Louisiana and northern Mexico were possibilities, according to the **hurricane** center. (AP Photo/NOAA)
[AP - Sep 21 4:22 PM](#)



Bumper to bumper traffic heads out of Galveston, Texas towards Houston, September 21, 2005. Evacuation of Galveston becomes mandatory on Wednesday night in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, taking as long as 5 hours to travel 45 miles. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston. REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 4:24 PM](#)



Bumper to bumper traffic heads out of Galveston, Texas towards Houston, September 21, 2005. Evacuation of Galveston becomes mandatory on Wednesday night in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, taking as long as 5 hours to travel 45 miles. **Hurricane Rita** grew into a monster Category 5 storm and took aim at Texas on Wednesday as authorities began to evacuate more than a million people from most of the coast and parts of Houston.

REUTERS/Tim Johnson
[Reuters - Sep 21 4:21 PM](#)



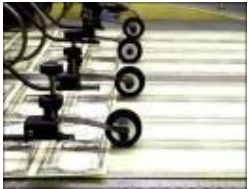
This satellite image provided by NOAA and taken at 15:45 EDT Wednesday Sept. 21, 2005 shows **Hurricane Rita** over the Gulf of Mexico. Gaining strength with frightening speed, **Rita** swirled toward the Gulf Coast a Category 5, 165-mph monster Wednesday as more than 1.3 million people in Texas and Louisiana were sent packing on orders from authorities who learned a bitter lesson from Katrina. (AP Photo/NOAA)

[AP - Sep 21 4:12 PM](#)



Sara Hailey walks her dog Buddy along the empty seawall in Galveston, Texas as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. Most residents began evacuating the island Wednesday. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

[AP - Sep 21 4:08 PM](#)



Sheets of one dollar bills are fed through the final press at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The dollar lost ground against the other major currencies as traders braced for **Hurricane Rita's** landfall and the effect of Tuesday's US rate hike began to fade. (AFP/File/Shawn Thew)

[AFP/File - Sep 21 3:19 PM](#)



This image released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows **Hurricane Rita** just northwest of Cuba. **Hurricane Rita** turned into a 265 kilometer an hour mega-storm as it hurtled across the Gulf of Mexico, forcing crew to abandon oil platforms and hundreds of thousands of people to flee the Texas coast. (AFP/HO-NOAA)

[AFP/HO-NOAA - Sep 21 3:03 PM](#)



Debra Bush, left, waits to be evacuated with her son, Brandon, at University of Texas Medical Branch's John Sealy Hospital in Galveston, Texas as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. The hospital plans to have all patients evacuated by this evening. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

[AP - Sep 21 2:54 PM](#)



An infant is evacuated from the University of Texas Medical Branch's John Sealy Hospital in Galveston, Texas as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas Gulf Coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[AP - Sep 21 2:51 PM](#)



Galveston residents Tabatha Little, right, and her grandmother Juanita Hatter, left, wait to board a bus to evacuate the island as **hurricane Rita** headed for the Texas Gulf Coast Wednesday. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[Canadian Press - Sep 21 2:51 PM](#)



Nurse Kimberly Arcidiacono moves an infant into an ambulance as patients at University of Texas Medical Branch's John Sealy Hospital are evacuated in Galveston, Texas as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas Gulf Coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[AP - Sep 21 2:41 PM](#)



Butch Kinerney, public affairs specialist of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shows a project track map of **Hurricane Rita** during an exclusive tour for AP at the FEMA Headquarters in Washington, Wednesday, September 21, 2005. (AP Photo/Yuri Gripas)
[AP - Sep 21 2:28 PM](#)



A building in Galveston is readied for the approach of **Hurricane Rita**. Stung by the political backlash over the response to **Hurricane Katrina**, US authorities are taking no chances as a new high-octane storm heads for the Texas coast. (AFP/James Nielsen)
[AFP - Sep 21 2:33 PM](#)



Bill Butler, of Biloxi, fills gas cans for his generator in front of a long line of cars at a gas station in Biloxi, Miss., Wednesday Sept. 21, 2005. Federal and state officials scrambled to squash a fast-spreading rumor Wednesday that **Hurricane Rita** would trigger a gasoline shortage in Mississippi, but not fast enough to prevent long lines. (AP Photo/Steve Helber)
[AP - Sep 21 2:28 PM](#)



