

## National Hurricane Center

### Watches/Warnings

#### **Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale**

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale is a 1-5 rating based on the hurricane's present intensity. This is used to give an estimate of the potential property damage and flooding expected along the coast from a hurricane landfall. Wind speed is the determining factor in the scale, as storm surge values are highly dependent on the slope of the continental shelf in the landfall region.

#### **Category One Hurricane:**

Winds 74-95 mph. Storm surge generally 4-5 feet above normal. No real damage to building structures. Damage primarily to unanchored mobile homes, shrubbery, and trees. Some damage to poorly constructed signs. Also, some coastal road flooding and minor pier damage.

#### **Category Two Hurricane:**

Winds 96-110 mph. Storm surge generally 6-8 feet above normal. Some roofing material, door, and window damage of buildings. Considerable damage to shrubbery and trees with some trees blown down. Considerable damage to mobile homes, poorly constructed signs, and piers. Coastal and low-lying escape routes flood 2-4 hours before arrival of the hurricane center. Small craft in unprotected anchorages break moorings.

#### **Category Three Hurricane:**

Winds 111-130 mph. Storm surge generally 9-12 feet above normal. Some structural damage to small residences and utility buildings with a minor amount of curtainwall failures. Damage to shrubbery and trees with foliage blown off trees and large trees blown down. Mobile homes and poorly constructed signs are destroyed. Low-lying escape routes are cut by rising water 3-5 hours before arrival of the hurricane center. Flooding near the coast destroys smaller structures with larger structures damaged by battering of floating debris. Terrain continuously lower than 5 ft above mean sea level may be flooded inland 8 miles or more. Evacuation of low-lying residences with several blocks of the shoreline may be required.

#### **Category Four Hurricane:**

Winds 131-155 mph. Storm surge generally 13-18 feet above normal. More extensive curtainwall failures with some complete roof structure failures on small residences. Shrubs, trees, and all signs are blown down. Complete destruction of mobile homes. Extensive damage to doors and windows. Low-lying escape routes may be cut by rising water 3-5 hours before arrival of the hurricane center. Major damage to lower floors of structures near the shore. Terrain lower than 10 feet above sea level may be flooded requiring massive evacuation of residential areas as far inland as 6 miles.

#### **Category Five Hurricane:**

Winds greater than 155 mph. Storm surge generally greater than 18 feet above normal. Complete roof failure on many residences and industrial buildings. Some complete building failures with small utility buildings blown over or away. All shrubs, trees, and signs blown down. Complete destruction of mobile homes. Severe and extensive window and door damage. Low-lying escape routes are cut by rising water 3-5 hours before arrival of the hurricane center. Major damage to lower floors of all structures located less than 15 feet above sea level and within 500 yards of the shoreline. Massive evacuation of residential areas on low ground within 5-10 miles of the shoreline may be required.

## Coast Guard

### Conditions

The Coast Guard uses a guideline five conditions to determine plans and actions. The conditions are set by the District/Sector Commanders and may be moved up or back depending on projections and analysis. CG members are encouraged to use the same conditions in their personal planning since the CG normally is 12-24 hours ahead of the general public. Conditions may also be set with modifications (based on storm).

**Condition V** December 1 – May 31 each year

**Condition IV** June 1 – November 30 each year

**Condition III** 48 hours prior to expected impact of higher winds not the projected landfall of the eye. Set by the District Commander and Sector CO.

**Condition II** 24 hours prior to expected impact of higher winds not the projected landfall of the eye. Set by the District Commander and Sector CO.

**Condition I** 12 hours prior to to expected impact of higher winds not the projected landfall of the eye. Set by the District Commander and Sector CO.