

Hide - Run

Among other things, hurricanes seem to be a particularly good source of spawning tornados with embedded cells of potentially lethal and destructive high winds. As these low pressure systems spiral up into formation with the collision of warm surface air rising from the ocean into the upper level cooler winds, the results can be downpours, lightning, gales, hail and tornados. With a sea level temperature of at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit and driven by a disturbance at the surface, the rising water vapors cool at altitudes often in excess of fifty thousands of feet. A thick cirrus cloud layer is created, beneath which may form deadly and destructive high winds and thunderheads. At the center or 'eye' of the hurricane formation is the column of calm, sinking air. With sustained winds in excess of 74 miles per hour the hurricane label is applied. As opposed to many other natural disasters, most hurricane systems give an early warning of their formation and course. As meteorologists spot and track them from their ocean birth toward land, a series of watches and warnings are issued. This is far from an exact science and predicting the path, intensity and final landfall of the hurricane system can prove tricky and difficult. Cyclones are known to make sudden turns and even reverse course and double back on themselves

The landfall event always weakens the hurricane rapidly as it loses its' warm ocean water source of power. Coastal areas are most vulnerable to damage, although this does not render the system harmless. Destructive winds and waters are known to travel miles inland from the point of landfall.

A "hurricane watch" is an official announcement that hurricane conditions are possible within the next 36 hours; while a "hurricane warning" is a certain alert of hurricane force winds within the next 24 hours or less. The announcement of either condition should trigger a high level of alert on your part. There is the real possibility of danger from destructive winds and wind driven high waters even as the winds may drop to more moderate levels.

Select an interior windowless room or hallway with a secured load bearing wall away from any exterior walls of the structure. If possible get a heavy piece of furniture to provide a covered location to keep you free of overhead debris in the event of structural collapse. Within the tornado system are found the fastest known winds on this earth. Tornados occur when a low level moist unstable air system encounters a cold higher level air mass headlong. This leads to a spinning column of air mass of destructive proportions. At touchdown debris is caught up and sucked into the vortex. Structures, automobiles and persons may be transported a considerable distance. It is imperative that you 'Hide from the Wind'.

With the onset of wind driven waters in the form of 'storm surge', you must then 'Run from the Water'. Higher elevation is the only refuge from water. If you find yourself in the path of these rising waters, evacuate to higher ground immediately. Personal possessions may be replaced; loss of life from drowning cannot. More people are killed from water hazards than any other event.

"Be Prepared" -- "Have a Plan" -- "Keep Informed" -- "Be Ready to Take Action"