US President George W. Bush pauses while speaking at the Republican Jewish Coalition's Anniversary Luncheon at Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC. The coalition was celebrating its 20th anniversary. Bush urged people in the path of powerful **hurricane Rita** to heed local authorities' evacuation orders.(AFP/Brendan Smialowski)

[AFP - Sep 21 2:33 PM](#)



A line of elderly wheel chair bound citizens from the Edgewater Retirement Community in Galveston, Texas, wait to board a bus to evacuate the city in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, September 21, 2005. (Tim Johnson/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 2:03 PM](#)



R. David Paulison, acting director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, speaks at news conference on **Hurricane Rita** at FEMA Headquarters in Washington, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/Yuri Gripas)

[AP - Sep 21 2:02 PM](#)



Florida Gov. Jeb Bush talks to Debbie Harrison, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005 in Marathon, Fla. in the Emergency Operations Center after **Hurricane Rita** moved through the area. She told the governor that the commercial fishing industries needs FEMA help to recover from the storm damage. (AP Photo/J. Pat Carter, Pool)

[AP - Sep 21 1:58 PM](#)



A plow flattens dirt delivered by dump trucks (rear) to plug a breach in the London Avenue Canal levee in New Orleans. New Orleans will likely escape a second flood as little rain from **Hurricane Rita** is expected to hit the city and engineers finish fixing levees broken by **Hurricane Katrina**, a federal spokesman said.(AFP/Robyn Beck)

[AFP - Sep 21 1:52 PM](#)



An oil refinery is seen along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana, 02 September, 2005. More than 70 percent of US oil production in the Gulf of Mexico has been shut down because of the threat of **Hurricane Rita** and the aftermath of Katrina, authorities reported.(AFP/POOL/File/David J. Phillip)

[AFP/POOL/File - Sep 21 1:51 PM](#)



A girl of the town 'El Cajio', walks on a flooded street in Havana, Cuba, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, after **Hurricane Rita** passed near the coasts of northern Cuba. (AP Photo/Jorge Rey)
[AP - Sep 21 1:42 PM](#)



Workers clean the street in the sea-wall 'Malecon', in Havana, Cuba, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, after **Hurricane Rita** passed near the coasts of northern Cuba. (AP Photo/Jorge Rey)
[AP - Sep 21 1:44 PM](#)



Galveston residents evacuate ahead of **Hurricane Rita** along Interstate 45, just north of League City, Texas. Devastated by the deadliest US **hurricane** on record in 1900, the fragile island city of Galveston braced for what could be a deadly hit by **Hurricane Rita** on the Gulf coast of Texas. (AFP/James Nielsen)
[AFP - Sep 21 1:30 PM](#)



Workers board up a hotel along Seawall boulevard as **Hurricane Rita** is predicted to makeland fall near the Texas City. Devastated by the deadliest US **hurricane** on record in 1900, the fragile island city of Galveston braced for what could be a deadly hit by **Hurricane Rita** on the Gulf coast of Texas. (AFP/James Nielsen)
[AFP - Sep 21 1:30 PM](#)



A building in Galveston is readied for the approach of **Hurricane Rita**. Devastated by the deadliest US **hurricane** on record in 1900, the fragile island city of Galveston braced for what could be a deadly hit by **Hurricane Rita** on the Gulf coast of Texas. (AFP/James Nielsen)
[AFP - Sep 21 1:30 PM](#)



Cuban workers clean a street in Havana after **Hurricane Rita** passed near Cuba, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** strengthened into a Category 5 storm on Wednesday as it headed for the Texas coast later this week, the U.S. National **Hurricane** Center said in its latest update. REUTERS/Claudia Daut
[Reuters - Sep 21 1:24 PM](#)



A family waits for water levels to decrease in their flooded house in the town of 'El Cajio' in Havana, Cuba, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, after **Hurricane Rita** passed near the coasts of northern Cuba. (AP Photo/Jorge Rey)
[AP - Sep 21 1:25 PM](#)



A resident of the town 'El Cajio', walks on a flooded street in Havana, Cuba, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, after **Hurricane Rita** passed near the coasts of northern Cuba. (AP Photo/Jorge Rey)
[AP - Sep 21 1:14 PM](#)



A train remains derailed in East New Orleans, Louisiana September 21, 2005. New Orleans braces for the possible threat of **Hurricane Rita** even as clean up efforts from **Hurricane Katrina** are still taking place throughout the city. REUTERS/Jessica Rinaldi
[Reuters - Sep 21 1:05 PM](#)



