

INTRODUCTION TO HURRICANES

What Is A Hurricane?

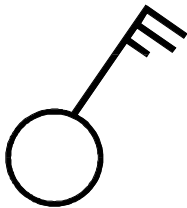
A hurricane is a powerful tropical storm, characterized by winds of extreme velocity (over 75 mph). Hurricanes are capable of causing widespread damage on land and at sea.

Where Do Hurricanes Form?

Hurricanes initially form in tropical latitudes (5-10 N and S). Hurricanes that affect Georgia generally form in the western Atlantic Ocean. Specifically, hurricanes form in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricanes are more frequent in the northern hemisphere than in the southern hemisphere.

How Hurricanes Form?

Between July and October, the equatorial low-pressure zone is displaced northwards. Storms developing from this displacement grow in ocean waters where surface temperatures exceed 80° F (27° C). Showers and thunderstorms develop in the tropics along the Intertropical Convergence Zone. Here, northeasterly trade winds coming from the north converge with southeasterly trade winds originating from the south. This convergence piles air up near the ocean surface causing warm, humid air to rise into the atmosphere. As it rises, air cools causing water vapor to condense into clouds and rain. This condensation results in the release of large amounts of energy, feeding the growth of a hurricane.



Hurricane Classification

Hurricanes are classified by wind speed into 5 categories.

Category	Wind Speed (mph)
One	74-95
Two	96-110
Three	111-130
Four	131-155
Five	> 155

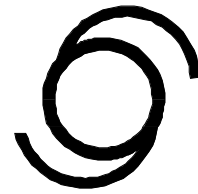
Just The Facts!

- ♦Hurricanes rotate in a counter-clockwise direction around an "eye".
- ♦Wind speed must reach 74 mph for a storm to be classified a hurricane.
- ♦Hurricane season lasts from June 1 to November 30.
- ♦The *deadliest* hurricane in U.S. history occurred in 1900 at Galveston, Texas - 6,000+ people lost their lives!
- ♦Andrew (1992), the most *expensive* hurricane in U.S. history, cost 30.5 million dollars!

Safety

The National Weather Service issues the following warnings concerning hurricanes:

- ♦Hurricane Watch - A hurricane is possible within 36 hours.
- ♦Hurricane Warning - A hurricane is expected in 24 hours; be prepared to evacuate.



Naming Hurricanes

Hurricanes are given names to make it easier to identify them. Prior to 1979, hurricanes were given female names. Since then, both female and male names are used. Each year, hurricane names are selected. Hurricanes originating the Atlantic Ocean can have English, Spanish, or French names.

1998	1999	2000	2001
Alex	Arlene	Alberto	Allison
Bonnie	Bret	Beryl	Barry
Charley	Cindy	Chris	Chantal
Danielle	Dennis	Debby	Dean
Earl	Emily	Ernesto	Erin
Frances	Floyd	Florence	Felix
Georges	Gert	Gordon	Gabrielle
Hermine	Harvey	Helene	Humberto
Ivan	Irene	Isaac	Iris
Jeanne	Jose	Joyce	Jerry
Karl	Katrina	Keith	Karen
Lisa	Lenny	Leslie	Lorenzo
Mitch	Maria	Michael	Michelle
Nicole	Nate	Nadine	Noel
Otto	Ophelia	Oscar	Olga
Paula	Philippe	Patty	Pablo
Richard	Rita	Rafael	Rebekah
Shary	Stan	Sandy	Sebastien
Tomas	Tammy	Tony	Tanya
Virginie	Vince	Valerie	Van
Walter	Wilma	William	Wendy