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## **Hurricane: Know Your Terms**

Familiarize yourself with these terms to help identify a hurricane hazard:

### **Tropical Depression**

An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 MPH (33 knots) or less. Sustained winds are defined as one-minute average wind measured at about 33 ft (10 meters) above the surface.

### **Tropical Storm**

An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39–73 MPH (34–63 knots).

### **Hurricane**

An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 MPH (64 knots) or higher.

### **Storm Surge**

A dome of water pushed onshore by hurricane and tropical storm winds. Storm surges can reach 25 feet high and be 50–1000 miles wide.

### **Storm Tide**

A combination of storm surge and the normal tide (i.e., a 15-foot storm surge combined with a 2-foot normal high tide over the mean sea level created a 17-foot storm tide).

### **Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch**

Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are possible in the specified area, usually within 36 hours. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

### **Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning**

Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area, usually within 24 hours.

## **Short Term Watches and Warnings**

These warnings provide detailed information about specific hurricane threats, such as flash floods and tornadoes.

## **Before a Hurricane**

To prepare for a hurricane, you should take the following measures:

- Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Determine how and where to secure your boat.
- Consider building a safe room

## **During a Hurricane**

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should:

- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks.· Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Moor your boat if time permits.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

**You should evacuate under the following conditions:**

- If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions.
- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure—such shelters are particularly hazardous during hurricanes no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- If you live in a high-rise building—hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If you feel you are in danger.

**If you are unable to evacuate, go to your safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:**

- Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

**After a Hurricane**

Recovering from a disaster is usually a gradual process. Safety is a primary issue, as are mental and physical well-being. If assistance is available, knowing how to access it makes the process faster and less stressful.