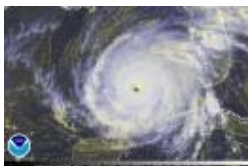
Texas Gov. Rick Perry leads the way to a news conference outside the Governor's Mansion Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Austin, Texas. He is followed by Steve McCraw, Texas Homeland Security Director. Perry urged voluntary evacuations along the Texas coast from Beaumont to Corpus Christi in advance of **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/Harry Cabluck)
[AP - Sep 21 1:13 PM](#)



Workers rip up carpet inside the New Orleans Convention Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 21, 2005. Efforts are underway to clean up the city as officials and residents brace for the possibility of another storm, **Hurricane Rita**, hitting the Gulf Coast. REUTERS/Jessica Rinaldi
[Reuters - Sep 21 1:03 PM](#)



Workers rip up carpet inside the New Orleans Convention Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 21, 2005. Efforts are underway to clean up the city as officials and residents brace for the possibility of another storm, **Hurricane Rita**, hitting the Gulf Coast. REUTERS/Jessica Rinaldi
[Reuters - Sep 21 1:04 PM](#)



This satellite image made available from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows **Hurricane Rita** northeast of the Yucatan peninsula at 3:15 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/NOAA)
[AP - Sep 21 12:54 PM](#)



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) satellite image of **Hurricane Rita** taken at 1845GMT on September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** took aim at Texas as it grew into a powerful Category 4 storm on Wednesday, and authorities urged residents of Houston and most of the state's coastline to evacuate. **Rita's** winds increased to 140 mph (225 kph) as it headed into the Gulf of Mexico after lashing the Florida Keys on Tuesday. The storm did little damage to the vulnerable Florida islands. FOR EDITORIAL USE ONLY
 REUTERS/NOAA/Handout
[Reuters - Sep 21 12:54 PM](#)



A patient is evacuated from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. The hospital plans to have all patients evacuated by this evening. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[AP - Sep 21 12:45 PM](#)



Francisco Gonzalez, left, and Fred Weaver, right, board up windows as they prepare to evacuate the Galveston, Texas as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[AP - Sep 21 12:48 PM](#)



This is the forecast for Thursday, Sept. 22, 2005 shows **Rita** turns northwestward and is forecast to make landfall near central Texas coast Saturday morning as a Category 4 **Hurricane**. A cold front extending from the Upper Midwest to Central Plains will move eastward into the Northeast and Ohio Valley tonight. (AP Photo/Weather Underground)
[AP - Sep 21 12:38 PM](#)



Texas Homeland Security Director Steve McCraw speaks during a news conference outside the Governor's Mansion on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Austin, Texas. The state has urged voluntary evacuations along the Texas coast from, now Port Arthur to Corpus Christi in advance of **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/Harry Cabluck)
[AP - Sep 21 11:47 AM](#)



International Space Station. NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston was to close due to the threat posed by **Hurricane Rita** and control of the International Space Station will be handed to Russia, the US agency said. (AFP/NASA-HO/File)
[AFP/NASA-HO/File - Sep 21 11:45 AM](#)



This NOAA satellite image taken Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005 at 14:15 EDT shows clouds associated with Category 4 **Hurricane Rita** spinning in the Gulf of Mexico. The storm is expected to move through the Gulf before making landfall over the central Texan coast early Saturday. Clouds associated with Tropical Storm Philippe can be seen east-northeast of Puerto Rico. This storm is expected to remain fall out at sea. Over land, a area of clouds over Florida associated with **Rita's** outflow is producing thunderstorms over the state. Much of the rest of the East remains dry under mostly sunny to partly cloudy. (AP Photo/Weather Underground)

[AP - Sep 21 11:53 AM](#)



Texas Gov. Rick Perry leaves a news conference outside the Governor's Mansion on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Austin, Texas followed by Texas Homeland Security Director Steve McCraw. Gov. Perry urged voluntary evacuations along the Texas coast from Beaumont to Corpus Christi in advance of **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/Harry Cabluck)

[AP - Sep 21 11:32 AM](#)



A line of school busses leave the Galveston Community center in Galveston, Texas, to evacuate citizens of the city in preparation for **Hurricane Rita** September 21, 2005. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 11:17 AM](#)



