

## HURRICANES

The Atlantic Hurricane Season officially begins on June 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on November 30<sup>th</sup>; however, hurricanes or tropical cyclones may occur at any time. Historically, the most active months for hurricanes in this area are August and September.

The Saffir–Simpson Hurricane Scale classifies hurricanes (that exceed the intensities of tropical depressions and tropical storms) into five categories distinguished by the intensities of their sustained winds. To be classified as a hurricane, a tropical cyclone must have maximum sustained winds of at least 74 mph (33 m/s; 64 kn; 119 km/h) (Category 1). The highest classification in the scale, Category 5, is reserved for storms with winds exceeding 155 mph (69 m/s; 135 kn; 249 km/h). The classifications can provide some indication of the potential damage and flooding a hurricane will cause upon landfall.

Category	Wind Speed (mph)	Storm Surge (ft.)
Tropical Depression	0-38	0
Tropical Storm	39-73	0 to 3
Hurricanes		
Cat 1	74-95	4 to 5
Cat 2	96-110	6 to 8
Cat 3	111-130	9 to 12
Cat 4	131-155	13 to 18
Cat 5	≥ 156	> 18

Hurricanes move in a counterclockwise spiral. The storm's calm center, called an eye, is about 20 to 30 miles wide. The storm around the eye can extend outward 400 miles. It's important to know what to do before, during, and after a hurricane.

### Before...

1. Have a hurricane disaster plan: Locate local shelters. Map the route to a nearby shelter; this will cut down on the travel time. Make sure you know how to get there before an evacuation order is issued.
2. If you are not ordered to evacuate, find shelter in your home. The safest place during a hurricane is an interior room without windows. Get your home and yard ready for a hurricane. Install hurricane shutters; remove dead and diseased trees and branches; identify items in the yard that should be brought inside; clean rain gutters, outside stairwells, window wells, drain lines, and downspouts.
  - Family members can become separated during a hurricane. Be prepared by creating a plan for how to reach one another. Establish an out-of-area contact (such as a relative or family friend) who can coordinate family members' locations and information should you become separated. Make sure children learn the phone numbers and addresses, and know the emergency plans.

- Prepare a [family disaster supplies kit](#). Families with children should have each child create their own personal pack.

### **During...**

1. If a hurricane watch has been issued for your area, conditions are favorable for and could produce a hurricane. Listen to the news and the weather updates and make sure you leave if an official evacuation is ordered. Cover your windows with hurricane shutters or plywood. Taping windows offers little or no protection against the winds. If a hurricane warning has been issued, a violent storm, possibly a hurricane, is expected within 24 hours.
  - Remain inside, away from windows and doors.
  - During power outages avoid carrying a lit candle. Use flashlights instead. Don't use a lit candle when searching for items in a confined space. Never use a candle for a light when checking pilot lights or fueling equipment such as a kerosene heater or lantern. The flame may ignite the fumes.
  - Do not be fooled by the calm when the eye of the hurricane is above your area; the worst of the storm is probably yet to come.
  - Be prepared for tornadoes caused by hurricanes; remain inside and at the center of your home or in a closet or basement.
2. If you are evacuated, take your [family disaster supplies kit](#) and leave immediately to a nearby shelter.

### **After...**

1. Continue to listen to the news and weather updates. Often when the storm is over, damage still exists from floods, downed power lines, and electrically charged water.
2. Stay out of buildings that have been damaged or flooded and obey detour and warning signs when driving. Never enter a flooded or barricaded roadway (even with a large vehicle) vehicles can be swept away by only two feet of water.