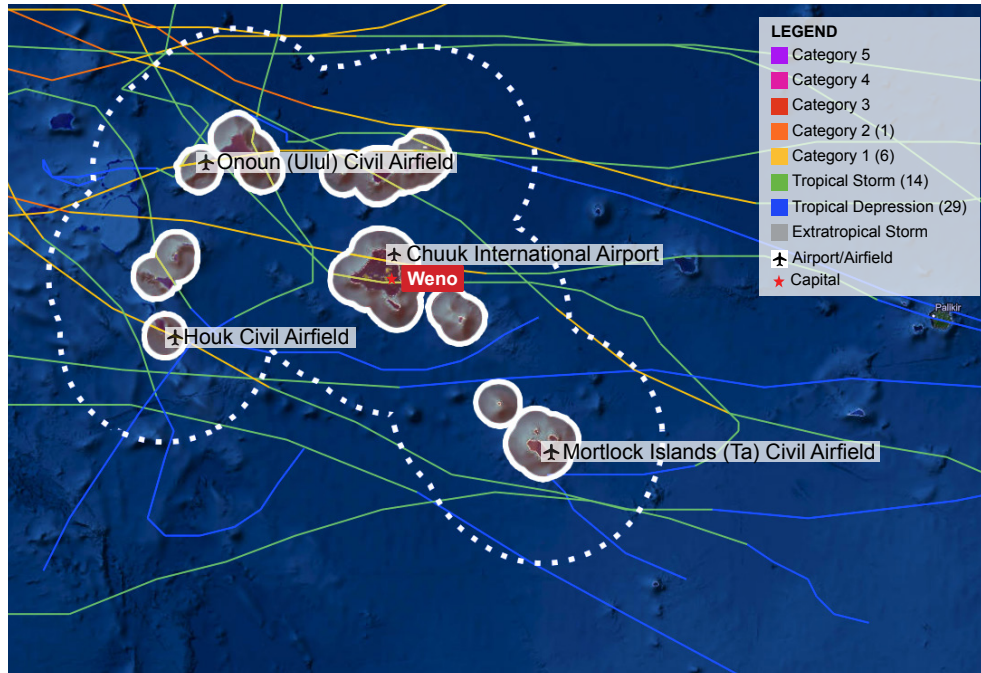


Due to Chuuk State's dispersed geography and hazard events such as tropical cyclones, drought, coastal flooding, and king tides, remote areas often face significant accessibility barriers. These challenges are intensified by limited airstrips and the absence of ports or jetties on outer islands, whose populations can be isolated during major hazard events. Initial response efforts are managed at the state and municipal levels with national and international coordination triggered for large-scale events to provide the resources for a full recovery.



Historic Tropical Cyclone Tracks around Chuuk State (2000-2025).

Source: NOAA Historical Hurricane Tracks

- **High-Exposure Environment:** Chuuk faces recurring tropical cyclones, drought, and coastal flooding across geographically dispersed islands, with outer islands particularly vulnerable to isolation during severe events.
- **State-Led Disaster Management (DM):** Chuuk maintains a structured DM system led by the Governor and the Chuuk Disaster & Emergency Operations Center (CDEOC), aligned with national law and policy.
- **Municipal-Level Execution:** Mayors and municipal focal points serve as first responders, coordinating with Village Chiefs and Municipal DM Committees to conduct rapid damage assessments, manage shelters, and disseminate warnings.
- **Capacity-Constrained but Functional:** Governance mechanisms are established and improving, but obstacles are linked to limited infrastructure and constraints on transport access and medical surge capacity for high-impact events.
- **International Support:** For major disasters exceeding state and national capacity, assistance is coordinated through national authorities, with the U.S. as the primary external partner under a Compact of Free Association (COFA); United Nations (UN) entities, non-governmental organizations, and regional partners all play a role.

State Facts

Chuuk State is one of the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).



Capital
Weno



Total Population
48,500 (36,000 in Chuuk Lagoon; 12,500 on Outer Islands)



Total Land Area
127.4 square kilometers (49.2 square miles)



State government
Executive, Legislative, and Judicial bodies



Local Government
40 municipalities, each with a municipal government; traditional leaders, "Soupun" and/or "Makal," on each island



Regions
Faichuuk, Halls, Mortlocks, Naminuito, Northern Namoneas, Pattiw, and Southern Namoneas