Texas Gov. Rick Perry speaks during a news conference outside the Governor's Mansion on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Austin, Texas where he urged voluntary evacuations along the Texas coast from Beaumont to Corpus Christi in advance of **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/Harry Cabluck)

[AP - Sep 21 11:06 AM](#)



This image released by the National Oceanis and Atmospheric Adminstration shows Category 4 **Hurricane Rita** just northwest of Cuba. Targeted by **Hurricane Rita**, the Texas coast braced for the worst and ordered evacuations amid fears the extremely dangerous storm would reach top intensity(AFP/HO-NOAA)

[AFP/HO-NOAA - Sep 21 11:00 AM](#)



Texas Gov. Rick Perry, foreground, speaks during a news conference outside the Governor's Mansion on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005, in Austin, Texas. In the background is Texas Homeland Security Director Steve McCraw. Perry urged voluntary evacuations along the Texas coast from Beaumont to Corpus Christi in advance of **Hurricane Rita**. (AP Photo/Harry Cabluck)

[AP - Sep 21 11:01 AM](#)



An earthmover pours rocks into a ditch while repairing the levee on the 17th Street Canal in New Orleans, Louisiana. Workers are rushing to shore up levees in New Orleans as **Hurricane Rita** approaches the Gulf Coast(AFP/Getty Images)

[AFP/Getty Images - Sep 21 11:00 AM](#)



Galveston Independent School District buses help to evacuate Galveston residents from **Hurricane Rita** leave Galveston County, Texas. Targeted by **Hurricane Rita**, the Texas coast braced for the worst and ordered evacuations amid fears the extremely dangerous storm would reach top intensity(AFP/James Nielsen)

[AFP - Sep 21 11:00 AM](#)



George Najarian cuts a piece of plywood as his wife Lizette keeps it steady in preparation for **Hurricane Rita** in Galveston, Texas, September 21, 2005. The Najarians, who are newlyweds, recently purchased this house which survived the 1900 Galveston storm. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:49 AM](#)



John Jordan (L) cuts a piece of plywood with Darwyn Cochran as they try to protect a house in Galveston, Texas, in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, September 21, 2005. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:52 AM](#)



This image released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 21 September, 2005, show Category 4 **Hurricane Rita** just northwest of Cuba at 13:15 GMT Targeted by **Hurricane Rita**, the Texas coast braced for the worst and ordered evacuations amid fears the extremely dangerous storm would reach top intensity(AFP/HO-NOAA)

[AFP/HO-NOAA - Sep 21 10:55 AM](#)



People hold onto a sign, as **Hurricane Rita** passes by Key West in Florida. Targeted by **Hurricane Rita**, the Texas coast braced for the worst and ordered evacuations amid fears the extremely dangerous storm would reach top intensity(AFP/Getty Images/Carlo Allegri)

[AFP/Getty Images - Sep 21 10:55 AM](#)



Cuban workers clean Havana's seafront boulevard after **Hurricane Rita** passed near Cuba September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** was updated into a more powerful Category 4 storm as it headed across the Gulf of Mexico on a course that could take it to Texas and dump more rain on Katrina-battered Louisiana. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:48 AM](#)



Carmelo Mateo strains as he secures a piece of plywood over a window in Galveston, Texas, September 21, 2005 in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:45 AM](#)



A giant wave engulfs a traffic light at Havana's seawall as **Hurricane Rita** passes near Cuba, September 20, 2005. (Claudia Daut/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:33 AM](#)



In this file photo, Texas Governor Rick Perry speaks with international media at the hotel Camino Real in Mexico City, August 23, 2002. Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. (Henry Romero/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:27 AM](#)



A Cuban worker cleans the drainage system on Havana's seafront boulevard after **Hurricane Rita** passed near Cuba September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** was updated into a more powerful Category 4 storm as it headed across the Gulf of Mexico on a course that could take it to Texas and dump more rain on Katrina-battered Louisiana. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:31 AM](#)



President George W. Bush comforts victims of **Hurricane Katrina** during a visit to Mississippi to view the devastation left by the storm, 2 September 2005. President George W. Bush urged people in the path of powerful **Hurricane Rita** to heed local authorities' evacuation orders(AFP/File/Jim Watson)

[AFP/File - Sep 21 10:11 AM](#)



Charlotte Minifee from the Edgewater Retirement Community in Galveston, Texas, has some assistance as she readies to board a bus to evacuate the city in September 21, 2005. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:13 AM](#)



