



GOVERNOR'S DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Main Message: Hurricane dangers include storm surge, high winds, tornadoes and heavy rains

Key Talking Points:

- Hurricanes are nature's most powerful storms. They are highly unpredictable. The smartest thing to do when a hurricane threatens is to evacuate well ahead of the storm.
- Hurricanes are measured as Categories One through Five, based on speed of the winds. But even the weakest Category One hurricane can damage buildings, knock down power lines, flood roads and uproot trees. A number of hurricane victims are killed each year by falling tree branches after the storm has passed.
- Because hurricanes are unpredictable, emergency managers always plan for a hurricane one category stronger than predicted. So should you.
- A Category Four hurricane will cause about 100 times the damage of a Category One storm.
- Hurricanes frequently will not follow the track predicted in weather broadcasts. Wind speeds can get a lot stronger just before the storm comes on shore. Hurricanes can change directions unexpectedly and strike 70 to 100 miles away from the place they were supposed to make landfall.
- Storm surge is a dome of water that can be 50 to 100 miles wide and 30 feet high or more – one of the most destructive forces on earth. A cubic yard of water weighs 1,700 pounds (a ton is 2,000 pounds).
- Many people who decided not to evacuate were killed by storm surge in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama during Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

- Tornadoes are spawned by hurricanes – even days after the storm system has moved inland. Hurricane Beulah in 1967 spawned 114 tornadoes, including seven that struck Travis County in Central Texas. Tornadoes are most likely to form in the right front quadrant of a hurricane.
- A hurricane can knock out electric power for days or weeks at a time, making life in a damaged house in the heat of summer extremely uncomfortable for residents who stay behind or return too soon.

Main Message: Tropical storms also are dangerous

Key Talking Points:

- Hurricanes and tropical storms can cause severe flooding. The slower the storm moves, the greater the flooding may be.
- Tropical storms can be killers. In 2001, Tropical Storm Allison dumped 36 inches of rain on Harris County and killed 41 people nationwide, including 22 in Texas.
- Tropical storm-force winds are strong enough to be dangerous. Evacuations must be complete before tropical storm force winds reach the area.
- Over the last 30 years, inland flooding due to tropical storms and hurricanes has been responsible for more than 50 percent of deaths related to these storms.