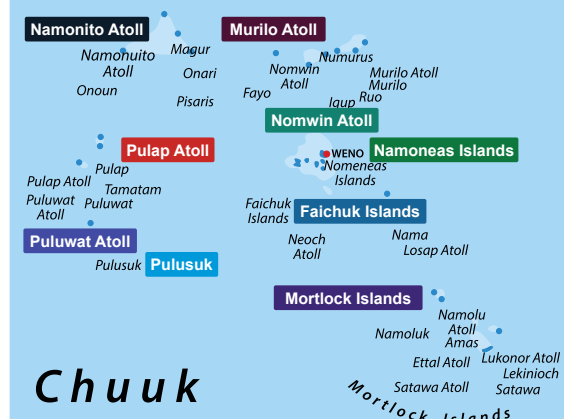
Languages
Chuukese (native), English (second / national)



POPULATION COUNT

Namoneas Islands	Faichuk Islands	Namonito Atoll
Weno - 13,856	Tol - 4,579	Onoun - 633
Fono - 388	Wonei - 638	Piherah - 227
Piis-Penau - 376	Paata - 1,107	Unanu/Onari - 193
Tonoas - 3,517	Polle - 1,498	Onou - 172
Fefen - 3,471	Eot - 266	Magur/Makur - 159
Uman - 2,554	Romanum - 865	
Parem - 342	Fanapanges - 672	
Siis - 349	Udot - 1,680	

Mortlock Islands	Nomwin Atoll	Pulusuk
Ettal - 672	Nomwin - 763	Pulusuk - 1,116
Kuttu - 323	Fananu - 580	
Oneop - 400		
Nema - 676		
Piis-Emwar - 258		
Lekinioch - 848		
Satawan - 692		
Namoluk - 355		
Losap - 248		
Ta - 273		
Moch - 932		



HAZARDS

Chuuk's geography and climate create a multi-hazard environment. Chuuk is exposed to tropical cyclones, drought, flooding, and landslides, as well as anthropogenic hazards.



Tropical Cyclones

- Primary typhoon tracks lie north and west of Chuuk; storms pass within several hundred miles
- Impacts: wind and storm surges damage housing and facilities, destroy crops, and contaminate water
- Outer islands are particularly vulnerable to isolation as sea states may prevent immediate relief via maritime routes



Drought

- El Niño-Southern Oscillation's (ENSO) El Niño phase often brings reduced cloud formation, suppressed rainfall, and prolonged dry periods
- Impacts: drinking water shortages, food insecurity
- Main islands rely on surface and ground water, while outer islands are largely dependent on rainwater harvesting and are vulnerable to prolonged drought



Coastal Flooding & King Tides

- During ENSO's La Niña phases, higher-than-normal sea levels and intensified trade winds amplify the reach of king tides
- Impacts: salt entering soil and groundwater leads to drinking water shortages and food insecurity
- Communities and infrastructure are concentrated in narrow, low-lying coastal strips



Landslides

- Heavy rainfall over the high islands' slopes destabilizes soil and rock; landslides and rockfalls often occur concurrently with flooding
- Impacts: blockages of or damage to primary roadways isolates communities
- Debris clearance capacity is limited



Oil Leakage from Sunken World War II Ships

- Chuuk Lagoon is the site of over 60 deteriorating World War II shipwrecks that contain oil and other hazardous materials that are leaking
- Oil spills can contaminate water and food sources, threaten fisheries, and pose health risks
- The scale and complexity of oil spill risks exceed local capacity, requiring external resources for specialized technical expertise, equipment, and international collaboration to mitigate and respond



DISASTER PROFILE (2006-2026)

The impacts of disasters over 20 years point to the types of relief and recovery support Chuuk may need.



March 2007: Large swell and high tides caused flooding, erosion, destruction of croplands, and salt contamination in drinking water; 90% of taro was destroyed on outer islands.



March – November 2007: El Niño-induced drought resulted in the loss of agricultural production. The US issued an emergency declaration and authorized government assistance for Chuuk State.



December 2008: High tidal surge event caused coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion, leading to crop damage in the Mortlocks, Namonuitos, and Halls regions.



November 2012: Typhoon Bopha caused damage to housing and livelihoods in the Mortlock Islands.



March 2015: Typhoon Maysak made landfall at Chuuk Lagoon; it contaminated water sources, damaged crops and infrastructure, and killed five people; 830 dwellings on Weno were destroyed, and 6,000 people were displaced.



2016: Drought declared; some 100,00 people affected nationally. Following a Chuuk State Declaration of Disaster Emergency, the El Niño Joint Task Force was activated.



February 2019: Tropical Cyclone Wutip struck Chuuk's Mortlocks and Northwestern Islands. Infrastructure, food crops, and water sources suffered extensive damage.



