Wild, Wicked Winds

Report by J J Jay.

Hurricanes and tropical storms are given names to help people identify them. Scientists refer to storms as they track them across the ocean. Before 1953, hurricanes were not given official names. From 1953 until 1978, hurricanes were only given female names, like Isobel, Camille, Claudette and Wilma. From 1979, male and female names were introduced so that the hurricanes were named alphabetically, alternating by male or female.

For example, in 2010 the storms were named as follows:

Alex (male)

Bonnie(female)

Colin (male)

Danielle (female)

Earl (male)

and so on...

There are six different lists that change so that the names are used every six years. The only way a name is added is when a hurricane has been particularly deadly and the name has been retired, tehn replace with a new one.

# Tornado versus Hurricane

Hurricanes can cover an area of hundreds of kilometres wide, while tornadoes are almost always less than one kilometre wide. While they are smaller than hurricanes, tornado winds can be stronger and more powerful. Some tornadoes have winds of over 480 km/hr, while hurricanes rarely exceed 320 km/hr.

# Safety Tips

There is no way to stop a hurricane or change its direction. If you ever find yourself in the way of a hurricane, be sure to follow the emergency procedures that your community has in place. Here are some safety tips:

Be sure to have a battery-powered radio, batteries, fresh drinking water and a supply of food. Also if anyone in the family needs special medication, be sure to have a full supply.

Tell neighbours, friends and family about your emergency plans. Tell them where you’ll go when you leave your house.

If you live near the ocean, in low-lying area, or in a mobile home, leave your home and travel inland to a safe place.

Keep listening to the radio to get instructions from the authorities about evacuating the area.

Before the hurricane arrives, ensure that your car is filled with fuel. If the electricity goes out, the petrol pumps will not operate.

Stay inside during the storm. You could be injured if you go outside.

Remember most emergency shelters will not allow pets. If you have to leave your pets behind, ensure that they have enough water and food for a few days. Also be sure they are wearing a collar with your family’s name and phone number on it.

# Categories of hurricanes

There are five categories of hurricanes, which are based on wind speeds. The categories help to make people aware of how much damage a hurricane may cause because the greater the wind speed, the more dangerous the storm.

|  |
| --- |
| Category 1 – winds 120 – 155 mph |
| Wind snap branches, uproot trees and overturn mobile homes that are not secured to the ground. |
| Category 2 – winds 156 – 180 mph |
| Winds are strong enough to destroy weak doors and windows, and create 2.5 metre ocean waves. |
| Category 3 – winds 181 – 250 mph |
| Intense winds cause major flooding near the coast, which can destroy homes and businesses. |
| Category 4 – winds greater than 250 mph |
| Buildings along the shorelines are washed away. Buildings are completely destroyed. |

# The Five Worst Hurricanes in U.S. History

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Hurricane** | **Year** | **State(s) Hit** | **Category** | **Death Toll** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 | Sea Islands | 1893 | South Carolina, Georgia | 3 | 1000 |
| 4 | Cheniere Caminanda | 1893 | Louisiana | 4 | 1100 |
| 3 | Hurricane Katrina | 2005 | Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama | 3 | 1833 |
| 2 | Lake Okeechobee Hurricane | 1928 | Florida | 4 | 2500 |
| 1 | Great Galveston Hurricane | 1900 | Texas | 4 | 8000 |
|  |  |  | TOTAL |  | <<Formula>> |

**Trivia Questions**

Which of these hurricanes had the strongest winds?

Sea Islands Hurricane in 1893

Hurricane Katrina in 2005

Lake Okeechobee Hurricane in 1928

What would you observe in the eye of the hurricane?

Strong, spinning winds

Calm or very little wind

Heavy rain, thunder and lightning

What happens when a hurricane passes over land?

It breaks apart and forms tornadoes

It moves more quickly

It loses strength