# Gulf Coast Hurricane Preparedness

# 2014

**National Weather Service**
**Mobile/Pensacola**

# TABLE OF CONTENT


The Hurricane..... 3

Hurricane Forecasts & Advisories..... 4

Winds & Tornadoes..... 5

Storm Surge..... 6

Inland Flooding..... 8

Rip Currents..... 9

NOAA All Hazards Radio..... 10

Taking Care of Pets..... 11

Planning & Preparation..... 12

Emergency Supply Kit.....14

Final Checklist.....15

Portable Generator Safety..... 16

After the Storm.....17

More Information.....18

*Contents and Editing: National Weather Service Mobile*

# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES

Although there has been a lack of tropical activity in our local area over the past few years, and with the potential for yet another relatively quiet year, we would like to remind everyone to not become complacent. It's not a matter of IF another tropical storm or hurricane will affect the local area again, but WHEN that will happen. Remember, it only takes one hurricane landfall in your local area to make it an active (and a bad) season for you! With this in mind, everyone is encouraged to remain prepared. This publication is a good resource for you and your family to reference with your preparations for the 2014 hurricane season.

*Don Shepherd, Tropical Outreach & Preparedness Focal Point*
*National Weather Service, Mobile/Pensacola*

With all of the recent talk about El Niño possibly lowering the number of named tropical cyclones that would form over the Atlantic Basin this season, this is certainly no reason to let your guard down when it comes to being prepared. In fact, the last documented strong El Niño event was 1997. As it turned out, Hurricane Danny (1997) was the only US hurricane to make landfall that season. This historic event speaks volumes regarding having a plan for you and your family, and being able to execute that plan when the time comes.

Another thing that goes a long way towards personal preparedness is knowing where you live. Are you in a storm surge zone? If so, do you know the established evacuation routes? Do you live further inland? Please realize that inland high winds surrounding a hurricane's center (after landfall) can be deadly due to falling trees. Major hurricanes (winds 115+ mph) can do damage to structures without tree fall.

This publication will tell you what you need to know for the 2014 hurricane season. ***Now is the time to prepare!***

*Jeffrey Medlin, Meteorologist In Charge (MIC)*
*National Weather Service, Mobile/Pensacola*

# THE HURRICANE

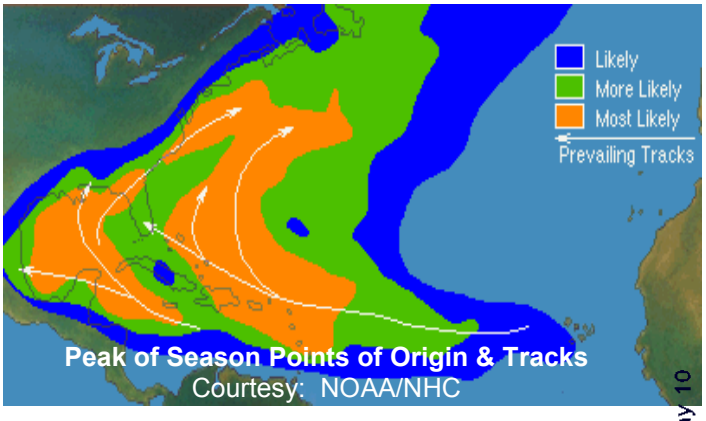
Hurricanes and tropical storms form over warm ocean waters, like those found in the Gulf of Mexico, during the summer and autumn each year.

On average, 11 tropical storms (6 of which strengthen to hurricanes) develop in the Atlantic basin each hurricane season.

Hurricane season is June 1st through November 30th.

Peak of hurricane season occurs in August and September for interior southeast Mississippi, southwest Alabama and the western Florida panhandle.

| 2014 Storm Names (Atlantic) | |
|---|---|
| Arthur | Laura |
| Bertha | Marco |
| Cristobal | Nana |
| Dolly | Omar |
| Edouard | Paulette |
| Fay | Rene |
| Gonzalo | Sally |
| Hanna | Teddy |
| Isaias | Vicky |
| Josephine | Wilfred |
| Kyle | |



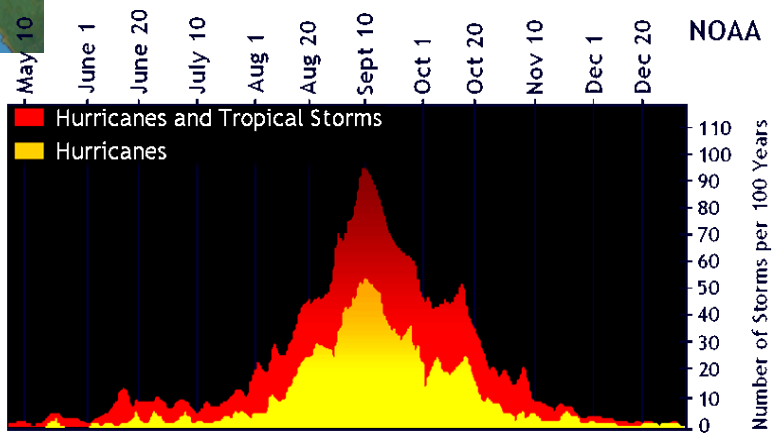
Peak of Season Points of Origin & Tracks
Courtesy: NOAA/NHC

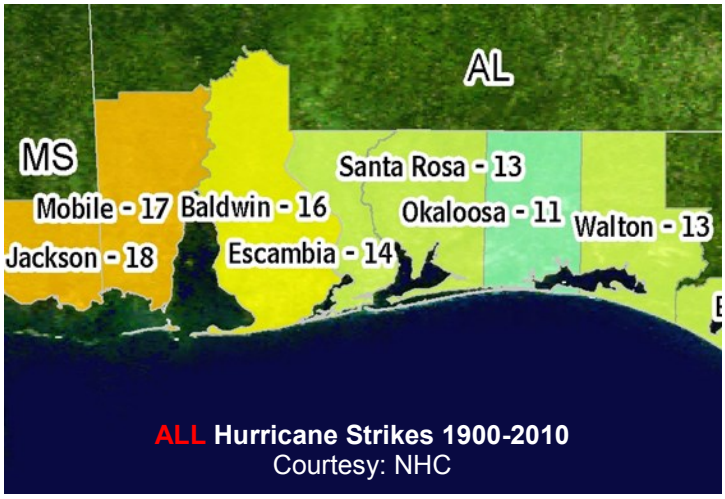
Keep in mind, hurricanes can strike any month during hurricane season.

