GENERAL HURRICANE INFORMATION



KNOW THE HAZARDS:

WIND — A hurricane is a tropical storm with constant winds greater than 74 miles per hour. These winds can extend inland for hundreds of miles. Hurricanes can spawn tornadoes which add to its potential destruction.

RAIN — Because of the tropical nature of hurricanes, they contain rain. Sometimes the torrential rain will cause floods and flash flooding.

STORM SURGE — The most dangerous element of a hurricane is storm surge. This is a dome of ocean water than can be 20 feet high at its peak and 50 to 100 miles wide. Nine out of ten hurricane fatalities are attributable to the storm surge.

WATCHES AND WARNINGS:

HURRICANE WATCH — The National Weather Service issues the advisory when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.

HURRICANE WARNING — This National Weather Service advisory is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in 24 hours or less.

HURRICANE CATEGORIES:

CATEGORY WIND SPEED STORM SURGE

1 74-95 MPH 4-5 FEET

Damage primarily to shrubbery, trees, and unanchored mobile homes. No real damage to other structures. Some damage to poorly-constructed signs. Low-lying coastal roads inundated, minor pier damage, some small craft in exposed anchorage torn from moorings.

2 96-110 MPH 6-8 FEET

Considerable damage to shrubbery and tree foliage; some trees blown down. Major damage to exposed mobile homes. Extensive damage to poorly constructed signs; some damage to roofing materials of buildings; and some window and door damage. No major damage to buildings. Coastal roads and low-lying escape routes inland cut by rising water 2-4 hours before arrival of the hurricane's center. Considerable damage to piers. Marinas flooded and small craft in unprotected anchorages torn from moorings.

3 111-130 MPH 9-12 FEET

Foliage torn from trees; large trees blown down. Practically all poorly-constructed signs blown down; some damage to roofing materials of buildings; some window and door damage; and some structural damage to small buildings. Mobile homes destroyed. Serious flooding at coast and many smaller structures near coast destroyed; low-lying escape routes inland cut by rising water 3-5 hours before the hurricane's center arrives.

4 131-155 MPH 13-18 FEET

Shrubs and trees blown down; all signs down. Extensive damage to roofing materials, windows and doors; complete failure of roofs on many small residences; complete destruction of mobile homes. Major damage to lower floors of structures near shore due to flooding and battering by waves and floating debris.

5 155+ MPH 18+ FEET

Shrubs and trees blown down; considerable damage to roofs of buildings; all signs down; very severe and extensive damage to windows and doors; complete failure of roofs on many residences and industrial buildings; extensive shattering of glass in windows and doors; some complete building failures; small buildings overturned or blown away and complete destruction of mobile homes. Low-lying escape routes inland cut by rising water 3-5 hours before the hurricane's center arrives.