2017 Atlantic Seasonal Hurricane Forecast

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The official 2017 hurricane season began June 1st and will run until November

30th. For the 34th year, Dr. Philip J. Klotzbach, Research Scientist and Dr. William M. Gray, Professor Emeritus of Atmospheric Science, both of Colorado State University’s Department of Atmospheric Science, made their forecast of the upcoming season’s Atlantic basin hurricane activity by way of their “Extended Range Forecast of Atlantic Seasonal Hurricane Activity and Landfall Strike Probability” report.

The forecast for 2017 is believed to have average activity. This forecast is based on an extended-range early June statistical prediction scheme that was developed using 29 years of past data. Analog predictors are also utilized. It is anticipated to be an average Atlantic basin hurricane season. The odds of a significant El Nino in 2017 appear unlikely. Portions of the tropical Atlantic have deviated from the typical weather, and have warmed over the past two months. Although the tropical Atlantic is warmer than normal, the far North Atlantic remains colder, and is potentially indicated of a negative phase of the Atlantic Multi-Decadal Oscillation. It is anticipated a near- average probability for major hurricanes making landfall along the United States coastline as in the Caribbean. As always with hurricane seasons, coastal residents are reminded that it only takes one hurricane to make it an active season. Everyone should prepare for the same for every season, regardless of how much activity is predicted.



Predictions are the best estimate, but there is with all forecasts an uncertainty as to how well they will verify. Dr. Klotzbach indicates that uncertainty with this particular outlook is quite large, given the uncertainty in the state of both ENSO (El Niño–Southern Oscillation) as well as the Atlantic basin.

El Niño–Southern Oscillation (**ENSO**) is an irregularly periodical variation in winds and sea surface temperatures over the tropical eastern Pacific Ocean, affecting much of the tropics and subtropics. The warming phase is known as El Niño and the cooling phase as La Niña.

Also, it should be noted that there is no strong correlation between the number of storms or hurricanes and the U.S. landfalls in any given season. One or more of the 12 named storms forecast to develop this season could hit the U.S. or none at all. Therefore, our coastal clients are reminded that it only takes one hurricane to make landfall, so all are encouraged prepare each year no matter the forecast.

Information obtained through May 2017 indicates that the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season will have activity near the median 1981-2010 season. This is an increase in our forecast from what was predicted in early April.

Estimates are that 2017 will have an additional 6 hurricanes (median is 6.5). 13 named storms (median is 12.0), 60 named storm days (median is 60.1), 25 hurricane days (median is 21.3), 2 major (Category 3-4-5) hurricanes (median is 2.0) and 5 major hurricane day (median is 3.9). The probability of the U.S. major hurricane landfall is estimated to be near the long-period average. We expect Atlantic basin Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE)A and New Tropical Cyclone (NTC) activity in 2017 to be approximately 105 percent of their long-term median values.

Coastal residents are reminded that it only takes one hurricane making landfall to make it an active season for them, and they need to prepare the same for every season, regardless of how much activity is predicted.

Drs. Klotzbach and Gray most recent predictions are as follows:

**ATLANTIC BASIN SEASONAL HURRICANE FORECAST FOR 2017**

\*The Seasonal Forecast

**FORECAST PARAMETER AND 1981-2010**

**Median (in Parentheses)**

**Issue Date**

**6/01/17**

**Seasonal Forecast**

Includes activity observed

through March 2017

NAMED STORMS (NS) (12.0) 13 14

NAMED STORM DAYS (NSD) (60.1) 59.25 60

HURRICANES (H) (6.5) 6 6

HURRICANE DAYS (HD) (21.3) 25 25

MAJOR HURRICANES (MH) (2.0) 2 5

MAJOR HURRICANE DAYS (MHD) (3.9) 4 5

ACCUMULATED CYCLONE ENERGY (ACE) (92) 99 100

NET TROPICAL CYCLONE ACTIVITY (NTC) (103% 108 110

**PROBABILITIES FOR AT LEAST ONE MAJOR (CATEGORY 3-4-5) HURRICANE LANDFALL ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING COASTAL AREAS:**

1. Entire U.S. Coastline – 55% (average for the last century is 52%)

2. U.S. East Coast including the Florida Peninsula – 35% (average for the last century is 31%)

3. Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle westward to

Brownsville – 32% (average for the last century is 30%)

**PROBABILITY FOR AT LEAST ONE MAJOR (CATEGORY 3-4-5) HURRICANE TRACKING INTO THE CARIBBEAN (10-20°N, 60-88°W):**

1. 44% (average for the last century is 42%)

