

Late Season Storm could Disrupt 4 Mln Barrels of US Oil Output, Researchers Say

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A late season tropical storm predicted to intensify into a category 2 hurricane in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico this week could reduce U.S. oil production by about 4 million barrels, researchers said.

Storm Rafael was in the Caribbean Sea late on Monday and expected to enter the Gulf of Mexico on a track that takes it through prime oil-producing areas. Winds could reach 100 miles per hour (161 kph) on Wednesday, the National Hurricane Center said.

U.S. oil producers could lose between 3.1 million and 4.9 million barrels of oil, said energy analytics firm Earth Science Associates using a model that estimates volume losses to past storm intensity and track.

Natural gas production losses could range between 4.56 billion and 6.39 billion cubic feet, according to its model. The upper end assumes structural damage that prolongs shut-ins, said Tony Dupont, Earth Science's chief operating officer.

Shell and Chevron on Monday said they were moving non-essential personnel to shore from several platforms ahead of the storm. Shell said it was pausing some drilling activity but there was impact on production. Chevron also said routine oil and gas production was not affected.

Earth Science's model calls for Rafael to have the second-largest impact of this year's storms on offshore production, behind hurricane Francine, which shut in up to 42% of oil and 52% of natural gas production.

Raphael, the 17th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, is on a track would take it through areas of the Gulf that are heavy with oil and gas platforms. The season runs through Nov. 30.

There have been 10 named Atlantic storms formed this year since September 24, a record for the period, according to Colorado State University meteorologist Phil Klotzbach.

(Reporting by Gary McWilliams and Anjana Anil; Editing by Lincoln Feast)

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By Reuters

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People walk near the beach as Tropical Storm Rafael approaches, in Playa Baracoa, Cuba, November 4, 2024. REUTERS/Norlys Perez [Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab](#)

- Summary
- Companies
- Shell, Chevron removing some staff from offshore platforms
- Rafael forecast to become category 2 hurricane at mid-week

Key Points

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