

HAZARDS AND THREATS

HURRICANES – GENERAL INFORMATION

The Los Angeles County Operational Area coastlines, beaches and harbor locations are susceptible to hurricanes and/or other types of extreme water-wind events, but it rarely occurs on the West coastline areas compared to the more frequent occurrences of hurricanes in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Ocean. Majority of the hurricanes remain over the ocean and have little to no impact to the continental United States. However, about five hurricanes strike the U.S. coastline every three years. Of these five, two will be classified as Category 3 or higher (defined as having winds gusting over 111 miles per hour) on the Saffir-Simpson Scale. These storms can cause life and property damage that could cost our nation millions, if not billions of dollars of damages.

NOTE: It is important to follow the path of the storm to know whether you should evacuate or shelter in place until it passes by. Always seek your local law enforcement to find out if an evacuation order is going to be issued for your community.

Quick Facts about Hurricanes:

- Hurricanes are strong storms that cause life and property-threatening hazards such as flooding, storm surge, high winds and tornadoes.
- Hurricanes feature severe winds of more than 74 miles per hour that is usually accompanied by heavy rain. This combination can cause damage to buildings, trees and vehicles.
- Hurricanes extend for hundreds of miles across, from end to end.
- Hurricane Season: June to November, but these storms can occur at any time of the year.
- When a hurricane hits land, its wind speed usually weakens, but the resulting storm surge can raise ocean levels by several feet.
- Worst hurricane in U.S. history took place in Galveston, Texas on September 8, 1900 as the hurricane killed 8,000 people.
- Major Hurricane is a term utilized by the National Hurricane Center for hurricanes that reach maximum sustained one minute surface winds of at least 50 m/s (96

kt, 111 mph). This is the equivalent of category 3, 4 and 5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

- Intense Hurricane is an unofficial term, but is often used in the scientific literature. It is the same as “Major Hurricane.”

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