Eleven hurricanes have either directly impacted or had moderate impacts to interior southeast Mississippi, southwest Alabama and western Florida panhandle coast since 1990.

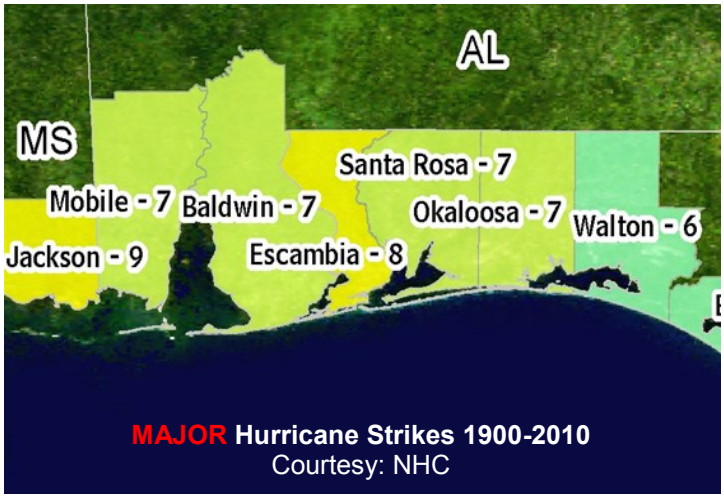
**Everyone along the central Gulf Coast needs to be prepared for hurricanes and tropical storms!**

While the greatest damage resulting from land-falling hurricanes or tropical storms is along the coast near the strongest winds and storm surge; inland areas experience destructive winds, tornadoes and flooding from heavy tropical rains.



ALL Hurricane Strikes 1900-2010
Courtesy: NHC



MAJOR Hurricane Strikes 1900-2010
Courtesy: NHC

# HURRICANE FORECASTS & ADVISORIES

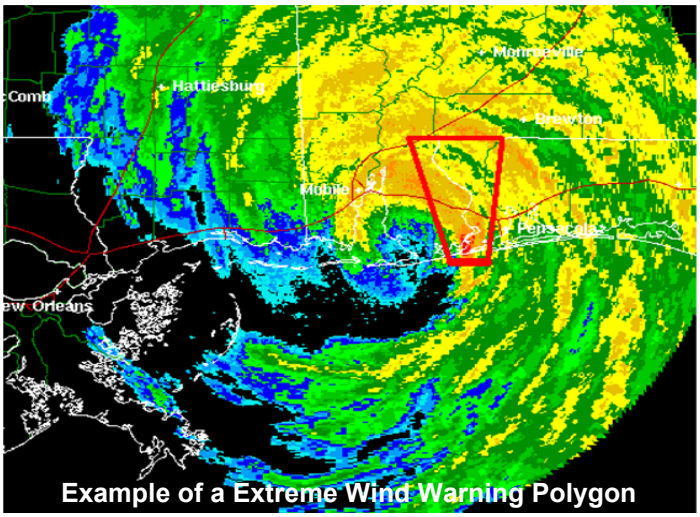
The National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami, FL is the official source for tropical advisories and forecasts. NHC is responsible for issuing tropical cyclone watches and warnings for the entire United States.

## Tropical Watches and Warnings

Since hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, watches & warnings are issued in advance of the onset of tropical storm force wind (39-73 mph).

**Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch:**
Tropical Storm and/or Hurricane conditions POSSIBLE in the Watch Area. Issued 48 hours in advance of the onset of tropical storm force winds.

**Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning:**
Tropical Storm and/or Hurricane conditions EXPECTED in Warning area. Issued up to 36 hours in advance of onset of tropical storm force winds.



Example of a Extreme Wind Warning Polygon

**Extreme Wind Warning (EWW):** Short duration warning for the onset of extreme sustained winds (115 mph+), usually associated with the eyewall of a major hurricane (Category 3+). ***This is a final call to SHELTER IN PLACE.***

## Common Tropical Cyclone Products

- Tropical Weather Outlook (48 hour & 5 day)
- Public Advisories
- Forecast Discussions
- Hurricane Local Statements (LOCAL impacts)

## Utilizing and Interpreting the NHC Forecast Advisories

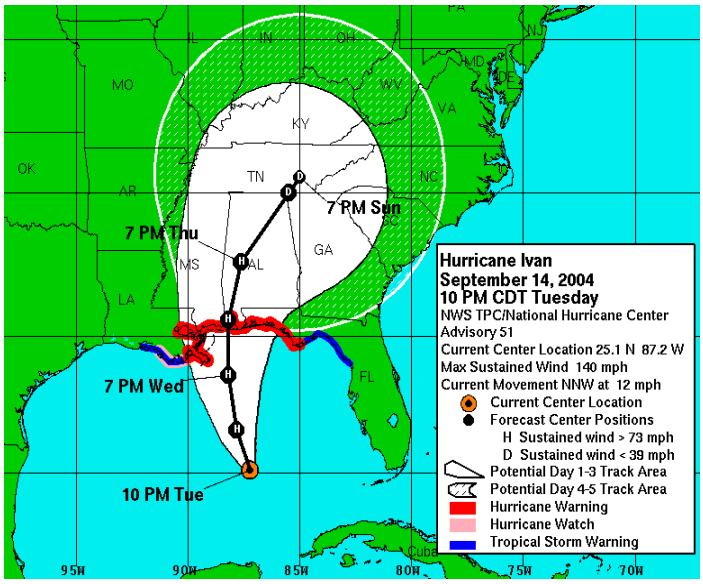
The white uncertainty cone of the forecast advisory represents the 5-year average error.

