

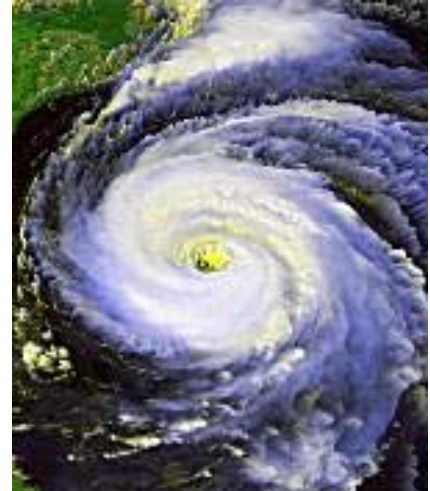


Preparing for Hurricanes

Hurricane season starts June 1st and lasts until November 30th. You can't avoid a hurricane, but you can prepare for one to reduce the damage and injury it may cause.

Are hurricanes a problem where I live?

In the U.S., hurricanes happen most often along the East Coast. Texas, Louisiana, and Florida are at the highest risk. However, hurricanes can travel all along the coast. For example, in the 1980's, Hurricane Gloria struck New England, causing over \$900 million in damage. Hurricanes cause damage because of high winds and flooding. If you live in a flood plain, your home may be at risk for damage.



What's the difference between a hurricane watch and a warning?

If a hurricane is coming, TV and radio will broadcast storm watches and warnings. These give you time to prepare for the storm and to evacuate (leave the area) if needed.

- **A hurricane watch** means that a hurricane may strike the area you live in within the next 36 hours.
- **A hurricane warning** means that a hurricane is expected to strike the area that you live in within the next 24 hours or less. This means that there will be winds of at least 74 miles per hour.

Hurricane forecasts are online on the National Weather Service's website:

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Why do hurricanes cause so much damage?

Hurricanes have caused billions of dollars in damage in the U.S. and can hurt people in their paths. As they make landfall they can cause:

- **Storm surge:** This is a big wave of water pushed onto the shore by a hurricane. It can be fifteen feet tall or higher. The force of the wave can damage buildings and other structures. In low-lying areas, the rise in water level caused by a storm surge can lead to flooding.
- **High winds:** These can blow roofs off, knock down trees, and destroy buildings. Blowing debris carried by high winds can also cause injuries.
- **Heavy rainfall:** Heavy rains can combine with a storm surge to cause serious flooding.
- **Tornadoes:** Tornadoes sometimes form during hurricanes and tropical storms.

What can I do to prepare?

- **Develop a family plan:** Talk to your family about your “safe room”, evacuation routes, escape routes from your home and places to meet if you need to leave your home. Think of an out-of-state friend or family member who everyone in your family can contact if you are separated from one another. This person can find out where everyone is and whether you are safe.
- **Create a disaster supply kit:** You will need non-perishable food, water, a flashlight and battery operated or crank operated radio, a first aid kit, and other supplies.
- **Protect your home:** Find out if you can buy flood insurance. Before a hurricane, board up or shutter windows.
- **Find out how to evacuate:** If you live in an evacuation zone, find out how to follow the evacuation routes. These are usually marked by signs. Know what kind of transportation you will need to use to evacuate if you don't have your own car.
- **Pick a “Safe Room”:** If you do not live in an evacuation zone or a mobile home, pick a “Safe Room”. It should be a room that is in the middle of the house or building. This is to protect you from being injured by high winds during a hurricane. If you are in a flood zone, you may still need to leave your home because you can be trapped in your home by the floodwaters.

Where can I learn more about preparing for hurricanes?

- **For a complete list of tips, visit the NOAA Hurricane Preparedness Week website:** You will find information about hurricanes and their risks and links to websites with information on preparing for hurricanes at: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml>
- **The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) Hurricane website:** For information about preparing for and recovering from a hurricane, and links to storm watch websites and forecasts visit <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/index.shtm>
- **The National Flood Insurance Program**
To learn more about floods and to assess your flood risk, visit <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/>
- **The National Weather Service Forecast Site**
For hurricane forecasts visit <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>



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