



TDCJ Risk Management's
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BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES!



June officially kicks off the beginning of hurricane season — although we've already had named Atlantic and Pacific storms. The experts predict this is going to be a very active season for hurricanes. So, now is the time to get and remain prepared!

Although those of us working in areas hundreds of miles from the coast might not expect to feel the meteorological effects of a hurricane, we could definitely be impacted by logistical issues such as coastal evacuations, low staffing and having to supply support equipment to an affected area. Remember, TDCJ relocated close to 9,000 offenders in preparation for hurricane Rita. Also remarkable, staff accomplished this enormous task with out incurring a single reported injury!

Experts at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center are projecting a 75 percent chance that

the Atlantic Hurricane Season will be above normal this year—showing the ongoing active hurricane era remains strong. With the start of the hurricane season upon us, NOAA recommends those in hurricane-prone regions to begin their preparation plans.

"For the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA scientists predict 13 to 17 named storms, with seven to 10 becoming hurricanes, of which three to five could become major hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. An average Atlantic hurricane season brings 11 named storms, with six becoming hurricanes, including two major hurricanes.

Climate patterns responsible for the expected above normal 2007 hurricane activity

continue to be the ongoing multi-decadal signal (the set of ocean and atmospheric conditions that spawn increased Atlantic hurricane activity), warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean and the El Niño/La Niña cycle.

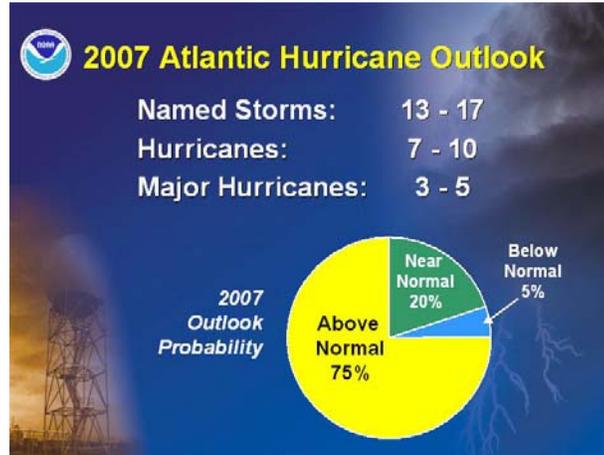
Last year, seasonal hurricane predictions proved to be too high when an unexpected El Niño rapidly developed and created a hostile environment for Atlantic storms to form and strengthen. When storms did develop, steering currents kept most of them over the open water and away from land. "There is some uncertainty this year as to whether or not La Niña will form, and if it does how strong it will be," said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center. "The Climate Prediction Center is indicating that La Niña could form in the next one to three

months. If La Niña develops, storm activity will likely be in the upper end of the predicted range, or perhaps even higher depending on how strong La Niña becomes. Even if La Niña does not develop, the conditions associated with the ongoing active hurricane era still favor an above-normal season."

Bell also noted that pre-season storms, such as Subtropical Storm Andrea in early May, are not an indicator of the hurricane season ahead. "With or without Andrea, NOAA's forecast is for an above normal season."

"With expectations for an active season, it is critically important that people who live in East and Gulf coastal areas as well as the Caribbean be prepared," said Bill Proenza, NOAA National Hurricane Center director. "Now is the time to update your hurricane plan, not when the storm is bearing down on you." The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, with peak activity occurring August through October. The NOAA Climate Prediction Center will issue an updated seasonal forecast in August just prior to the historical peak of the season.

So, what are storm categories? The Saffir-Simpson scale is used to determine the severity of hurricanes.



- **Tropical Storm**
Winds 39-73 mph
- **Category 1 Hurricane** — winds 74-95 mph (64-82 kt)
No real damage to buildings. Damage to unanchored mobile homes. Some damage to poorly constructed signs. Also, some coastal flooding and minor pier damage.
- Examples: Irene 1999 and Allison 1995
- **Category 2 Hurricane** — winds 96-110 mph (83-95 kt)
Some damage to building roofs, doors and windows. Considerable damage to mobile homes. Flooding damages piers and small craft in unprotected moorings may break their moorings. Some trees blown down.
- Examples: Bonnie 1998, Georges(FL & LA) 1998 and Gloria 1985

- **Category 3 Hurricane** — winds 111-130 mph (96-113 kt)

Some structural damage to small residences and utility buildings. Large trees blown down. Mobile homes and poorly built signs destroyed. Flooding near the coast destroys smaller structures with larger structures damaged by floating debris. Terrain may be flooded well inland.

- Examples: Keith 2000, Fran 1996, Opal 1995, Alicia 1983 and Betsy 1965

- **Category 4 Hurricane** — winds 131-155 mph (114-135 kt)

More extensive curtainwall failures with some complete roof structure failure on small residences. Major erosion of beach areas. Terrain may be flooded well inland.
- Examples: Hugo 1989 and Donna 1960

- **Category 5 Hurricane** — winds 156 mph and up (135+ kt)
Complete roof failure on many residences and industrial buildings. Some complete building failures with small utility buildings blown over or away. Flooding causes major damage to lower floors of all structures near the shoreline. Massive evacuation of residential areas may be required.
- Examples: Andrew(FL) 1992, Camille 1969, Labor Day 1935, Rita and Katrina 2005

Disaster Prevention

Obviously, there is nothing you can do to prevent a storm from developing. But how you respond to the storm by preparing for it will ultimately determine your safety. One of the most important decisions you will have to make is "**Should I Evacuate?**"

If you are asked to evacuate, you should do so without delay. But unless you live in a coastal or low-lying area, an area that floods frequently, or in manufactured housing, it is unlikely that emergency managers will ask you to evacuate. That means that it is important for you and your family to **HAVE A PLAN** that makes you as safe as possible in your home.

Disaster prevention includes modifying your home to strengthen it against storms so that you can be as safe as possible. It also includes having the supplies on hand to weather the storm. The suggestions provided here are only guides. You should use common sense in your disaster prevention.

- **DEVELOP A FAMILY PLAN** - Your family's plan should be based on your vulnerability to the Hurricane Hazards. You should keep a written plan and share your plan with other friends or family.
- **CREATE A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT** - There are certain items you need to have regardless of where you ride out a hurricane. The disaster supply kit is a useful tool when you evacuate as well as making you as safe as possible in your home.

- **SECURE YOUR HOME** - 'substantially inland' found themselves housing, clothing, preparing meals and conducting security operations for hundreds of more offenders literally overnight. And this lasted for weeks. So, get and stay prepared. There are things that you can do to make your home more secure and able to withstand stronger storms. Consult local authorities as to what you can do.
- **ONLINE VULNERABILITY INFO** - There are web sites that can give you information about your communities vulnerability to specific hazards. These include hurricanes as well as other weather related hazards.
- **RESOLVE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ISSUES AT WORK** - Discuss special issues or needs that may affect your ability to respond to work assignments with your supervisor. There is no time to discuss these issues once emergency actions are initiated. Keep your supervisor informed of your situation. Discuss evacuation plans with your supervisor prior to evacuating.

Remember, things begin to move very rapidly once a storm is upon you. Unpredictability is a reoccurring theme during this time. Electricity is lost, fuel is rationed or is unavailable, families may get separated and cellular phones stop working. You may be stranded and unable to get to your home or you may be stranded and not able to get out of your home.

Preparation is the key. Expect the unexpected. As hurricane Rita demonstrated, you do not have to work at a coastal unit to be affected by a hurricane. Several units that are considered

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