The center of the tropical cyclone will remain in the white error cone 67% of the time.

**REMEMBER**: Hurricane conditions can be felt hundreds of miles from the center of the storm.

**DO NOT** focus solely on the exact forecast track!

**DO NOT** wait for a Hurricane Watch or Warning to be issued before implementing initial preparedness preparations — it may be too late!!



# WIND & TORNADOES

**Hurricane force winds** of 74 mph or greater can destroy buildings, mobile homes, power lines and trees. Debris such as signs, roofing material and siding, as well as small items left outside, become dangerous flying missiles during a hurricane.

Winds associated with a hurricane are most intense near the center of the storm, in a region called the eyewall. As a hurricane moves inland, winds begin to rapidly decrease, but hurricane force winds can be felt 150 miles inland from the coast.

**General rule-of-thumb:** wind speed will decrease by 50% within the first 12 hours of landfall. The faster the hurricane is moving, the further inland the hurricane force winds will be experienced.

| Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale | |
|---|---|
| Category | Sustained Winds |
| 1 | 74-95mph, 64-82kt |
| 2 | 96-110mph, 83-95kt |
| 3 | 111-129mph, 96-112kt |
| 4 | 130-156mph, 113-136kt |
| 5 | 157+mph, 137+kt |

*Category 3+ is considered a MAJOR hurricane*

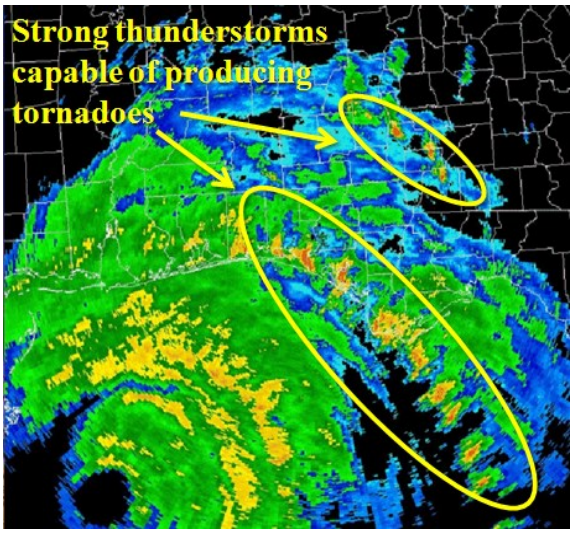
To minimize the damage from wind, it is imperative to ensure that your home is well constructed .

**MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS MUST EVACUATE!!!**

No mobile home or manufactured home can provide safe shelter from hurricane force winds.

Straps and other tie-downs **will not** protect a mobile home from high winds associated with a hurricane.

Mobile home residents **must evacuate** when told to do so by local authorities.




Hurricanes can produce **tornadoes**. Tornadoes are most likely to occur in the right-front quadrant of the hurricane, and are often embedded in the rainbands away from the center of the storm. However, they can also occur near the eyewall.

Nearly 70% of land-falling hurricanes produce at least one tornado, 40% spawned 3+ tornadoes and some even spawned tornado outbreaks.

Foley, AL

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan, which made landfall along the Alabama Gulf coast, spawned 117 tornadoes over a 3 day period!

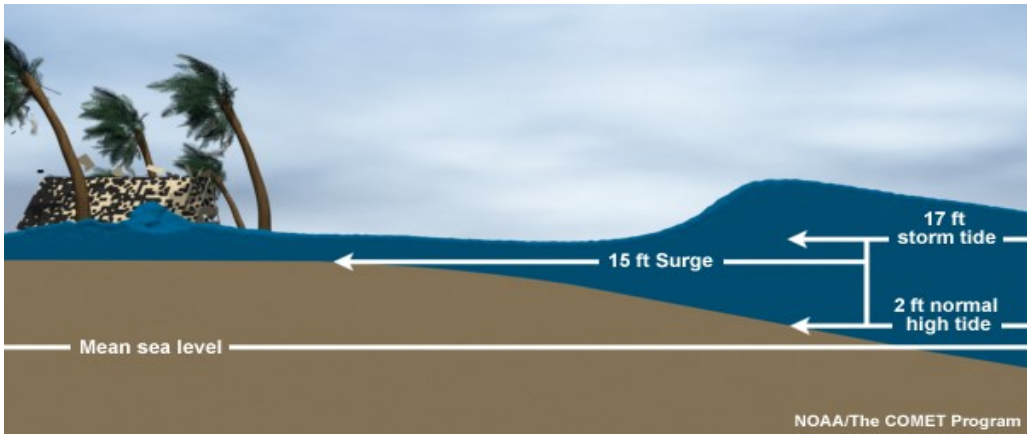
Tornadoes produced by tropical cyclones are typically weak, EF0 to EF1 & short-lived. Tornadoes associated with hurricanes are generally less intense than those that are produced by supercell thunderstorms, but when added to the larger area of hurricane-force winds, they can still produce substantial damage and be potentially deadly.

# STORM SURGE

**Storm surge** is the wall of water pushed toward the shoreline as a hurricane moves ashore. Storm surge poses the greatest threat to life and property along our coast. Historically, storm surge claims nine out of ten victims along the shoreline.

Storm surge is highest near and just to the right of where the eye of the hurricane crosses the coast. The advancing surge combines with the normal tides to create what is known as the storm tide. A major hurricane can produce a storm tide which is tens of feet higher than normal water levels.

Wind driven waves superimposed on top of storm tide can cause significant damage to structures along the immediate coast. Many buildings can actually withstand hurricane force winds until their foundations fail (undermined by erosion).




Water level rise can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, especially when the storm tide coincides with normal high tide.

In general, the more intense the hurricane and closer a community is to the center, right quadrant of a storm, the more destructive the storm surge.

There are a number of factors that determine maximum storm surge for any location along the coast: forward speed and size of the hurricane, angle of approach to the coast, central pressure of the storm, and coastal feature shape and characteristics, such as bays and estuaries.

When making landfall, there is always uncertainty in the intensity and exactly where the storm will make landfall.

