

Hurricane Hazards

Every year there is the possibility that a hurricane will disrupt our lives, living in Southwest Florida. Just because 2009 was a very quiet season for us does not mean we should not prepare for this year's season like any other.



Wind

Hurricanes are categorized by sustained winds of 74 mph to 200 mph. Refer to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale in this guide for a more detailed list of what wind can do during a storm.

Tornados

Tornados may form in the rain bands of a hurricane and cause significant damage. Tornados are commonly found in the right front quadrant of the storm. These tornados are not as intense as those in the Midwest tornado belt, but they can inflict tremendous damage with little or no warning.

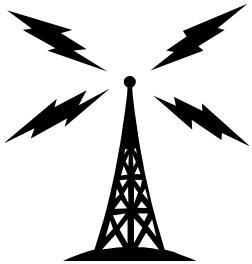
Storm Surge

Storm surge is a dome of water that moves ashore near the hurricane eyewall. It has the potential to be a major killer if evacuation is inadequate. As the storm makes landfall, tide levels of 4 to 25 feet may occur along the coastal areas and major rivers of Southwest Florida. This is enough to inundate most populated areas. Damage amounts depend on the hurricane's intensity, size, forward speed and its direction of movement. Storm surge causes salt water flooding which cripples communications, causes sewers and storm water basins to back up and contaminates drinking water supplies. Storm surge flooding washes out roads, leaving streets filled with sand and debris.



Heavy Rain

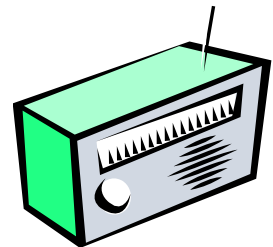
Over the past 30 years, freshwater flooding has caused more drowning deaths than storm surge flooding. Torrential rains associated with slow moving or stationary tropical weather systems can produce more than 40 inches of rain over a two-day time period. In addition to flooding residences and businesses, heavy rain can have a disastrous effect on agriculture interests by drowning crops and increasing the probability of disease and pest infestations in surviving crops. Insects, dead animals and sewage polluted water can create massive health problems.



HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN A HURRICANE OR TROPICAL STORM POSES A THREAT TO SOUTHWEST FLORIDA?

Emergency Management personnel closely monitor tropical weather and are in frequent contact with the National Hurricane Center and local Weather Forecast Office of the National Weather Service.. The local media provides frequent updates on the storm, as well as emergency protective actions recommended by the Emergency Operations Center. As a hurricane or tropical storm moves closer to Southwest Florida, your County Emergency Operations Centers will be activated. The National Weather Service also broadcasts continually over NOAA Weather Radio. Check with your local Emergency Management Office for the frequency that serves your area.

Alarm activated [NOAA Weather Radios](#) with a battery back-up are inexpensive and can be purchased locally. [NOAA Weather Broadcasts](#) are invaluable sources of “real-time” information during severe weather conditions. For emergency action statements affecting your county, listen to local radio and TV broadcasts. Please consult the “Emergency Information” on page 28 for media outlets and the NOAA FIPS code for your county.



WHAT AREAS ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO HIGH WATER LEVELS CAUSED BY STORM SURGE?

Storm surge can rise over 25 feet above normal tide levels in the Gulf of Mexico. Except for the areas of Immokalee, Lehigh Acres, eastern Sarasota County and the inland counties, a large percentage of Southwest Florida coastal residents live in areas just a few feet above sea level. Should a major land falling hurricane strike Southwest Florida, many low-lying coastal areas would be flooded to varying depths by the storm surge and wave action that accompany the storm. Tides of 3 to 4 feet above normal could occur as many as 12 hours before the “eye” of the storm reaches the coastline. Many of our coastal roads used as evacuation routes could be underwater well in advance of the storm, thus restricting their use as evacuation routes.

**EVACUATE
Early**

People living or working in coastal or flood prone areas should be prepared to evacuate and seek shelter inland as soon as a Hurricane Warning is announced. Evacuations should be completed early to avoid the high winds and heavy rain, which precede the arrival of the storm. If you live in an area that is prone to flooding, either along the coast or inland, you may be stranded without fire, law enforcement or medical support until the floodwaters subside.

HURRICANE NAMES FOR YEAR 2010

Alex	Lisa
Bonnie	Matthew
Colin	Nichole
Danielle	Otto
Earl	Paula
Fiona	Richard
Gaston	Shary
Hermine	Tomas
Igor	Virginie
Julia	Walter
Karl	