

## WSO Pago Pago (American Samoa) prepares Partners for Tropical Cyclone Season



November 1st marked the beginning of tropical cyclone season for American Samoa. With the start of the season, the Weather Service Office (WSO) Pago Pago, in collaboration with American Samoa Territorial Emergency Management Coordinating Office (TEMCO), conducted a 2-day tropical cyclone workshop with partners to help with their preparedness activities. On November 6th, the workshop welcomed government core partners along with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The next day, the workshop was focused on improving communications with the local media.



WSO Pago Pago faces many challenges when issuing their products (following US standards) since it is the only U.S. territory in the South Pacific. In addition, thresholds for tropical cyclones differ throughout the region. To address these challenges, the office continues to focus outreach and education to partners on how to get their information.

Although American Samoa and Independent Samoa share language and culture, the structure of their governments is different. This drives the importance for the two nations to work closely together. To avoid confusion, WSO Pago Pago continues proactive outreach activities to educate the public about the tropical cyclone thresholds and hazards for American Samoa and the importance of tuning in to local media sources during severe weather.

Workshops were conducted in collaboration with the US Coast Guard, who presented on their severe weather products, and their decision process for closing the main Pago Pago harbor port 72 hours before a tropical cyclone is expected to make landfall. Recognizing the diverse communities in the territory, the idea of holding press conferences was brought up with the media to serve the territory's diverse communities. WSO Pago Pago and TEMCO were given

good feedback from participants for this year's tropical cyclone workshop and they are still finding ways to improve their outreach efforts to protect the life and property of the people of American Samoa.

"We are truly grateful for a successful workshop this year, and we look forward to continuing our outreach efforts and providing the service needed toward a prepared American Samoa during this tropical cyclone season." *Meteorologist in Charge, Elinor Lutu-McMoore*

American Samoa will likely see below normal tropical cyclone activity this season (30% chance below tropical cyclone climatology). This is fairly consistent with neutral to possibly weak La Niña conditions. With the outlook forecasting La Niña conditions by austral summer (Dec-Jan-Feb), up to 2 tropical cyclones are predicted to impact the Samoan Islands basin this tropical cyclone season. Although La Niña conditions favor below normal tropical cyclone activity near American Samoa, WSO Pago Pago along with TEMCO are urging residents and mariners to continue preparations through the tropical cyclone season.

The outlook is a general guide to the overall tropical cyclone season activity within the American Samoa basin (extends outward 300 nautical miles from Tutuila) and does not predict whether, or how many, of these systems will directly affect American Samoa. Tropical cyclone season begins November 1 and runs until April 30.