Emergency managers and local officials balance that uncertainly with the human and economic risks to their community. This is why most emergency managers plan for one category higher than what is forecast. This is a reasonable precaution to help minimize the loss of life from hurricanes.

**Those living near and in coastal areas should know the evacuation zone for their residence.**

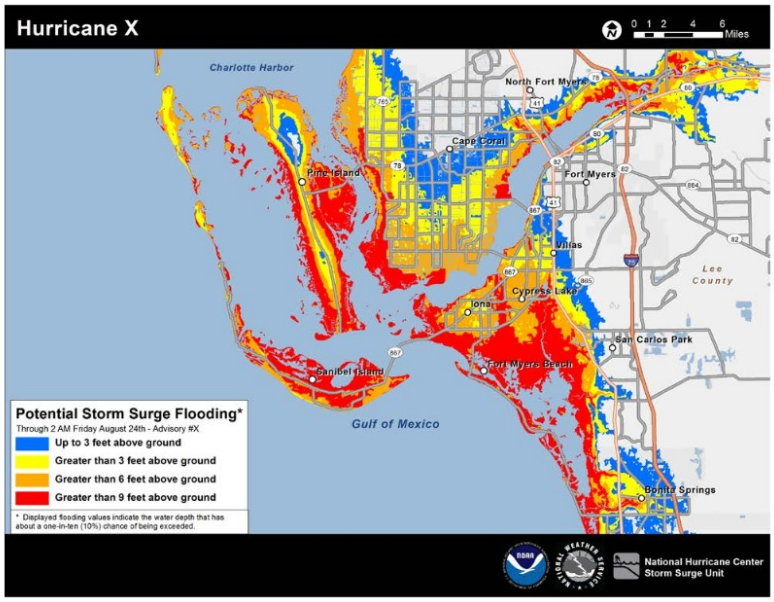
When local officials declare an evacuation for your zone, move to the nearest possible evacuation destination outside of the danger zones.

# STORM SURGE

## 10 Tips to Be Ready!

**From the National Hurricane Center**

1. Storm surge is often the greatest threat to life and property from a hurricane. It poses a significant threat for drowning. **Six inches** of fast-moving flood water can knock over an adult. **Two feet** of rushing water to carry away most vehicles — including SUVs.
2. Storm surge can cause water levels to rise quickly and flood large areas — sometimes in just minutes, and you could be left with no time to take action if you have not already evacuated.
3. Storm surge values do not correspond well to the hurricane wind categories (Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale) that range from 1 to 5. These categories are based only on winds and **do not account for storm surge**.
4. Tropical storms, category 1 or 2 hurricanes, major hurricanes (category 3 to 5) and post-tropical cyclones can **ALL** cause life-threatening storm surge.
5. Storm surge can occur with non-tropical storms like Nor'easters and winter storms.
6. Many U.S. Gulf and East Coast areas are vulnerable to storm surge, including areas up to several miles inland from the coastline. **Find out today if you live in a storm surge evacuation zone**.




*If a tropical storm or hurricane is threatening your community, go to www.nhc.noaa.gov to see a map like this, which will show potential storm surge flooding for your area*

## Know Your Maps, Know Your Zone!

The *Potential Storm Surge Flooding* map is different from FEMA flood insurance rate maps and hurricane evacuation zone maps.

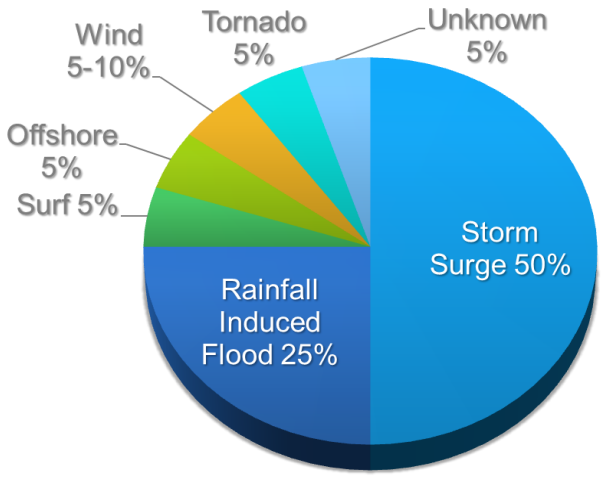
- You do not have to live in a floodplain to experience storm surge from a hurricane or other storm
- Evacuation zones can be established for many public safety reasons & differ from areas shown on this map

**Find out if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone!**

7. Storm surge can occur before, during or after the center of a storm passes through an area. Storm surge can cut off evacuation routes, so do not delay leaving if an evacuation is ordered for your area.
8. During the peak of storm surge, emergency responders will likely **not** be able to reach you if you are in danger.
9. Even if your community is not directly affected by storm surge, it could experience other hazards from the storm such as **impassable roads, water and sewage problems and power outages**. If power remains on, downed electrical wires can pose an **electrocution risk**.
10. Weather conditions and the forecast can change. Local officials could issue evacuation or other instructions for many different reasons. **Always follow the instructions of local officials.**

# INLAND FLOODING

When it comes to hurricanes, wind and storm surge are only part of the story. Heavy rain and the resultant inland freshwater flooding are equally as dangerous and destructive. In fact, behind storm surge, rainfall induced flooding is by far the next most dangerous and destructive hazard associated with tropical cyclones.




Intense rainfall is not directly related to the intensity of a tropical cyclone. In fact, some of the greatest rainfall amounts have occurred during weaker storms that slowly drift or stall over an area.

Very slow moving tropical storms and hurricanes can produce tremendous amounts of rain in a relatively short period of time. This often results in disastrous flooding, which can be a major threat to communities hundreds of miles from the coast.

