



Hurricane Tracking Chart



Hurricane Tracking Chart

Hurricane season for the United States runs from June 1 to November 30. During that time, the National Weather Service monitors the Tropics very closely for the formation of “tropical waves.” These are areas of low pressure and thunderstorms that can begin to circulate and become tropical storms and hurricanes. These waves can form as far away as the coast of Africa and drift all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, becoming, tropical depressions, then tropical storms, and sometimes hurricanes.

When a storm develops, the National Weather Service (NWS) begins to issue reports every six hours until the storm dissipates. Listen for these reports on radio or television or read them on the Internet at 5a.m., 11 a.m., 5 p.m., and 11 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

As part of these reports, the NWS gives the current location of the storm. Use the map on the front of this sheet to chart the path of the storm. You will learn something about how hurricanes move and tracking the storm will make you more aware of the need to prepare.

Definitions

Tropical Wave — An area of low pressure and thunderstorms that can develop into a tropical depression.

Tropical Depression — When a tropical wave begins to circulate and develop some structure, it becomes a tropical depression.

Tropical Storm — When a tropical depression has sustained winds of 35 miles an hour or more, it becomes a tropical storm. At this point, it will receive a name.

Hurricane — As a tropical storm passes over warm water, it gains energy and it increases in wind speed and size. When sustained winds reach 74 miles an hour, the storm becomes a hurricane. Hurricanes are classified by their sustained wind speeds according to the Saffir-Simpson Scale. Hurricanes can fall into categories from 1 to 5, the higher the number, the more intense the hurricane.

Watch — There is a **possibility** that a tropical storm or hurricane may strike a specific area within 36 hours. Time to prepare!

Warning — A tropical storm or hurricane is **expected** to strike a specific area within 24 hours.

■ IFAS publication DPR-0707. Published June 1998, revised August 2005. It is part of The Disaster Handbook, a component of the IFAS Disaster Information Program. For complete list of program products, visit: <disaster.ifas.ufl.edu>.

■ General editor: Carol J. Lehtola, Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

■ UF/IFAS Extension Publications are available on the Internet at: <edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

■ The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension service.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Larry Arrington, Dean. (DH287)