Tanisha Humphrey and Mykia Allen, 6 months old, leave the Galveston Community Center in Galveston, Texas in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**, September 21, 2005. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:10 AM](#)



An unidentified man from the Edgewater Retirement Community in Galveston, Texas, waves as he boards a bus, via a wheel chair lift, to evacuate the city September 21, 2005. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:13 AM](#)



An unidentified man from the Edgewater Retirement Community in Galveston, Texas September 21, 2005 gets ready to board a bus to evacuate from the city in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:15 AM](#)



An unidentified man from the Galveston Community Center in Galveston, Texas September 21, 2005 gets ready to board a bus to evacuate from the city in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:13 AM](#)



Elise landers from the Edgewater Retirement Community in Galveston, Texas, readies to board a bus to evacuate the city in preparation for evacuation September 21, 2005. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:15 AM](#)



Shaarde Bush and her baby kitten are about to board the bus at the Galveston Community Center in Galveston, Texas, to evacuate the city in preparation for **Hurricane Rita** September 21, 2005. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:13 AM](#)



Cubans cross a bridge in pouring rain and strong winds in Varadero as **Hurricane Rita** passes near Cuba September 20, 2005. (Claudia Daut/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:15 AM](#)



People walk along a jetty as **Hurricane Rita** approaches Key Largo, Florida, September 20, 2005. (Marc Serota/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:15 AM](#)



Waves crash against Havana's seafront boulevard as **Hurricane Rita** passes near Cuba September 20, 2005. (Stringer/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:15 AM](#)



A man watches the surf as **Hurricane Rita** approaches Key Largo, Florida September 20, 2005. Strengthening **Hurricane Rita** lashed the low-lying islands of the Florida Keys with rainy squalls on Tuesday and Gulf Coast communities to the west braced for a possible encore to devastating **Hurricane Katrina**. (Marc Serota/Reuters)

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:05 AM](#)



Galveston EMS trucks queue to help in the evacuation of citizens from the Edgewater Retirement Community in Galveston, Texas September 21, 2005 in preparation for **Hurricane Rita**. Texas Gov. Rick Perry said on Wednesday a long stretch of his state's Gulf coastline should be evacuated now in advance of **Hurricane Rita**, which is due to make land on Friday. REUTERS/Tim Johnson

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:09 AM](#)



A truck with speakers drives through the streets of Havana encouraging Cubans to clean up the debris after **Hurricane Rita** passed near Cuba September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** was updated into a more powerful Category 4 storm as it headed across the Gulf of Mexico on a course that could take it to Texas and dump more rain on Katrina-battered Louisiana. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

[Reuters - Sep 21 10:08 AM](#)



Cubans walk past an uprooted tree on a street in Havana after **Hurricane Rita** passed near Cuba, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** was updated into a more powerful Category 4 storm as it headed across the Gulf of Mexico on a course that could take it to Texas and dump more rain on Katrina-battered Louisiana. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

[Reuters - Sep 21 9:42 AM](#)



Cubans cut an uprooted tree that is blocking a street in Havana after **Hurricane Rita** passed near Cuba, September 21, 2005. **Hurricane Rita** was updated into a more powerful Category 4 storm as it headed across the Gulf of Mexico on a course that could take it to Texas and dump more rain on Katrina-battered Louisiana. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

[Reuters - Sep 21 9:43 AM](#)



Edgewater Retirement Community residents are evacuated from Galveston Island as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas gulf coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

[AP - Sep 21 9:32 AM](#)



Edgewater Retirement Community residents wait to be loaded onto a bus as they are evacuated from Galveston Island as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas gulf coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

[AP - Sep 21 9:34 AM](#)



Edgewater Retirement Community resident Dorothy Weaver, left, is helped onto the bus by Lisa Baker, right, as residents are evacuated from Galveston Island as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas gulf coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

[AP - Sep 21 9:29 AM](#)



Edgewater Retirement Community residents wait to be evacuated from Galveston Island as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas gulf coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. Forecasters predicted **Rita** would come ashore Saturday somewhere along the central Texas Gulf Coast between Galveston and Corpus Christi. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

[AP - Sep 21 9:33 AM](#)



Galveston residents Tabatha Little, right, and her grandmother Juanita Hatter, left, wait to board a bus to evacuate the island as **Hurricane Rita** heads for the Texas Gulf Coast Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2005. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)
[AP - Sep 21 9:36 AM](#)

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