**Brewton, AL**
Courtesy of Alabama Forestry Commission

## What Can You Do?

- When you hear hurricane or tropical storm, think inland flooding
- Develop a flood emergency plan
- Determine if you live in a potential flood zone
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately
- Keep abreast of road conditions through the media
- Move to a safe area quickly before access is cut off by the flood waters
- Do not attempt to cross flowing water on foot or in any vehicle
- Have flood insurance as flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance

***NEVER drive across flooded roads or around barricades!***

**Lucedale, MS**
Courtesy of Jackie Dunlap

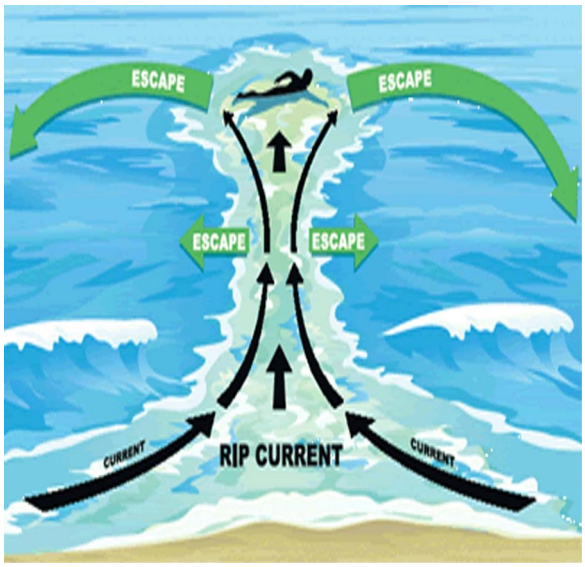
**Mobile, AL**
Courtesy of Anna Mills

## Rule of Thumb:

Do not drive through the water if you cannot see the road or the road markers. The road could be washed away or large debris could be located below the surface.

Abandon your vehicle immediately and seek higher ground if caught in rising water.

# RIP CURRENTS




**Rip currents** are strong currents or channels of rapidly flowing water moving AWAY from the shore.

Rip currents develop when excess water is piled against the shoreline during certain weather patterns.

While rip currents can form at anytime, they are very likely to be present in high winds and rough seas that accompany tropical storms and hurricanes.

Beachgoers should stay out of the water when a storm is approaching.

A tropical cyclone does not have to be directly affecting the area for rip currents to develop along our coastline.

Anytime a tropical system is in the Gulf of Mexico, large swells and above normal tides could combine to produce dangerous rip currents along the beaches ahead of the storm. As a result, beachgoers are at risk of getting caught in a rip current even though the weather appears tranquil and no evacuation orders have been given.

## If Caught In A Rip Current

- DO NOT fight the current
- Swim out of the current, then back to shore
- If you can not escape, float or tread water
- If you need help, call or wave for assistance

Both Florida and Alabama use the 5 flag system to alert beachgoers of surf conditions. Flags are posted at all public beaches, where surf conditions and rip currents are monitored throughout the day.

**Red Flags** means conditions are life threatening to anyone entering the surf.

Remember: the absence of red flags does not assure safe conditions.

In some locations, it is **illegal** to enter the water when a double red flag is being flown.

# NWS ALL HAZARDS WEATHER RADIO

**NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards** (NWR) is the *official voice* of the National Weather Service. NWR provides continuously updated weather information, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

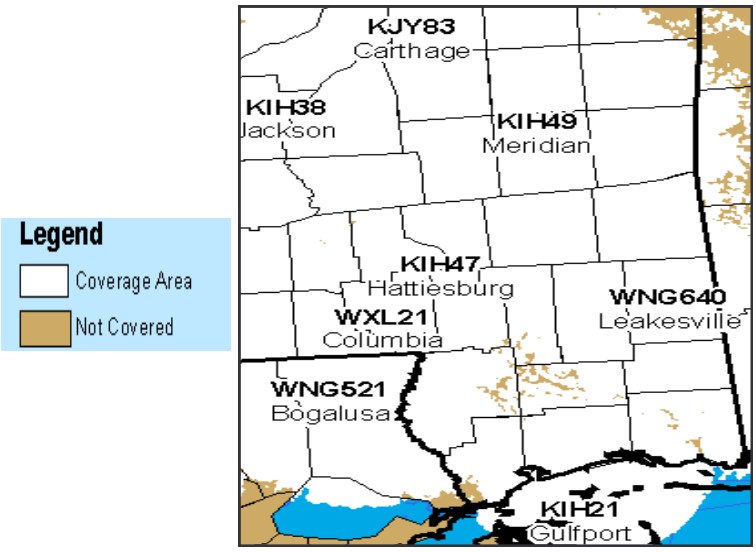
Watches, warnings, advisories, forecasts, current weather conditions and climate data are broadcast in 3-5 minute cycles on NWR stations.

A special radio capable of receiving signals in the Very High Frequency (VHF) public service radio band is required to listen to NWR broadcasts. 7 frequencies from 162.400 to 162.550 MHz are used. Weather radios can be purchased at most electronics stores and online. Prices of these radios vary and depend based on the type of radio.

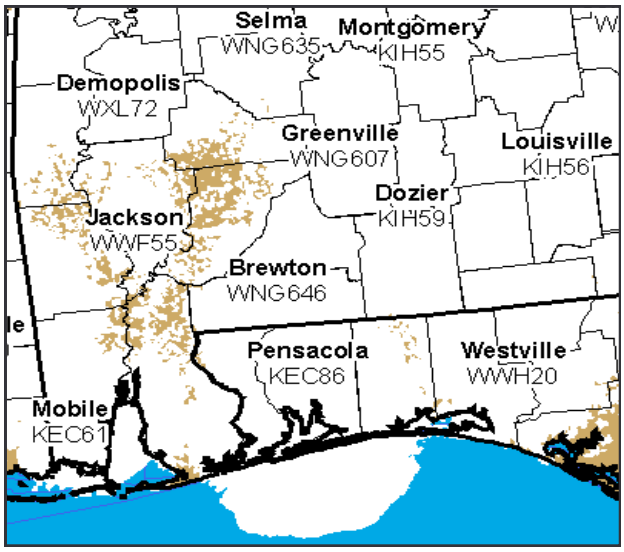
NOAA Weather Radio is useful anytime, but becomes especially important during severe weather. During threatening weather, normal broadcasts are interrupted and the focus shifts to local severe weather. Watches and warnings are given the highest priority with frequent updates.