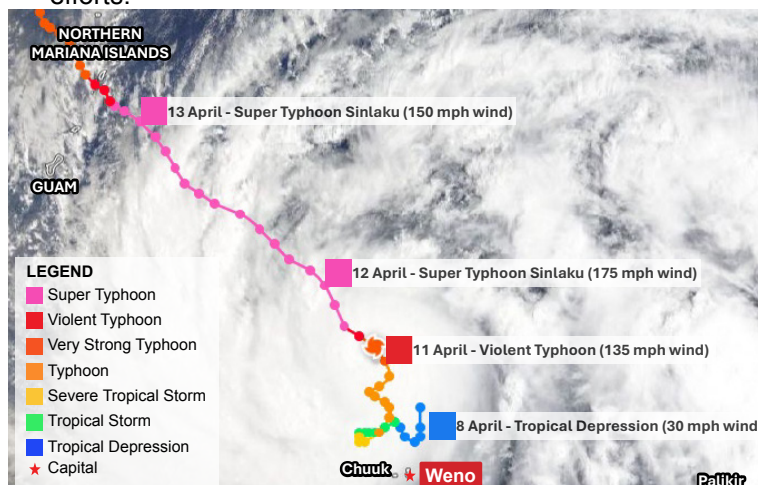
December 2021: King tide and storm surge-driven coastal flooding wiped out crops and damaged infrastructure.



January 2024: A large storm north of FSM created high surf and led to coastal flooding on Lekinioch Island in Chuuk State; it destroyed taro crops.



April 2026: Typhoon Sinlaku intensified over Chuuk State. It inflicted catastrophic wind, rain, and storm surge damage to critical infrastructure, housing, and food crops. This devastation prompted the FSM government to request assistance, triggering U.S. and international response efforts.



Typhoon Sinlaku Track (2026). Source: Zoom Earth



Chuuk State's DM system operates within the legal framework of the FSM Disaster Relief Assistance Act (1989). Disaster response authority is shared between national and state governments, with states responsible for initial response and the national government responsible for national and international coordination when local capacity is exceeded.

- **Disaster Assistance Act 1989** – Legal framework for preparedness, response, and recovery in FSM; provides roles and responsibilities; requires states to develop disaster plans
- **Chuuk State Constitution Article VI, Section 12** – Legal basis for activating the CDEOC and mobilizing state resources
- **Chuuk State Disaster Management Plan (2024)** – Outlines roles and responsibilities for disaster management and response; establishes comprehensive structure for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and recovery
- **Chuuk State Standard Operating Procedure for Emergency and Disaster Response** – Playbook for executing disaster response operations; clarifies coordination between state departments and municipal authorities

Chuuk's disaster response system flows from the Governor through the Disaster Coordination Office, but operational effectiveness depends heavily on municipal leaders, traditional networks, and a small number of critical service providers.

Governor of Chuuk State

- Responsible for formulation of DM policies; manages national and international assistance when provided
- Decision authority to declare state of emergency and activate CDEOC, Governor's Disaster Committee, and State Disaster Coordination Team

Lieutenant Governor

- Chair of the Governor's Disaster Committee
- Approves broadcast announcements and warning messages

CDEOC Director / Incident Commander

- Chair of the State Disaster Coordination Team
- Oversees emergency and disaster operations
- Operational liaison with the national government

Governor's Disaster Committee

- Comprises all department or office heads and serves as an advisory body
- Activated by the Governor in full or part, depending on the scope of the disaster event
- Facilitates agreements between state agencies for use of assets during an emergency or disaster response

State Disaster Coordination Team (SDCT)

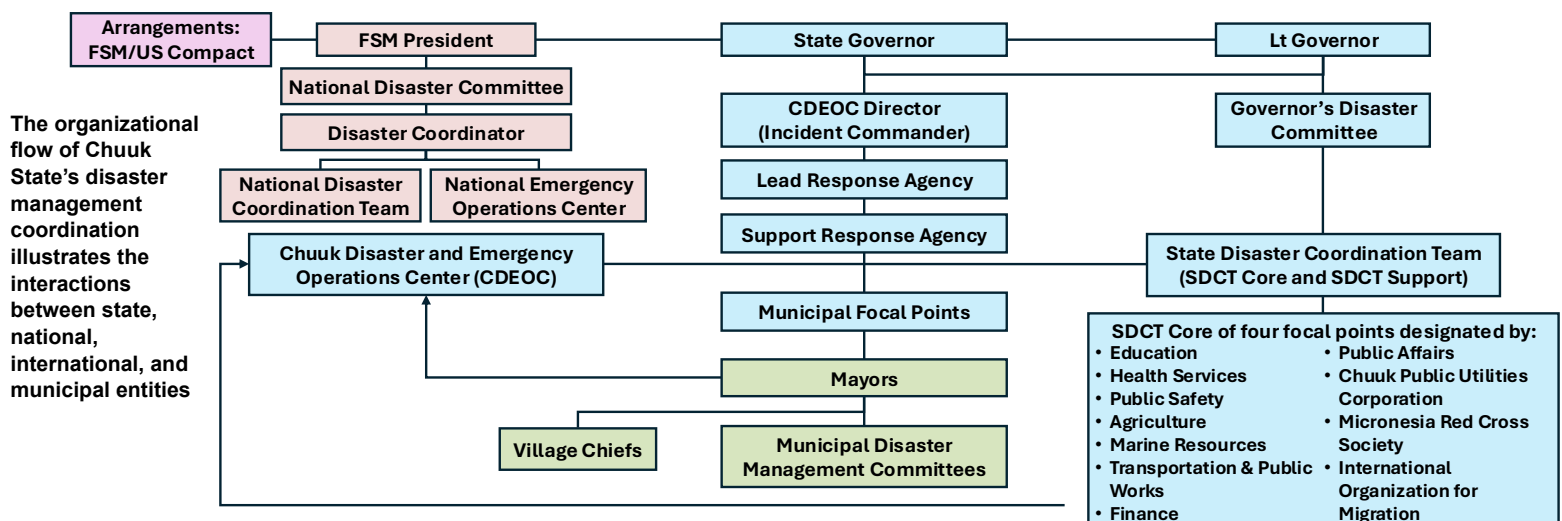
- Comprises focal points from each department, state agency, and partner organization that participates in state emergency operations or disaster response
- Facilitates coordination and cooperation for effective and efficient response
- Four focal points from designated departments rotate on 6-hour shifts when the CDEOC is activated

Municipal Focal Points

- Operate outer island radio to receive warning announcements from CDEOC
- Assist in evacuation
- Conduct initial damage assessments and report information to CDEOC

CDEOC and Command Post

- Command post is an on-site coordination location for isolated or localized incidents
- CDEOC, located in Weno, is used for response coordination for emergencies or disasters that are not isolated to one geographic area



Hazard-Specific Lead Response Agencies:

- Epidemic/pandemic and hazardous material: Health Services and/or Environmental Protection Agency
- Airport and seaport incident: Transportation and Public Works
- Search and rescue: Public Safety, Transportation, and Public Works
- Fire (domestic and forest): Public Safety
- Environmental pollution and oil spill: Environmental Protection Agency
- Agricultural incident: Agriculture
- Civil unrest: Public Safety
- Natural hazards: CDEOC

Other Organizations

- Chuuk Public Utilities Corporation
- FSM Telecom
- FSM Petrocorp
- Weather Service Office
- Chuuk Conservation Society
- Chuuk Women's Council
- Chuuk Chamber of Commerce
- UN entities
- Micronesia Red Cross Society



INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

Chuuk cannot independently request international assistance; this process follows FSM national protocols, directed by the FSM President and on the advice of and through the National Disaster Committee. When a disaster exceeds Chuuk's capacity, the Governor declares an emergency. If the need also outstrips national capacity, the FSM national government formally requests international assistance and engages international partners through the National Disaster Committee.

UN entities, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and foreign government partners may provide humanitarian relief.

U.S. Assistance

The U.S. Department of State is the lead federal agency (LFA) for the coordination of U.S. foreign disaster response. Based on the COFA and other agreements, following a U.S. Presidential Disaster Declaration, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds major disaster assistance to FSM and may provide technical expertise and assessment personnel for Joint Damage Assessments (JDA). The U.S. Chief of Mission in FSM is responsible for overall coordination of U.S. Government assistance to the country.

Recurrent natural disasters threaten to destabilize FSM, and any subsequent humanitarian crisis could be exploited by strategic competitors. While the Department of State is the designated LFA, the logistical challenges of responding to disasters across FSM, including on Chuuk's remote islands, could necessitate Department of War (DoW) support and, therefore, U.S. Pacific Command (US PACOM) assets for transport, assessment, and delivery of supplies.

Compact of Free Association

FSM is a sovereign nation in free association with the U.S. Among other terms, the COFA spells out that:

- The U.S. retains defense rights and responsibilities in FSM
- FSM is eligible for U.S. federal disaster assistance
- The U.S. has strategic denial authority in the region

Under the COFA (2024), Article X addresses the authorities that govern disaster assistance.