Below you will find the listing of hurricane names for the Atlantic Ocean for the year 2017. For every year, there is a pre-approved list of tropical storm and hurricane names. These lists have been generated by the National Hurricane Center since 1953. At first, the lists consisted of only female names; however, since 1979, the lists alternate between male and female.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2017 STATE IMPACT PROBABILITIES (NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES ARE LONG-PERIOD AVERAGES)** | | | |
|  | **State** | **Hurricane** | **Major Hurricane** |
| **TEXAS** |  | 35% | 13% |
| **LOUISIANA** | | 32% | 13% |
| **MISSISSIPPI** | | 11% | 5% |
| **ALABAMA** | | 17% | 3% |
| **FLORIDA** | | 54% | 22% |
| **GEORGIA** | | 12% | 1% |
| **SOUTH CAROLINA** | | 19% | 4% |
| **NORTH CAROLINA** | | 30% | 8% |
| **VIRGINIA** | | 7% | 1% |
| **MARYLAND** | | 1% | <1% |
| **DELAWARE** | | 1% | <1% |
| **NEW JERSEY** | | 1% | <1% |
| **NEW YORK** | | 8% | 3% |
| **CONNECTICUT** | | 7% | 2% |
| **RHODE ISLAND** | | 6% | 3% |
| **MASSACHUSETTS** | | 7% | 2% |
| **NEW HAMPSHIRE** | | 1% | <1% |
| **MAINE** |  | 4% | <1% |
|  | |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **2017 Hurricane Names** | | |
| 1. Arlene | 8. Harvey | 15. Ophelia |
| 2. Bret | 9. Irma | 16. Phillipe |
| 3. Cindy | 10. Jose | 17. Rina |
| 4. Don | 11. Katia | 18. Sean |
| 5. Emily | 12. Lee | 19. Tammy |
| 6. Franklin | 13. Maria | 20. Vince |
| 7. Gert | 14. Nate | 21. Whitney |

Hurricanes are named alphabetically from the list in chronological order. The lists contain hurricane names that begin from A to W, but exclude names that begin with a "Q" or "U." There are six lists that continue to rotate. The lists only change when there is a hurricane that is so devastating, the name is retired and another hurricane name replaces it.

**Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category Sustained Types of Damage Due to Hurricane Winds**  **Winds** | | |
| **1** | 74-95 mph  64-82 kt  119-153 km/h | **Very dangerous winds will produce some damage:** Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles and vinyl siding and gutters. Large branches of trees will snap and shallowly rooted trees may be toppled. Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days. |
| **2** | 96-110 mph  83-95 kt  154-177 km/h | **Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage:** Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks. |
| **3 (MAJOR)** | 111-129 mph  96-112 kt  178-208 km/h | **Devastating damage will occur:** Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will be snapped or uprooted, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes. |
| **4 (MAJOR)** | 130-156 mph  113-136 kt  209-251 km/h | **Catastrophic damage will occur:** Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months. |
| **5 (MAJOR)** | 157 mph or higher  137 kt or higher  252 km/h or higher | **Catastrophic damage will occur:** A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months. |

Visit the Landfalling Probability Webpage at http://www.e- transit.org/hurricane for more information on landfall probabilities for 11 U.S. coastal regions and 205 coastal and near-coastal counties from Brownsville, Texas to Eastport, Maine. In addition, probabilities of named storms, hurricanes and major hurricanes tracking within 50 and 100 miles of various islands and landmasses in the Caribbean and Central America. We suggest that all of our coastal clients visit this site to determine their probability of risk.

The analysis of a variety of atmosphere and ocean measurements (through March) which are known to have long-period statistical relationships with the 2017 Atlantic tropical cyclone activity is what leads Dr. Klotzbach and Dr. Gray to predict near average activity. One of the key question in determining its accuracy is how quickly the El Niño weakens.

**Steps to Take During a Hurricane Watch**

**Know what to do before a hurricane**

A Hurricane Watch means that hurricane conditions are likely within 48 hours. Have your hurricane plans in place and be ready to act in case a warning is issued. At this stage, it is important to stay abreast of the storm’s development and path.