NWS is a major part of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) that disseminates warning information rapidly through commercial broadcast outlets. In an emergency, each NWR station will transmit a warning alarm tone followed by information on the emergency situation. This signal is capable of activating specially designed receivers by increasing the volume or producing a visual and/or audible alarm. Not all weather radios have this capability, but all weather radios can receive the emergency broadcasts.

The maps below show the locations of NOAA Weather Radio transmitters located in our area.




*Transmitters in south Mississippi*




*Transmitters in south Alabama & west Florida*

## More Resources:

For SAME codes, visit:
www.weather.gov/nwr/indexnw.htm

For more local NOAA Weather Radio information, visit our website:
www.weather.gov/mob/?n=nwr

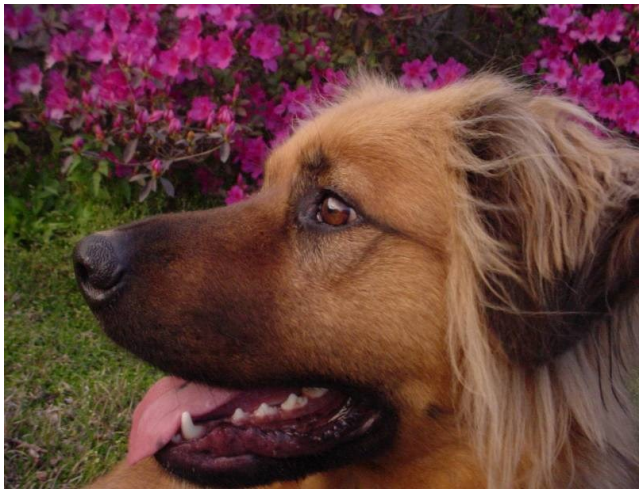
| NWR Area Listings | | |
|---|---|---|
| KEC-61 | Mobile, AL | 162.550 MHz |
| KEC-86 | Milton, FL | 162.400 MHz |
| KIH-59 | Dozier, AL | 162.550 MHz |
| WNG-607 | Greenville, AL | 162.425 MHz |
| WNG-640 | Leakesville, MS | 162.425 MHz |
| WNG-646 | Brewton, AL | 162.475 MHz |
| WWF-55 | Jackson, AL | 162.500 MHz |

# TAKING CARE OF PETS

You must plan ahead to be sure you can properly care for your pet during a weather emergency or an evacuation. Your plan should include all family members, including pets!

## A Few Planning Suggestions

- Take Your Pet — If you must leave your home, take your pet with you if at all possible. You are the best person to take care of your pet. Think about it: if the situation is dangerous for you then it is likely just as dangerous for your pet.
- Where To Take Your Pet — Before you leave, know where you can take your pet. Find out which motels or hotels are "pet friendly" or which will accept your pet in an emergency. Plan to go to a friend or relative's house who will allow you to bring your pet.



- Crate — Before you travel, ensure your pet is used to a crate. Familiar surroundings can help ease anxiety in your pet. Getting your pet into a crate for travel will be easier once your pet is used to the crate, too.
- Disaster Kit — Make sure to pack your pet's food, medicines, vaccination records and pet insurance information (if you have a policy). Assemble this into a disaster kit you can quickly grab.
- Pre-Arrangements — If you get stuck away from your home, your pet will be better off if you made pre-arrangements with a neighbor or friend to take care of your pet. This temporary caretaker should have a list of phone numbers to reach you and instructions to properly care for your pet. Your instructions should include a signed authorization for veterinary care and financial limits to the veterinary care.
- Behavior — Emergencies can cause pets display unexpected and/or uncharacteristic behaviors. Well-behaved pets may become aggressive and defensive after a major disruption in their lives. Your pet may not return to their usual behavior for several weeks. Use caution when releasing your pet after an emergency, especially in unfamiliar surroundings. Ensure that your pet cannot escape. Do not release your pet outside until you know the area is safe. Allow your pet plenty of time to rest and get used to new surroundings. Provide familiar toys, if possible.

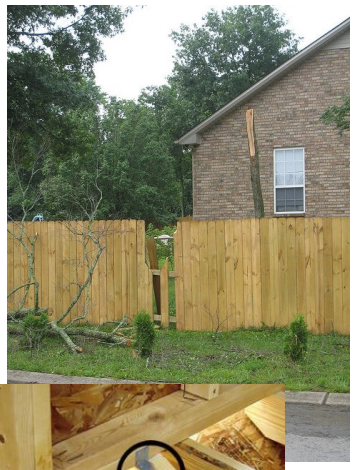
## More Resources:

FEMA/Ready.gov Pet Website:
www.ready.gov/caring-animals

Red Cross Pet Website:
www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/pets

# PLANNING & PREPARATION

## Important Home Preparation Tips for Hurricane Season



### Mobile Homes

- Check tie-downs for rust or breakage

### Landscaping

- Trim trees, shrubbery and dead limbs (especially near your home)
- Repair or replace broken or damaged fences
- Shredded bark is preferred for landscaping instead of small gravel or stone bedding

### Roofing

- Inspect roof for loose tiles, shingles or debris. Consider replacing old or damaged shingles with new ones rated for hurricane force winds
- Check and install hurricane clips to secure roof trusses to side walls
- Clear clogged rain gutters and downspouts.

