

Getting Ready for Hurricane Season 2011

A hurricane is a large tropical storm formed around a low pressure system that normally develops over warm, open waters during warm weather months. It carries heavy rains coupled with dangerously high winds. While the coastal states are at the highest risk of experiencing the worst effects of these storms, the remnants of a hurricane can bring flooding rains and heavy winds to nearly all parts of Mexico. Hurricane Jimena made landfall during September of 2009 in the Sea of Cortez, near to Baja California. The cities of Alamos and Guaymas suffered extensive damage some of the inland parts of Sonora and Sinaloa also experienced damage due to the heavy rains and winds. In September 2010 Hurricane Georgette caused massive flooding and significant infrastructure damage in Guaymas and San Carlos.

What can I do to prepare for a hurricane?

- Create an emergency plan. This includes establishing meeting points, should family members become separated, evacuation routes, and collecting a disaster kit. For more information on creating an emergency plan and a disaster kit, please visit www.Ready.gov
- Register your trip with the nearest Embassy or Consulate. In the event of an emergency, American consular officers can assist you by warning you of possible crises, keeping you updated on events in the area, helping you contact friends and family in the US, and even making evacuation plans when necessary. To register, visit <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>
- Designate a safe area to which you and members of your household can evacuate, should you be instructed to do so.
- Stay informed. Pay special attention to local and international media broadcasts and listen for alerts issued by civil protection authorities.
- In the event that a hurricane threatens Mexico, the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center in the United States will issue watches and warnings for the areas that will be affected. If a watch is issued for your area, you are likely to experience storm conditions within 48 hours. If a warning is issued for your area, you are likely to experience storm conditions within 36 hours or less. Take these advisories into account in conjunction with those issued by Mexican authorities.
- Ensure that your house is secure. This includes removing any loose items from outside (patio furniture, trash cans, etc.) and boarding up windows. In the event that you must evacuate your home, ensure that your doors and windows are securely locked.
- In the event that your residence is especially vulnerable to storm surge, flooding, or wind damage, be prepared to evacuate should civil protection authorities instruct you to do so. If you do receive an evacuation order, it is in the interest of your personal safety and security to comply.

What can I do to protect myself during a hurricane?

If you find yourself inside your home during a hurricane, take the following steps:

- Remain indoors for the duration of the storm. Stay in an interior room or hallway on the lowest level of your residence, away from windows and glass doors.
- Take cover under a table or other sturdy object.
- Close all interior doors.
- Secure and brace all external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed.

- Do not venture outside if there is a lull in the storm. This could be the eye of the storm, signifying that more dangerous weather is yet to come.
- If your home becomes damaged during the storm and is no longer able to provide adequate protection, be prepared to move to a different location.

What can I do to protect myself and others in the aftermath of a hurricane?

- Stay in your safe area until you are certain that the storm has passed. Having the ability to listen to local radio broadcasts via battery-powered radio will assist you in making this determination.
- If you are in need of immediate help and cannot reach the local authorities, call the U.S. Consulate in Hermosillo. If you are safe and not in need of emergency assistance, please *refrain* from calling the Consulate. The more lines that are open, the easier it will be to communicate with those who need help the most. You can reach us at 662 289 3500 or, after hours, cell 662 256 0741.
- Avoid walking around in damaged areas. Downed power lines and other debris could cause injury.
- If you evacuated your residence, do not return until authorities allow you to do so.
- Before returning to your home, ensure that it is architecturally sound. Should you need assistance in doing this, contact your local authorities.

Where can I learn more about hurricanes?

- The National Hurricane Center: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>
- Hurricane Preparedness webpage: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml>
- Ready.gov – Hurricanes: <http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/hurricanes.html>
- National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>
- State Department – Know before you go
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_2915.html
- State Department’s website on Natural Disasters - CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/index.asp>
- National Meteorological Service (Servicio Meteorológico Nacional):
<http://smn.cna.gob.mx/> (in Spanish)
- Sonora – Unidad Estatal de Protección Civil (Reportes Climatológicos)
<http://www.proteccioncivil.sonora.gob.mx/> (in Spanish)
- Sinaloa – Unidad Estatal de Protección Civil (Que hacer en caso de huracán)
<http://www.mazatlan.gob.mx/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=587> (in Spanish)

U.S. Consulate General Hermosillo
Monterrey 141 Poniente
Col. Esqueda
Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico
662-289-3500
Hermoacs@state.gov

U.S. Consular Agency Mazatlan
Playa Gaviotas 202 Local 10
Golden Zone
Mazatlan, Sinaloa 82110
669-916-5889
ConagencyMazatlan@state.gov