

"WEATHER TERMS"

By international agreement, tropical cyclone is the general term for all cyclone circulations originating over tropical waters, classified by form and intensity as follows:

Hurricane: Pronounced rotary circulation, constant wind speed of 74 miles per hours (64 knots) or more.

- A hurricane consists of a huge swirl of clouds rotating around a calm center known as the eye. A hurricane may be as much as 250 miles in diameter.
- The clouds are arranged in bands around the eye.
- The largest clouds form the wall of the eye where rain is heaviest.
- Wind speeds range from about 110 mph at 20-25 miles from the eye wall down to about 45 mph at a distance of 90 miles from the eye.

Small craft cautionary statements. When a tropical cyclone threatens a coastal area, small craft operators are advised to remain in port or not to venture into the open sea.

Gale Warnings may be issued when winds of 39- 54 miles an hour (34-47 knots) are expected. Storm Warnings may be issued when winds of 55- 73 miles an hour (48-63 knots) are expected. If a hurricane is expected to strike a coastal area, gale or storm warnings will not usually precede hurricane warnings.

A Hurricane Watch is issued for a coastal area when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.

A Hurricane Warning is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in a specified coastal area in 24 hours or less. Hurricane conditions include winds of 74 miles an hour (64 knots) and/or dangerously high tides and waves. Actions for protection of life and property should begin immediately when the warning is issued.

Flash Flood Watch means a flash flood is possible in the area; stay alert.

Flash Flood Warning means a flash flood is imminent; take immediate action.

Tornadoes spawned by hurricanes sometimes produce severe damage and casualties. If a tornado is reported in your area, a warning will be issued.

Gale warnings: Winds 38 to 55 mph.

Hurricane: A storm with a pronounced rotary circulation and a wind speed of at least 73 mph.

Category 1: Winds 73 to 95 mph. Low-lying coastal roads inundated, small craft in exposed anchorages torn from moorings, some pier damage.

Category 2: Winds 96 to 110 mph. Coastal roads and low-lying escape routes cut off by rising water two to four hours before hurricane center arrives. Marinas flooded. Some damage to windows, doors and roofing. Major damage to mobile homes.

Category 3: Winds 111 to 130 mph. Low-lying escape routes cut off by rising water three to four hours before hurricane center arrives. Mobile homes destroyed. Structural damage to small buildings. Serious coastal flooding.

Category 4: Winds 131 to 155 mph. Low-lying escape routes cut off by rising water three to five hours before hurricane center arrives. Major damage to lower floors of buildings near shore from flooding, battering by waves and debris. Collapse of roofs on small residences.

Category 5: Winds more than 155 mph. Low-lying escape routes cut off by rising water three to five hours before hurricane center arrives. Small buildings overturned. Extensive shattering of glass windows. Collapse of roofs on many residential and industrial buildings. Some buildings will collapse.

Hurricane eye: The relatively calm area near the center of a hurricane. Depending on size and speed of the hurricane, it can take several minutes or several hours for the eye to pass. When it does, the calm ends suddenly and winds return, possibly with greater force, from the opposite direction.

Hurricane warning: Issued when hurricane is expected to strike within 24 hours.

Hurricane watch: Issued when a hurricane may threaten an area within 36 hours.

Storm surge: A wave of water that moves across the coast as the hurricane makes landfall. Causes extremely high tides and flash floods.

Storm warnings: Notice that winds of 55 to 74 mph are expected.

Tropical depression: A storm with winds to 39 mph.

Tropical disturbance: A defined area of showers and thunderstorms that maintains its identity for 24 hours or more. It's the first sign of a potential hurricane.

Tropical storm: A storm with winds of 39 to 73 mph.

Tropical Storm Watch: When tropical storm conditions could threaten coastal areas within 24 to 36 hours.

Tropical Storm Warning: Winds of 39 to 73 mph.

Water spout: A tornado occurring over water, close to or touching the surface and appearing as a rapidly rotating, funnel-shaped column full of spray.