

Hurricanes

How Hurricanes Form

Hurricanes must have warm water to form. That is why most hurricanes develop in the warm waters near the equator. This warm, moist air near the ocean's surface rises. It is replaced by air from surrounding areas, which also becomes warm and rises. Clouds begin to form, and a storm begins to develop. If the conditions are right, the storm continues to be fed by all of the warm water available in the ocean, and the storm grows bigger and stronger.

Hurricane Damage

As hurricanes leave the ocean and begin to travel over land, they begin to weaken because there is not enough warm water available to continue to feed the storm. However, they can cause significant

Sustaining Wind Speed	Hurricane Storm Category
38 mph or less	Tropical Depression
39 – 73 mph	Tropical Storm
74 – 95 mph	Category 1 Hurricane
96 – 110 mph	Category 2 Hurricane
111 – 129 mph	Category 3 Hurricane
130 – 156 mph	Category 4 Hurricane
157 mph or more	Category 5 Hurricane

damage before they die out. Not only do hurricanes create massive amounts of rain, but they can also produce tornadoes, floods, landslides, fierce winds, and storm surges (heavy waves created by hurricane winds). All of these can be harmful to people.

Hurricane, Cyclone, or Typhoon?

Not everybody calls these huge storms hurricanes. Depending on the location of the storm, it could also be called a typhoon or a cyclone. When this type of storm occurs around the United States or the Caribbean, it is referred to as a hurricane. India, Australia, Bangladesh, and other places near the Indian Ocean all refer to the storms as cyclones. In the western Pacific Ocean, near the Philippines, Japan, China, and other parts of east Asia, the storm is called a typhoon. No matter where you live, however, these storms can cause huge damage.

Staying Safe During a Hurricane

It takes time for hurricanes to develop and grow strong, and hurricanes are relatively slow moving for a storm. Because of this, there is usually a sufficient amount of time to prepare for a hurricane.



A hurricane near Florida.

The most important preparation you can do is to know where the evacuation routes are in case you need to leave the area and head someplace safer. But you should also board up windows, bring anything inside that might fly away, and create an emergency kit that has a flashlight, first aid kit, food, and bottled water in it.

If officials tell you to evacuate, then you should leave for someplace safer immediately. However, if you are stuck in the storm, then stay inside and stay away from windows. Do not go outside until you are absolutely certain it is safe.

After a hurricane it is important to stay away from loose wires and avoid drinking tap water until officials tell you it is safe. Also, be aware that flooding could still occur and cause potential problems.



Hurricane winds can destroy trees and houses.