



Hurricanes are not something we need to worry about here in Arizona; however, you never know when your travels may take into a hurricane prone city. We also want you to have the knowledge to pass on to your loved ones.

So what exactly is a hurricane? According to FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), hurricanes are a type of tropical cyclone or severe tropical storm that forms in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The cyclones are typically accompanied by thunderstorms, and in the Northern Hemisphere, a counterclockwise circulation of winds near the earth's surface.

All of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal areas are subject to hurricanes. Each year, hurricanes bring heavy rains and flooding to parts of the Southwest United states and Pacific Coast. June to November brings the Atlantic hurricane season which typically peaks from mid-August to late October. May to the end of November is the Eastern Pacific hurricane season.

Hurricanes can produce winds in excess of 155 miles per hour along with tornadoes and microbursts. The winds and heavy down pours can cause catastrophic damage to coastlines and several hundred miles inland along with storm surges along the coast. Flooding and flying debris are often deadly and destructive. Flash flooding, landslides, and mud slides are all due to excessive rain.

Sandy has been called the perfect storm, encompassing all of the above warnings and outcomes. The National Hurricane Center is warning of "life-threatening storm surge flooding the Mid-Atlantic coast" all in addition to sustained winds in excess of 70 mph and even stronger gusts – conditions that will affect millions of people. Sandy has already caused 67 deaths as it rumbled through the Caribbean.

So how does one prepare for a hurricane? He is some simple steps to consider:

- Build an emergency kit
- Make a family communication plan

- Know your surroundings
- Learn the elevation level of your property which will help you know how your property will be affected.
- Identify levees and dams in your area and determine whether they pose a hazard.
- Learn community hurricane evacuation routes.
- Make plans to secure your property.
- Cover all of your home's windows.
- Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutter and downspouts.
- Reinforce your garage doors.
- Bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage and anything else that is not tied down.
- Install a generator for emergencies
- If in a high-rise building, be prepared to take shelter on or below the 10th floor.
- Purchase flood insurance protection.

Above all, don't ignore evacuation warnings, stay informed and be safe!

For more information on hurricane safety and news visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes.