



Disaster Preparedness Newsletter

November, 2008

Volume 1, Number 3

In This Issue

How Hurricanes Form

How to Shelter-in-Place

Disaster-Related Deaths

Upcoming Events for November and December

Cloud Identification Guide

Next Issue...

Surviving Winter Storms

First Aid Basics

Preparing for Winter

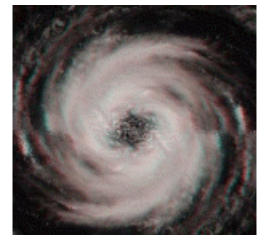
U.S. Disaster Watch

Southern California Wildfires

Flooding in Central and Southern Plains States

How Hurricanes Form

What is a hurricane? How many are there each year? How do they form? Find all the answers below.



Hurricanes rotate counter-clockwise

A hurricane is a powerful, rotating storm that forms over warm oceans near the Equator. Another name for a hurricane is a tropical cyclone. Hurricanes have strong, rotating winds (at least 74 miles per hour), a lot of rain, low air pressure, lightning and thunder. The winds of a hurricane rotate in a counterclockwise direction around a central, calm eye.

If this type of storm forms in the western Pacific Ocean, it is called a typhoon. In the eastern Pacific Ocean or the Atlantic Ocean, they are called hurricanes.

Hurricanes often travel from the ocean to the coast and onto land. Their wind, rain, and huge waves can cause extensive destruction.

Generally, when a hurricane moves over land (or over cold ocean waters) the storm begins to weaken and quickly dies down because the storm is fueled by warm water.

On average, there are about 100 tropical cyclones worldwide each year; 12 of these form in the Atlantic Ocean, 15 form in the eastern Pacific Ocean, and the rest are in other areas.

Hurricane season is the time when most Atlantic Ocean hurricanes occur; it is from June 1st until November 30th. In the eastern Pacific Ocean, the hurricane season is from May 15th until November 30th.

Continued on Page 2 ...

Disaster Preparedness Newsletter

November, 2008

Volume 1, Number 3, Page 2

How Hurricanes Form

Continued from Page 1

Hurricanes need four conditions to form:

1. low air pressure
2. warm temperatures
3. moist ocean air
4. tropical winds (near the equator)

Hurricanes form in the tropics, over warm ocean water (over 80°F or 27°C), and at latitudes between 8° and 20°. Hurricanes form mostly from June through November (hurricane season). These powerful storms are fueled by the heat energy that is released when water vapor condenses (turns into liquid water in the form of rain).

A hurricane goes through many stages as it develops:

It starts as a tropical wave, a westward-moving area of low air pressure.

As the warm, moist air over the ocean rises in the low air pressure area, cold air from above replaces it. This produces strong gusty winds, heavy rain and thunderclouds that are called a tropical disturbance.

As the air pressure drops and there are sustained winds up to 38 miles per hour, it is called a tropical depression.

When the cyclonic winds have sustained speeds from 39 to 73 miles per hour, it is called a tropical storm (storms are given names when they begin to have winds of this speed).

The storm becomes a hurricane when there are sustained winds of over 73 miles per hour.

Hurricanes lose strength when they travel over land or cold ocean water. Even then, they bring a lot of rain and flooding to affected areas.

Disaster Related Deaths

What Causes Them?

Whenever disasters strike, there are a great number of deaths. Hurricanes and cyclones are most devastating, taking many lives which could be saved. This article examines types of hurricane-related deaths.

Anywhere from 0 to 1 million people can die in a hurricane or cyclone. People die in hurricanes in a number of ways, but the major reasons are:

1. drowning
2. building collapse
3. tornadoes
4. failure to take shelter
5. failure to evacuate in a timely fashion
6. lack of adequate shelter facilities
7. deaths related to power outages
8. deaths due to starvation
9. deaths due to weather-related illnessness
10. suffocation from carbon monoxide from generators

Approximately 2,000 people died in New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Most of these people drowned in the flooding when a levee broke. 500 people died in Haiti from Hurricane Gustav due to lack of shelter facilities.

In Jacksonville this year, as hurricane Gustav approached this September, a woman died while surfing in the high waves. A man died from carbon monoxide poisoning attempting to run a generator inside his house. Another man was killed when he stepped out of his house to smoke a cigarette. A tree branch collapsed on him. These may seem like “freak accidents,” but all were clearly avoidable.

