

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RALEIGH NC  
800 AM EDT MON MAY 25 2015

THIS WEEK IS HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK FOR 2015

All week long the National Weather Service will issue informative messages to help you prepare for the hurricane season. Each day we will cover a different topic. Today we will talk about **storm surge**.

The greatest potential for loss of life related to a hurricane is from the storm surge. Storm surge is simply water that is pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm. This advancing surge combines with the normal tides to create the hurricane storm tide, which can increase the mean water level to heights impacting roads, homes and other critical infrastructure. In addition, wind driven waves are superimposed on the storm tide. This rise in water level can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tides. Because much of the United States' densely populated Atlantic and Gulf Coast coastlines lie less than 10 feet above mean sea level, the danger from storm tides is tremendous.

The storm surge combined with wave action can cause extensive damage, severely erode beaches and coastal highways. With major storms like Katrina, Camille and Hugo, complete devastation of coastal communities occurred. Many buildings withstand hurricane force winds until their foundations, undermined by erosion, are weakened and fail. Storm surge can travel several miles inland and can also span hundreds of miles of coastline.

It is important to keep in mind that storm surge is not a factor in the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. Know that even a tropical storm or Category 1 hurricane can have a devastating storm surge if the proper conditions exist. In other words, don't assume that a tropical storm or a hurricane on the low end of the Saffir-Simpson Scale will not have a large or significant storm surge. Be sure to stay informed and pay close attention to storm surge forecast details regardless of the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale rating.

**What can you do? Here are some storm surge safety actions:**

- Know the types of hazards that could affect your family, and know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, floods, and wind. Find out if you live in an evacuation zone and keep track of which zone it is. If you live close to the floodplain, consider flood insurance.
- Make plans for where you'll go, preferably outside the vulnerable area, or consider the closest possible public shelter. Have a single point of contact for your family members to keep in touch. Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and keep a disaster supply kit within reach.
- Prepare your home prior to leaving: board up doors and windows, secure or move all yard objects indoors, and turn off all utilities. Fill your car with gas, withdraw extra money from the ATM, and be sure to take all prescription medicines and special medical items, such as glasses and diapers.
- If you live in an evacuation zone and are ordered to evacuate by state or local officials, do so as quickly as possible. Do not attempt to cross flowing water. As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

- Stay tuned to a local radio or television station and listen carefully for any advisories or specific instructions from local officials. Monitor your NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every six months, as you do with your smoke detectors.

For more information about hurricane preparedness, please visit the following web sites:

- <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare>
- <http://www.readync.org>