Typhoon Wutip Response (2019)

The Wutip response underscores the logistical challenges and coordination required to deliver disaster assistance across Chuuk.

Impact: Damage to infrastructure, including schools, dispensaries, community halls, churches, and crops. Water sources on outer islands were contaminated and undrinkable. No injuries or fatalities were reported. Schools closed due to major damage and displaced families sheltering in classrooms.

Logistical Challenges: Response efforts faced delays due to debris on airstrips, lack of ports or jetties, and low tides or strong currents that affected unloading.

Response Timeline:

- 20-22 February: Chuuk activated its Command Post; State and National Emergency Declarations issued
- 26 February: First response teams deployed to outer islands
- 12 March: U.S. Chargé d'Affaires declared a disaster, enabling LFA, FEMA, and FSM to carry out a JDA
- 30 April: Leveraging its shallow-water capabilities, USNS Brunswick supported recovery in coordination with LFA
- 7 May: U.S. President approved disaster declaration under COFA to enable the release of FEMA funding; with the funding, LFA supported Catholic Relief Services and International Organization for Migration to provide food assistance

Sources:

Chuuk State Government. <https://gov.fm/chuuk-government/>
Chuuk State. Chuuk State Standard Operating Procedure for Emergency and Disaster Response. September 2024
Chuuk State. Chuuk State Disaster Management Plan. September 2024
Chuuk State. Chuuk Joint State Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change. Accessed January 2019. <https://bsrp.gsd.spc.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/chuuk-action-plan-for-web.pdf>
Federated States of Micronesia. Chuuk Joint State Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change. 2017
Federated States of Micronesia. FSM Disaster Timeline. Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://fsm-data.sprep.org/system/files/FSM%20disaster%20timeline.pdf>
Federated States of Micronesia. FSM Strategic Development Plan.
Federated States of Micronesia. Typhoon WUTIP Situation Report No. 1. Accessed Feb 23, 2026. <https://fsm-data.sprep.org/system/files/Typhoon%20WUTIP%20Situation%20Report%20No.%201.pdf>
"FSM's Mori declares national emergency." Marianas Variety, 5 January 2009. https://www.mvariety.com/news/local/fsm-mori-declares-national-emergency/article_78a3722d-88bf-5156-9dcd-de0094bb14ae.html
NOAA. Historical Hurricane Tracks. Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://coast.noaa.gov/hurricanes/pacific-data-hub-mdpp-ettal-report>. Accessed Feb 20, 2026. <https://pacific-data.sprep.org/system/files/6b09efdb-c0d0-44e3-9be9-52defaaf782d/MDPP%2520-%2520Ettal%2520%2520%25281%2529.pdf>
"FSM Hit by Coastal Flooding, Extent of Damage Being Assessed." Guam Pacific Daily News, December 2021. https://www.guampdn.com/news/fsm-hit-by-coastal-flooding-extent-of-damage-being-assessed/article_73dfc080-56f4-11ec-8880-af3e3487cfed.html
"State of Emergency Declared in Chuuk." Pacific Island Times, December 2021. <https://www.pacificislandtimes.com/post/state-of-emergency-declared-in-chuuk>
"Rebuilding Homes and Enhancing Disaster Preparedness Following Typhoon Wutip." IOM Regional Office for Asia-Pacific. Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://roasiapacific.iom.int/news/rebuilding-homes-and-enhancing-disaster-preparedness-following-typhoon-wutip-federated-states-micronesia>
"Maysak Displaces Thousands in FSM's Chuuk." RNZ Pacific News, April 2015. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/270302/maysak-displaces-thousands-in-fsm-s-chuuk>
USAID/OFDA Program Summary: Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands. USAID, Aug 20, 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/report/micronesia-federated-states/usaiddofda-program-summary-federated-states-micronesia-and-3>
PreventionWeb. FSM PDNA Report to FSM Government. [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/27083_fsmpdnareport-tofsmgovernment\[1\].pdf?startDownload=true](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/27083_fsmpdnareport-tofsmgovernment[1].pdf?startDownload=true)
Federated States of Micronesia. Press Release: FSM Government Response to Typhoon Mitag. April 11, 2002. <https://www.fsmgov.org/press/nw041102.htm>



Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance

📍 456 Hornet Avenue, Building 76, Ford Island Joint Base Pearl Harbor - Hickam, Hawaii 96860-3503

✉ Email: indopacom.jbphh.indopacom.mbx.cfe-dmha@us.navy.mil

🌐 <https://www.cfe-dmha.org>

☎ Tel: 808.472.0518 DSN: 315.472.0518

✉ @cfedmha