

It's HURRICANE Season!

Are You Ready?

It is very important for you to understand the terminology used when giving you information on the severity, intensity, and disaster potential of the weather during hurricane season.

Terminology and Intensity

Small Craft Advisory: Issued when a tropical storm or hurricane moves within several hundred miles of the coast. Boaters are advised to take precautions and not venture into the open sea. Wind speeds must usually be at least 20 miles per hour for a small craft advisory to be issued.

Gale Warnings: Issued when coastal wind speeds are between 39 and 54 miles per hour (34-47 knots).

Storm Warnings: Issued when winds of 55-73 miles per hour (48-63 Knots) are expected on area waters.

Hurricane Watch: Issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions developing within 24-36 hours.

Hurricane Warning: Issued when winds of 74 miles per hour or more (64 knots) are expected within 24 hours. People within the warning area should begin to take action to protect life and property.

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms often develop when hurricanes and tropical storms make landfall. A watch means these storms are possible.

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Tornadoes or severe thunderstorms are actually occurring within a warning area.

Tropical Disturbance: An area of showers and thunderstorms that may have a slight cyclonic (counter-clockwise) circulation and maintains its identity for at least 24 hours.

Tropical Depression: A storm system displaying a noticeable circulation with maximum sustained wind speeds of 38 miles per hour (33 knots).

Tropical Storm: A storm system with sustained wind speeds of 39 to 73 miles per hour (34-62 knots). When reaching tropical storm strength a storm is given a name to aid in tracking.

Hurricane: A storm system with sustained winds of 74 miles per hour (64 knots) or more. In the western North Pacific and most of the South Pacific, such storms are called Typhoons. In the Indian Ocean they are called Cyclones.

Hurricane Disaster Potential

Category 1: Pressure: 28.94" (980 Mb) or Greater.
Winds: 74-95 MPH
Storm Surge: 4-5 feet

Minimal damage, primarily to trees, foliage, and unanchored mobile homes. No real damage to other structures. Some small craft may be torn from moorings.

Category 2: Pressure: 28.93" to 28.5" (980 Mb)
Winds: 96-110 MPH
Storm Surge: 6-8 feet

Moderate damage. Some trees blown down. Some windows, doors, and/or roofing damage. Small craft torn from moorings in unprotected anchorage. Some evacuation of shoreline and low-lying island residents.

Category 3: Pressure: 28.49" to 27.91" (964-945 Mb)
Winds: 111-130" MPH
Storm Surge: 9-12 feet

Extensive damage. Large trees blown down. Some structural damage to small buildings. Mobile homes destroyed. Serious coastal flooding. Many small structures near the coast destroyed by wind and waves. Almost all small boats torn from moorings.

Category 4: Pressure: 27.9" to 27.17" (944-920 Mb)
Winds: 131-155 MPH
Storm Surge: 13-18 feet

Extensive damage to roofs on many smaller structures and buildings. Terrain 10 feet or less above sea level flooded. Escape routes cut by rising water 3 to 5 hours before hurricane center arrives. Massive coastal evacuation required.

Category 5: Pressure: <27.17" (920 Mb)
Winds: 156 MPH or more

Storm Surge: 19 feet or more

Catastrophic damage. Complete failure of roofs on residences and many commercial buildings. Small structures overturned or blown away. Massive evacuation from low ground within 5-10 miles of the coast.

Hurricane Survival Checklist

Before Hurricane Season

- Understand the storm risks to your area
- Contact local emergency office for information
- Plan possible evacuation routes
- Check the location of shelters
- Review home and flood insurance policies
- Trim and prune trees and shrubbery
- Develop an emergency communication plan for your family
- Find an out-of-state friend or relative to act as an emergency contact
- Check emergency equipment such as generators, flashlights, portable radios, and cell phones

When a Hurricane Watch is issued

- Monitor storm progress on TV, radio, and NOAA Weather Radio
- Check supply of batteries
- Fuel vehicles
- Check supplies of non-perishable foods. Don't forget a manual can opener!
- Check supply of prescription drugs and first aid items
- Make sure you have an adequate supply of pet food
- Collect copies of valuable papers, including insurance policies
- Review family evacuation and communication plans
- Have extra CASH on hand
- Moor boats in safe areas or take them out of the water
- Prepare to bring inside lawn furniture, tools. And any other objects that could be blown around by storm winds

When a Hurricane Warning is issued

- Store fresh drinking water in bathtubs, bottles, jugs, and pots
- Finish putting up storm shutters, storing loose objects, etc.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings

- If in a mobile home, check tie downs and *Evacuate!*
- Closely monitor radio, TV, and NOAA Weather Radio
- Store valuables in waterproof containers
- Follow instructions of local officials. *Leave if told to do so!*

If Evacuating

- Leave as soon as possible
- Secure your home: unplug appliances, turn off electricity, propane, and main water valve
- Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going
- Bring extra clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, personal hygiene items, required medications, games, toys, and books, as well as important papers
- Leave food and water for pets that cannot travel with you

If Staying Home

- Stay inside and away from doors, windows and skylights
- Fill bathtub with water and open refrigerator **only** when necessary
- Turn off propane tanks
- If power is lost, turn off major appliances to limit damage when power is restored
- Use only battery operated lights. **DO NOT use candles or open flames!**

When a Hurricane Strikes

- Stay away from windows, even if they are covered
- Brace all exterior doors and close all interior doors
- Go to a small interior first-floor room, such as a bathroom or closet for maximum protection
- Do not go outside if the storm “eye” passes overhead.. Hurricane force winds will soon return

After the Storm

- Stay away from downed, loose or dangling electric lines and report them to authorities
- Check gas, water, and electrical lines leading to your home for possible damage
- **Avoid using candles and open flames**
- If using a generator, make sure your home is isolated from other sources of electricity

- Make sure tap water is not contaminated before drinking or using it for cooking
- Drive **ONLY** if absolutely necessary
- Take pictures of damage to house, furnishings, and surroundings for insurance claims