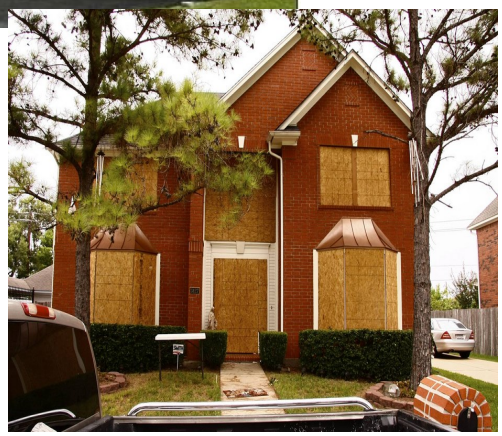
Courtesy of LAS Enterprises

### Doors

- Reinforce garage doors and tracks or replace with a hurricane tested garage door
- Reinforce double entry doors with heavy duty foot and head bolts
- Use a security dead bolt with a 1” minimum bolt length
- Doors can be shuttered, but one entry must be left easily accessible

### Windows

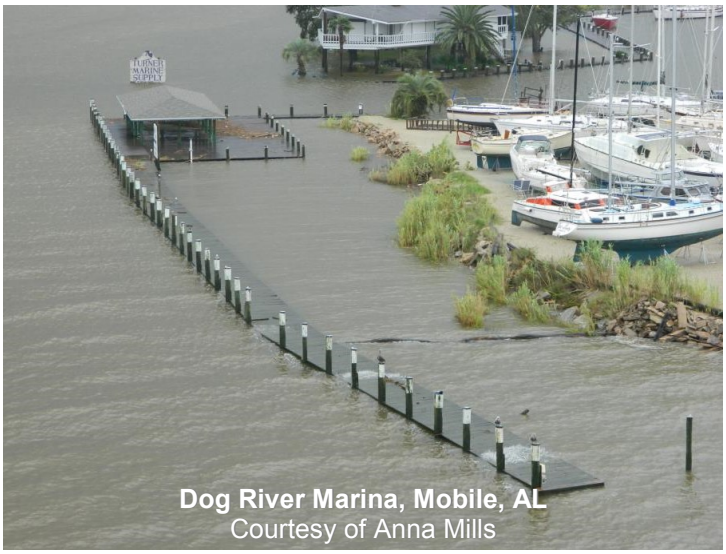
- Install tested/manufactured hurricane shutters. Inspect existing shutters to ensure good condition.
- Alternative: *Use 5/8” or greater exterior grade plywood secured by 2 ½” screws or special clips. Obtain wood and fasteners; cut wood to size (labeling pieces); pre-drill holes; place anchors on home.*
- Store shutters or plywood lying flat to avoid significant warping when not in use



# PLANNING & PREPARATION

## Protecting Your Boat — Tips for Boat Owners

- Check your marina contract for any hurricane procedures and policies
- Check with your boat manufacturer for the proper way to secure your boat during a tropical storm or hurricane
- Consider moving arrangements **well in advance**
- Trailer boats should be removed from the water and securely stored at least 48 hours before a tropical storm or hurricane are expected to make landfall
- Purchase necessary hurricane materials: additional mooring lines, crew anchors, fenders, fender boards, chafing gear and anchors
- Safe storm moorings should consist of good condition ropes of a sufficient diameter and length with at least 3-4 substantial anchor points
- Do NOT moor parallel to bank. Receding tides often breach and/or capsize boats in this type of anchorage.



**Dog River Marina, Mobile, AL**
Courtesy of Anna Mills

## More Marine Safety Resources:
www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/marine.php

## Important Tips for Automobiles

- Make sure to have your vehicles serviced regularly and in good working order during hurricane season so it will be ready for use should you need to evacuate.
- Keep your gas tank full.
- Make an emergency kit specifically for your vehicle. Include jumper cables, flashlight, cell phone charger, first aid kit, water, snacks, etc.

**More Vehicle Tips:** www.ready.gov/car

# EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

- ☐ **Water** — at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days
- ☐ **Food** — enough for at least 3 to 7 days
  - Non-perishable packaged or canned food and juices
  - Food for infants or the elderly
  - Snack foods
  - Cooking tools, fuel, non-electric can opener
  - Paper plates, plastic utensils
- ☐ **Blankets, Pillows & Bedding, etc.**
- ☐ **Clothing**
  - Seasonal
  - Rain gear
  - Sturdy shoes
- ☐ **First Aid Kit, Medicines and Prescriptions**
- ☐ **Special Items** - for babies and the elderly
- ☐ **Toiletries and Hygiene items**
- ☐ **Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation**
- ☐ **Items for Children**
  - Toys
  - Books
  - Games
- ☐ **Tools** - keep a set with you during the storm
- ☐ **Pet Care Items**
  - Proper identification, immunization records, medications
  - Ample supply of food and water
  - Carrier or cage
  - Muzzle and leash
- ☐ **NOAA Weather Radio —** Battery operated
- ☐ **Flashlight & Batteries**
- ☐ **Keys**
- ☐ **Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
- ☐ **Cell phone —** Fully charged cell phone with extra battery, non-cordless telephone set
- ☐ **Cash (some small bills)** — Banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods
- ☐ **Credit Cards**
- ☐ **Important Documents** - waterproof container or watertight re-sealable plastic bag
  - Insurance
  - Medical records
  - Bank account numbers
  - Social Security card

# FINAL CHECKLIST

## Actions to Take When a Storm is in the Gulf of Mexico

- ☐ Listen to radio, TV and/or NOAA Weather Radio for forecasts of the storms progress
- ☐ Double check items in your emergency supply kit
- ☐ Fuel and service your vehicles
- ☐ Inspect and secure mobile home tie-downs
- ☐ Make sure you have supplies to survive for at least 72 hours, but preferably for up to one week
- ☐ Board up windows (if shutters do not exists). Do not use tape, it provides no protection
- ☐ Store lawn furniture and loose, lightweight objects (garbage cans, patio plants, garden tools)
- ☐ Get plenty of extra cash in case power goes out and ATM's do not work
- ☐ Store vehicles that are not being used
- ☐ Follow instructions issued by local officials. **EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY IF ORDERED!**

## Final Actions to Take (if Leaving)

- ☐ Turn off propane tanks
- ☐ Unplug small appliances. Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest setting
- ☐ Turn off utilities (if ordered)
- ☐ Notify family members of your evacuation plans
- ☐ Lower water level in swimming pool by one foot
- ☐ Lock home securely
- ☐ Board doors and brace garage door
- ☐ Take pets with you

## Final Actions to Take (if Staying)

- ☐ Close storm shutters
- ☐ Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest setting and open only if necessary. (Note: 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic foot freezer below freezing for 3-4 days)
- ☐ Follow instructions from emergency managers and be prepared to turn off utilities if ordered
- ☐ Board doors (leave an emergency exit), brace garage door and remain inside. Stay away from boarded windows
- ☐ Take refuge in a predetermined safe room, such as an interior closet, bathroom or hallway
- ☐ Beware of calm wind in the eye of the storm. Do not venture outside as the strongest winds may occur shortly after the eye passes.

