



STORMS AND HURRICANES

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over warm ocean waters and move toward land. Potential threats from hurricanes include powerful winds, heavy rainfall, storm surges, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, tornadoes, and landslides. Hurricanes can happen along any U.S. coast or in any territory in the Atlantic or Pacific oceans. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30. The Pacific hurricane season runs from May 15 to November 30. Hurricanes can affect areas more than 100 miles inland and are most active in September.



The Hawaiian Islands sit amid storm tracks. Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, though storms are also known to appear outside of this seasonal window. Ranging from tropical depressions to full-blown hurricanes, these systems usually form off the coast of Central America and move in a westerly direction between 10 degrees to 20 degrees north latitude. Winds and storm-generated waves present significant hazards. Coastal flooding from the ocean often occurs in low-lying areas. Torrential rains from tropical storms can also turn small streams into raging torrents, causing dangerous rockslides, mudslides, and flash flooding.

Terms Related to Hurricanes and Tropical Storms

- ❖ **Tropical Disturbance**: A moving area of thunderstorms that maintains its identity for 24 hours or more.
- ❖ **Tropical Depression**: A low-pressure system or cyclone with sustained winds of less than 39 miles per hour (mph).
- ❖ **Tropical Storm**: A cyclone where winds range from 39 to 73 mph.
 - Flash Flood Watch - Possible flood in the area; stay alert.
 - Flash Flood Warning - Imminent or occurring.
 - Gale Warning - Winds of 39 - 54 miles per hour.
 - Storm Warning - Winds of 55-73 miles per hour are expected, a storm warning is given. Storm warning may be upgraded to a Hurricane Warning.
- ❖ **Hurricane**: A tropical cyclone with winds of 74 mph or more. Torrential rains, destructive waves, and high waters known as storm surges may create flood conditions in coastal and low-lying areas.



- Hurricane Watch - Issued when there is a possibility of a threat to coastal and inland regions within 36 hours.
- Hurricane Warning - Issued when sustained winds of 74 miles per hour or more are expected in a specified area in 24 hours or less

Storm Preparations

Do not wait until a storm is about to hit to make your emergency preparations. Prepare your business and employees ahead of time to prevent unnecessary damage to your property and physical injury to yourself and others. There are many tasks that must be undertaken to properly prepare for a hurricane.

The following are recommendations for hurricane preparedness:

- ❖ Acquire radio and place in main office to ensure continuous monitoring of weather information.
- ❖ If internet access is available, check the following web sites and share relevant data with ECC and staff.
 - **National Hurricane Centre** - <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>
 - **Weather Net** - <http://cirrus.sprl.umich.edu:80/wxnet/tropical.html>
- ❖ If the weather channel is accessible, regularly check to obtain storm tracking information.
- ❖ Heavy surf often reaches island shores a day or two ahead of a tropical storm or hurricane, causing damage to homes and roadways.
- ❖ Storms approaching the islands from the south tend to do more damage than those approaching from other directions.
- ❖ Strong winds can cause tree branches to fall, garbage cans and other items can become projectiles.
- ❖ Be aware of your surrounding buildings to keep you safe.
- ❖ Stock your emergency preparedness kit.
- ❖ Plan method of communication in case of power loss. Atlas will deploy their communication plan.
- ❖ Review the Atlas evacuation zone, evacuation route and shelter locations.
 - An order to evacuate may come quickly, so plan ahead.
- ❖ ECC should meet regularly to review the procedures, updates for action, and review hurricane procedures with all staff.
- ❖ Keep your car in good working condition, and keep the gas tank full, stock your vehicle with emergency supplies and a change of clothes.

What to Expect in a Hurricane

- ❖ Devastating forces in a hurricane are wind and water.
- ❖ Rise in sea level which may cause coastal devastation and winds can be hazardous.
- ❖ Wind speeds may vary from hurricane to hurricane, and within each storm. Wind gusts may exceed sustained winds by 25 to 50 percent.

The office may remain closed due to road closures, property and office damage. Many employees will not be able to return to work because of personal difficulties. Therefore, the Atlas Continuity plan may be deployed in order to get back to operating as best and quick as possible.