# Title: **HURRICANE IDALIA: SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS**

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Hurricane Idalia made landfall in Florida Wednesday morning bringing with it storm surges upwards of 15-feet in height, flooding, and heavy winds. After making landfall in the “Big Bend” region of Florida, Idalia progressed northeastward through the state, leaving a trail of wind damage and flooding in its wake as it passed through Georgia and impacting the Carolinas before being reclassified as a tropical storm that moved offshore on Thursday.

The category 3 hurricane heavily impacted the supply chain, forcing airports, marine cargo ports, and distribution hubs to cease or reduce operations in preparation for and during the storm. Several parcel delivery giants temporarily closed facilities during the storm, and continue to experience delays and service disruptions throughout affected areas in Florida and Georgia.

**AIR FREIGHT DISRUPTIONS**

“TPA is fortunate to have avoided the worst effects of such a dangerous storm, after acting in an abundance of caution to protect the safety of our passengers, employees and facilities. We’re focused now on returning to full operational capacity to continue serving our community and to assist in recovery efforts for our fellow Floridians.” -Joe Lopano, CEO Tampa International Airport-

The disruption caused by Hurricane Idalia was felt across the air freight industry, affecting not only carriers but also airports, distribution centers, and customers. Airports in Florida faced closures and delays due to adverse weather conditions. These closures rippled through the entire supply chain, causing delays in cargo processing and distribution.

* Tampa International Airport (TPA) shuttered operations at 12:01 p.m. local time on Tuesday. Arrival flight operations resumed at 4 p.m. local time on Wednesday with full operations (including departures) resuming on Thursday, August 31. The airport avoided serious storm damage.
* Jacksonville International Airport (JAX) ceased operations on Tuesday in preparation for Idalia. The airport resumed partial operations on Wednesday and resumed normal operations on Thursday, August 31.

**MARINE PORTS IMPACTED**

Following temporary closures prompted by the storm, major ports in the Southeastern U.S. are gradually resuming operations. With the Idalia’s movement away from the coast, Port Tampa Bay, the Port of Jacksonville, and ports in Savannah and Brunswick have initiated their reopening processes. In South Carolina, the Port of Charleston remained functional for land side operations without interruption while ports in North Carolina encountered disruptions and faced temporary closures due to the storm’s impact.

**STRATEGIES FOR SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE**

A range of options are available for businesses to mitigate disruptions to their supply chain when natural disasters, such as Hurricane Idalia, impact freight movement. Implementing the following steps will significantly strengthen supply chain resilience.

1. Teamwork and Partnerships: Join forces with a freight forwarding company that understands the art of logistics. They will have a network of reliable carriers, and they can leverage these relationships to keep your supply chain moving even during disruptions. They will be able to develop mitigation plans by substituting carriers, employing alternative transportation modes, and revising routes to keep freight moving.
2. Warehouses and Smart Inventory: Establish secure warehousing facilities that will serve as a protective cushion during uncertain times. This approach provides stability to businesses when circumstances are unpredictable. Additionally, strategically locating inventory close to key markets and embracing flexible inventory management approaches enables businesses to maintain balance between supply and demand.
3. Power of Technology: Employ cutting-edge tools that offer enhanced visibility into supply chain management. Innovations like data analytics and real-time tracking systems enhance the efficiency and simplicity of the process. These tools empower businesses to troubleshoot challenges and make swift adjustments.

In a world where disruptions are becoming more common due to things like natural disasters and climate changes, being ready is the name of the game, companies that adopt these forward-thinking strategies will be better prepared to confront challenges head-on.