***DO NOT EXPECT EMERGENCY RESPONDERS TO BE OF ANY ASSISTANCE DURING A LANDFALLING HURRICANE!***

# PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY

After a hurricane, primary electrical power will likely be off for hours or days. During this time, many people use portable power generators to run essential utilities such as lighting, air conditioning and refrigeration.

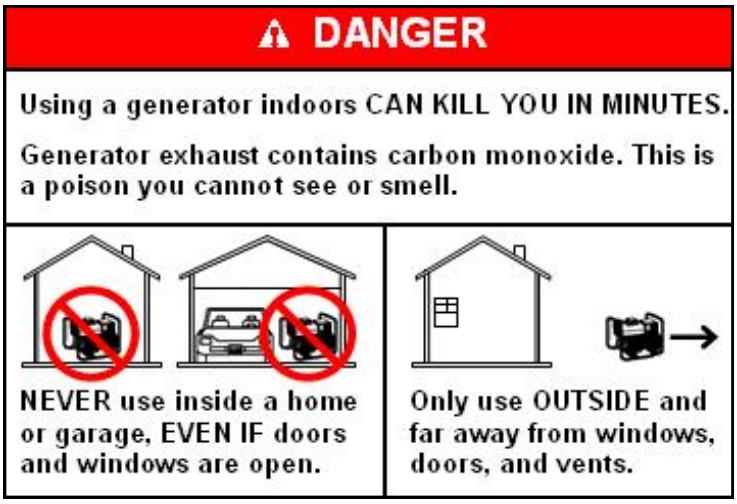
Every year people are injured or killed in incidents related to portable generator use.

The primary hazards to avoid when using a portable generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the engine exhaust, electrical shock or electrocution, and fire.

Follow the directions supplied with the generator!!

## Generator Usage Tips for When a Disaster Strikes:

- **NEVER use portable generators INDOORS**
  - This includes garage, basement, carport, crawlspace or other enclosed or partially-enclosed area (even with ventilation)
  - Using fans or opening windows or doors will not prevent buildup of CO in your home
  - Even if you cannot smell exhaust fumes, you may be exposed to CO
  - If you feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, get fresh air RIGHT AWAY, DO NOT DELAY!



Courtesy of Consumer Product Safety Commission

- **Place generator AWAY from windows, doors and vents that allow CO to come in-doors**
- **Keep the generator dry and do not use in rain or wet conditions**
  - To protect the generator from moisture, operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure, such as under a tarp held up by poles.
  - Dry your hands if wet before touching the generator.
- **Turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling**
- **Plug appliances directly in the generator or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads**
  - The cord must be free of cuts or tears and the plug must have all three prongs (especially a grounding pin)
  - **Never power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet**, a practice known as “backfeeding”. This is an extremely dangerous practice that presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer.

## More Information on Generator Safety: www.redcrossalcoast.org

# AFTER THE STORM

***IF EVACUATED, WAIT FOR "ALL CLEAR" FROM CITY / COUNTY / STATE OFFICIALS BEFORE RETURNING HOME. PREPARE TO SHOW PROOF OF RESIDENCE.***

## General

- ☐ Be cautious of structural damage and downed trees and/or power lines. Do not move structural supports or large pieces of debris
- ☐ DO NOT run power generators indoors. Ensure exhaust is well ventilated
- ☐ DO NOT use open flames indoors
- ☐ Restrict driving to emergency use only. Road conditions unsafe until road debris is cleared

## Debris

- ☐ Cities and counties will provide a schedule and instructions for debris pick-up and removal. Debris usually cannot be removed from private property
- ☐ Construction materials, vegetative debris, household hazardous waste and household appliances will need to be placed into separate piles and moved to the curbside for pick-up

## Water

- ☐ Use bottled, boiled or treated water until you know that your water supply is safe
- ☐ You can use household chlorine bleach to treat water for drinking or cleaning. Add 1/8 teaspoon of bleach per gallon of clear water (¼ teaspoon of bleach per gallon if cloudy water). Allow water to stand 30 minutes before using

## Utilities

- ☐ Check for gas leaks. If you smell or hear gas leaking, leave immediately. DO NOT use the phone or turn on lights in your home. Call the gas company from a neighbor's phone
- ☐ Report any visible damage to electrical lines to the power company. Turn off power at main breaker if any electrical equipment or circuits have been exposed to water
- ☐ DO NOT connect generators to your home's electrical circuits. If a generator is online when electrical service is restored, it is a major fire hazard

## Sewage

- ☐ If you suspect water or sewage lines are damaged, do not use plumbing (toilets, sinks). Contact the water company or a plumber

## Interior Cleanup

- ☐ Disinfect and dry interior buildings and inside items to prevent growth of bacteria, viruses, mold and mildew that can cause illness
- ☐ Clean walls, floors and counter tops with soap and water. Disinfect with a solution of 1 cup bleach to 5 gallons of water
- ☐ Wash all clothes and linens in hot water. Air dry and spray un-washable items with disinfectant. Steam clean carpets. Throw away items touched by water than cannot be disinfected

# CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

## National Weather Service Mobile/Pensacola

Don Shepherd (Tropical Outreach & Preparedness)
Jason Beaman (Tropical Operations)
Jeffrey Medlin (Meteorologist In Charge)

8400 Airport Blvd, Bldg 11
Mobile AL 36608
Phone: 251-633-6443
www.weather.gov/MOB

Other Useful Websites:
National Weather Service, Mobile, AL
www.weather.gov/mob
National Hurricane Center (NHC)
www.nhc.noaa.gov

Social Media:

NWSMobile