Disaster Preparedness Newsletter

November, 2008

Volume 1, Number 3, Page 3

Upcoming Events for November, December *Federal and State Emergency Preparedness Events*

November 12-14, 2008 - Los Angeles, CA
Los Angeles International Earthquake Conference
Omni Hotel

The conference will bring together the world's leading authorities in seismic safety and disaster preparation and recovery. Exchange ideas and identify best practices with public officials, academics and emergency planners from around the world. Key goals include developing policy recommendations for future legislation that will improve preparedness, response and the ability to quickly rebound from major earthquakes. The conference is part of the Great Southern California ShakeOut, which will feature the largest earthquake drill in U.S. history. The conference will be presented in partnership with the Earthquakes in Megacities Initiative (EMI), an international, not-for-profit, scientific organization that works with several megacities and metropolises in the world to reduce disaster risk. For more information, go to

<http://iec.lacity.org/html/registration.html>

November 15-20, 2008 - Kansas City (Overland Park), Kansas
IAEM 56th Annual Conference & EMEX 2008 "Putting a New Spin on Emergency Management"

The IAEM Annual Conference provides a forum for current trends and topics, information about the latest tools and technology in emergency management and homeland security, and advances IAEM committee work. Sessions encourage stakeholders at all levels of government, the private sector, public health and related professions to exchange ideas on collaborating to protect lives and property from disaster.

For more information, see <http://www.iaem.com/events/annual/intro.htm>

December 8-9, 2008 - Melbourne, Florida
Second Annual Conference on National Preparedness
Florida Institute of Technology, Global Center for Preparedness

The conference will focus on cutting-edge topics, technologies and integrated solutions including: cyber-security and interoperability; humanitarian and disaster relief logistics (HDRL); architecture and engineering-based sustainable security; command and control; situational awareness; global preparedness: policies, procedures and programs; and disaster simulation with avatar technology. The conference will feature top speakers from government, military, business, industry, non-profits, universities and professional societies.

For more information, see <http://uc.fit.edu/cnp/>

Disaster Preparedness Newsletter

November, 2008

Volume 1, Number 3, Page 4

How to Shelter In Place at Home

Red Cross Fact Sheet

What Shelter-in-Place Means

One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere is to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining indoors. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building. If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow the instructions provided in this Fact Sheet.

Why You Might Need to Shelter-in-Place

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally or intentionally into the environment. Should this occur, information will be provided by local authorities on television and radio stations on how to protect you and your family. Because information will most likely be provided on television and radio, it is important to keep a TV or radio on at all times. The important thing is for you to follow instructions of local authorities and know what to do when they advise you to shelter-in-place.

How to Shelter-in-Place At Home

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your family disaster supplies kit: <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/supplies.html> and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- Bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents in the room.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told that all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Disaster Preparedness Newsletter

November, 2008

Volume 1, Number 3, Page 5

HUD Announces Federal Assistance for Hurricane Ike Texas and Louisiana Affected

Sept. 15, 2008 (Housing & Urban Development Department Documents and Publications/ContentWorks via COMTEX) —

WASHINGTON D.C. - U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Steve Preston today announced HUD will speed federal disaster assistance to dozens of counties and parishes in Texas and Louisiana following Hurricane Ike. This assistance will support homeowners and low-income renters and includes foreclosure relief for families whose homes are insured through HUD's Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

"Hurricane Ike cut a wide path across Louisiana and Texas, and possibly uprooted many families," said Preston. "FHA's foreclosure moratorium will give these families the breathing room they need to put their lives back together without worrying about the prospect of losing their homes."

A presidential disaster declaration triggers a variety of federal assistance including grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

HUD is granting immediate foreclosure relief. In certain storm and flooded ravaged counties, HUD granted a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures of FHA-insured home mortgages and strongly recommended that loan servicers take such actions as special forbearance, loan modification, refinancing, and waiver of late charges. Foreclosure relief is available for FHA-insured families living in the following counties:

Texas

Angelina, Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Cherokee, Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Hardin, Harris, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Matagorda, Montgomery, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Trinity, Tyler, Walker, Waller, and Washington Counties.

Louisiana

Acadia, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Sabine, St. Mary, Vermilion, and Vernon Parishes.