Essential staff members should report to the property as soon as a Hurricane Watch has been announced. Watch letters should be distributed and signs should be posted on the front and rear doors of offices as well as in common areas. Other important steps to take at this time include:

• Forward phone lines, as applicable, to an alternate or corporate location

• Communicate official emergency evacuation routes are known by employees

• Call your bottled water supplier and trash company

• Contact your predetermined security company and

review the security procedures you have contracted for—

both pre- and post-storm

• Call your vendors for priority post-hurricane assistance

• Ensure that your phone lists have been updated and redistribute them to employees

• Determine which employees need to call to report in

• Replace any disaster supplies that have expired or are not in stock

• Contact any tenants, if applicable, who might need evacuation assistance

• Raise equipment, product and stock off of the floor to help prevent water damage

**Steps to Take During a Hurricane Warning**

**Preparation pays off!**

A Hurricane Warning means that hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hours. Complete your storm preparations and leave the area if directed to do so by authorities. Your storm preparations at this time should include:

• Secure all windows with plywood

• Reinforce the office, shop, boiler room and storage doors

• Check the exterior of each building to ensure loose items are secured

• Secure elevator cabs on the top floor and disable them

• Ensure all roof drains are clear and free of obstruction

• Post prepared signs advising that the elevators are out of service

• Secure important files plastic bags and place them large trash cans and seal with tape

• Relocate keys, key codes and any money or securities to a designated alternate location

• Assemble a petty cash supply that can be used in an emergency after the storm

• Lock all file cabinets and seal with tape

• Relocate any paper files not secured in plastic from lower drawers to a higher level in the event of flooding

• Back up computers and cover them with plastic bags, sealed with tape. Be sure computers are powered off prior to covering them

• Fill the gas tanks of all vehicles and equipment

• Unplug all electrical items, and turn off circuit breakers and gas lines

• Document all work in progress

• Communicate how company management will stay in contact with employees during and after the storm

• Recommend that employees obtain cash for personal use after storms

• Communicate with key external parties to ensure they can contact you during and subsequent to the storm

• Determine and communicate post-event damage assessment strategy

**Tips for Claims Filing**

**Pre-Storm Tips**

If a large storm is headed your way and you know that if it continues on this path that damage to your business could be substantial, an insurance claim involving your business and your location(s) is likely. We will presume you have adequately protected your property and employees. Before taking shelter, to expedite the claims process, gather and

store these items in a secure area:

• A separate financial report with accounting code to capture all associated expenses. Separate to identify potential FEMA expenses (if eligible)

• A spreadsheet with the statement of values and percentage deductible per location or building

• A copy of the policy with language to show how the deductible is applied (i.e., per building or location)

• Copies of important sub-limits (i.e., debris removal, code upgrades, increased cost of construction, etc.)

• A single document that lists carrier contact information for each layer of excess insurance

**If you are at risk of experiencing a Business**

**Interruption Claim, you will likely need to produce:**

• Documentation showing pre-loss sales/revenue

• Tax returns or profit and loss statements

• A copy of your lease agreement

• Payroll summaries

**Post-Storm Tips**

Whether the storm causes minor damage or results in a

major disaster, both outcomes share a common trait; business as usual is interrupted and action is needed to restore normal conditions. More than 40 percent of businesses close permanently following a significant loss, so it is important to file claims as soon as possible. The following guidelines can assist in claims filing:

• Report your claim immediately

• Establish and maintain internal and external communications with appropriate parties, to include:

» Personnel on-site — for guidance and direction

» Corporate management — to provide periodic updates on conditions and progress

» Insurance broker — for claims support and updates

» Displaced personnel — to deliver updates via website, text messages or phone messages

» Insurance adjuster — always end meetings and conversations with “next steps” discussion and schedule subsequent meetings

• As soon as possible, inventory all damage by performing a unit-by-unit inspection

• Photograph all damage identified and copy to a disc for the adjuster

• Complete necessary temporary repairs to prevent further damage

• Retain receipts for all repairs, as well as any additional expenses incurred as a result of the storm

• When contacted by the adjuster, request that you meet with the assigned appraiser on-site:

» Include your contractor, if you have selected one

» Discuss future repairs/replacement and seek a preliminary damage assessment value

» Determine what the adjuster needs from you to expedite the process

» Discuss a timeline for obtaining an initial advance

» Determine when the adjuster will be providing an initial report to the carrier

» Schedule a follow-up meeting or get a commitment on a time frame for a follow-up call

• Respond to all requested documentation as soon as possible

• Provide documents in the requested format

• Send complete copies of requested documents versus the portions you feel applicable, e.g., copy of complete tax returns

Hurricane season has begun quietly, take the time now to develop and review policies and guidelines for management and employees to implement in the event of a storm that will disrupt your business. Proper planning and procedures will help your organization to recover quickly from a storm and resume business as usual.

*The material provided in this document is for informational purposes only. Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of a Gallagher Loss Control specialist regarding their specific property. For assistance in this matter contact your Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. broker. Additional information regarding weather events can be found on our Disaster & Emergency Preparedness Knowledge Center website at:* [***http://www.***](http://www/) ***ajg.com/knowledge-center/disaster-emergency-preparedness/***

[www.ajg.com](http://www.ajg.com/)

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