

# HURRICANES

## And New York City

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

John T. Odermatt, Commissioner

NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT — NYC.GOV

**P**owerful Hurricane Isabel is currently moving northwestward across the Atlantic, and will likely make landfall in the eastern U.S. later this week. Forecasters are working with various models to predict Isabel's path. The Office of Emergency Management is monitoring the situation closely, and will provide updates as the storm progresses. Be sure to familiarize yourself with hurricanes and how to prepare to ensure you are ready for any storm.

### WHY ARE HURRICANES SO DANGEROUS?

No storm combines duration, size and wind speed more destructively than a hurricane. With sustained winds of more than 74 MPH, hurricanes can flatten homes, topple trees, and turn loose objects into deadly projectiles. The storm's driving winds and torrential rains can cause massive and dangerous flooding in low-lying and poor-drainage areas. However, storm surge — a dome of seawater pushed forward by the oncoming storm — is the most serious hurricane-related hazard.

### FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

**Hurricane Season** — June 1 to November 30

**Hurricane Watch** — Issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.

**Hurricane Warning** — Issued when hurricane conditions are expected in a specified coastal area in 24 hours or less. Hurricane conditions include winds of 74 MPH or higher and/or dangerously high tides or waves.

### WHAT IS STORM SURGE?

Storm surge refers to the dome of seawater pushed forward by an oncoming hurricane. In a severe hurricane, storm surge can reach up to 30 feet in some areas of the City. Aided by the hammering effect of the breaking waves, the surge acts like a giant bulldozer, sweeping away everything in its path. The stronger the hurricane, the higher the storm surge.

### HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

**Prepare a Go Bag and Emergency Supply Kit.** There are certain items you should have on hand and be ready to take with you if you are evacuating (see checklist at right for details).

**Prepare a Household Disaster Plan.** Develop a plan with your household members to prepare for what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in an emergency.

**Stay informed.** For the latest information about an approaching storm, stay tuned to TV and radio broadcasts, access NYC.gov or call 311.

**Protect your pets.** Only service animals are allowed in evacuation shelters. Arrange to shelter your pets either at a kennel or with friends or relatives outside the surge area.

**IF ASKED TO EVACUATE, DO SO IMMEDIATELY.** OEM works with the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service to monitor a storm's progress. During hurricanes, residents in designated evacuation zones may be asked to evacuate. The City will communicate specific instructions to the public through local media. **Please heed all warnings and DO NOT evacuate unless asked to.**

### ARE YOU PREPARED?

If a hurricane should strike, you should be prepared to live without power and water for several days. Be certain that friends, relatives and neighbors with disabilities or special needs are aware of the danger and assist them if possible.

### HURRICANE EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT:

- Portable cooler with ice
- Plastic garbage bags
- Plywood or other shuttering material for windows
- Sturdy shoes, heavy gloves and lightweight raingear
- One gallon of water per person per day
- Non-perishable, ready-to-eat canned or packaged foods and a manual can opener
- Whistle
- One quart of unscented bleach or iodine tablets (for disinfecting water ONLY if directed to do so by health officials) and eyedropper (for adding bleach to water)
- Personal hygiene items (soap, feminine hygiene products, toothbrush and toothpaste, etc.)
- Flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Prescriptions and medications (five- to seven-day supply)\*
- Child-care supplies (baby food, diapers, wipes)\*
- Checkbook, cash, credit cards, ATM cards\*

## HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO EVACUATE?

New York City residents should take the time to find out if their residence, office or school falls within the boundaries of a City evacuation zone. The best way to be prepared for the possibility of a hurricane evacuation is to know your evacuation zone — and plan your destination and travel routes — ahead of time. To see if your New York City address falls in an evacuation zone, enter the location in the Emergency Management Online Locator System (EMOLS) utility on OEM's website at [NYC.gov/oem](http://NYC.gov/oem), or call 311. Emergency officials will relay evacuation instructions through the media and direct warnings if they determine an evacuation is necessary.

## WHERE SHOULD I GO?

The City recommends evacuees stay with friends or family outside evacuation zones when possible. However, for those who have no alternative shelter, the City has identified Evacuation Shelters throughout the five boroughs.

To ensure the most efficient use of resources, the City will ask all evacuees seeking public shelter to report to a Reception Center. These centers are located in all boroughs, and are easily reached via public transportation. Some centers also provide parking facilities. At the Reception Center, evacuees will be assigned to a particular evacuation shelter and be transported by bus or van. To minimize crowding, Reception Centers will be opened in advance of a storm.

To find out the location of your nearest Reception Center, use EMOLS to locate your evacuation zone, and the system will direct you to the proper facility. During an emergency, you may also call 311 or stay tuned to local TV and radio stations for Reception Center locations.

## IF YOU ARE GOING TO AN EVACUATION SHELTER:

Pack only what you need to live for several days, including:

- Emergency Supply Kit items marked with an asterisk (listed on reverse)
- Important papers (including valid identification)
- Sleeping bag, blankets, pillows
- Extra clothing, infant necessities
- Personal hygiene items
- Auxiliary medical equipment
- Food and water for service animals

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- Secure windows with shutters or plywood and brace outside doors.
- Bring inside loose, lightweight objects, such as lawn furniture, garbage cans, garden tools and toys. Anchor objects that will be unsafe to bring inside, like gas grills or propane tanks. Turn off propane tanks.
- If you own a vehicle, fill your gas tank.
- Turn off electricity at the main switch.
- Shut gas valve at the appliance, not the main.
- Let friends, relatives or neighbors know where you are going.

## WEATHER RADIO

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) broadcasts National Weather Service forecasts, warnings and more, 24 hours a day. For a minimal cost, you can purchase a special weather radio that gives instant access to the same weather reports and emergency information that meteorologists and emergency personnel use.

## THE SAFFIR-SIMPSON HURRICANE SCALE

Developed in the early 1970s, based on the observations of numerous North Atlantic hurricanes, the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale rates hurricanes in order of increasing intensity from a Category 1 to Category 5.

The scale is utilized by meteorologists and emergency managers to outline the potential damage of an associated categorized hurricane.

Type of Tropical Cyclone	Category	Potential for Damage	Wind Speed (in MPH)
Depression	TD	--	< 39
Tropical Storm	TS	--	39-73
Hurricane	1	Minimal	74-95
Hurricane	2	Moderate	96-110
Hurricane	3	Extensive	111-130
Hurricane	4	Extreme	131-155
Hurricane	5	Catastrophic	156+

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 311 OR ACCESS NYC.GOV.

You can also log on to the following websites:

[NYC.gov/oem](http://NYC.gov/oem)

(NYC Office of Emergency Management)

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

(Federal Emergency Management Agency)

[www.nysemo.state.ny.us](http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us)

(NY State Emergency Management Office)

[www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)

(National Hurricane Center)

[www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org)

(American Red Cross of Greater New York)

