U.S. Embassy Nassau

Crisis and Hurricane Preparedness
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Hurricane Cycle Diagram

Category 5
155 mph winds or higher

Category 4
131-155 mph winds

Category 3
111-130 mph winds

Category 2
96-110 mph winds

Category 1
74-95 mph winds

Depression
35 mph winds

Tropical Storm
39-73 mph
CATEGOR Y 1: Hurricanes in The Bahamas

Hurricane Hanna – Inagua and Mayaguana (Sept 2008)
Hurricane Ike – Inagua (Sept 2008)
Hurricane Francis - Several Islands (Sept 2004)

• Average wind speed for a cat. 1 is 74-95mph.
• Storm surge is generally 4-5 feet above normal.
• Damage is mostly to trees and shrubbery, with no real building damage.
CATEGORY 2
Hurricanes in The Bahamas:

Hurricane Frances – Sept 2004 - several islands
Hurricane Floyd – (Sept 1999 - Freeport)
Hurricane George (Sept 1998 - several islands)
Hurricane Lilli (Oct 1996 - several islands)

- Winds are from 96-110 mph.
- Storm surge is generally 6-8 feet above normal.
- Coastal and low lying escape routes may flood 2-4 hours before the arrival of the hurricane's center.

- Damage: Some roofing material, door and window damage to buildings. Considerable damage to trees and shrubbery with some trees blown down. Considerable damage to signs, mobile homes and poorly constructed piers.
CATEGORY 3

Hurricanes in The Bahamas:

Hurricane Wilma – 2004
Hurricane Jeanne – 2004

MAJOR HURRICANE

- Winds from 111-130 mph.
- Can generate a storm surge of 9-12 feet above normal.
- Terrain lower than 5 feet above mean sea level may flood inland 8 miles or more.
- Evacuation of low lying areas may be required.
- Escape routes cut by rising water 3-5 hours before the hurricane’s center arrives.

DAMAGE: Structural damage to residences. Large trees blown down. Mobile homes and poorly constructed signs are destroyed. Smaller structures at the coast destroyed and larger structures damaged by floating debris.
CATEGORY 4
Hurricanes in The Bahamas

Hurricane Andrew (Cat 4-5) – August 1992
Hurricane Betsy – Sept 1965

MAJOR HURRICANE

- Winds 131-155 mph
- Storm surge - 13-18 feet above normal.

DAMAGE

- Extensive damage with complete roof structure failures on small residences.
- Most shrubs, signs and trees blown down.
- COMPLETE DESTRUCTION of mobile homes.
- Extensive damage to doors and windows.
- Low lying escape routes maybe cut by rising water 3-5 hours before the arrival of the hurricane's center.
- Major damage to lower floors of structures near the coast.
- Terrain lower than 10 feet above mean sea level may be flooded as far inland as 6 miles.
CATEGORIZATION 5

Hurricanes in The Bahamas

Hurricane Andrew – August 1992

MAJOR HURRICANE

- Winds greater than 155 mph.
- Storm surge greater than 18 feet above normal.
- Roofs destroyed on many residential and industrial buildings.
- Small utility buildings blown over or away.
- COMPLETE DESTRUCTION of some homes.
- Major damage to all lower floors of all structures located below 15 feet above sea level and within 500 yards of the shoreline.
- Massive evacuation of residential areas on low ground within 5-10 miles of the coastline required.
# Hurricane Table for The Bahamas

## Islands Impacted by Hurricanes

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**Total:** 24
Hurricane Warning System in The Bahamas

- A **HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM ALERT** implies that Hurricane/Tropical Storm conditions can be experienced within 60 hours (2½ days).

- A **HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM WATCH** implies that Hurricane/Tropical Storm conditions can be experienced within 48 hours.

- A **HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM WARNING** implies that Hurricane or Tropical Storm conditions can be experienced within 36 hours.

- An **ALL CLEAR MESSAGE** implies that Hurricane/Tropical Storm ALERTS, WATCHES or WARNINGS have been discontinued.
What does Crisis Preparedness Look Like?
Recent global events such as evacuations from Egypt, Libya and Japan all demonstrate the importance of being prepared. Preparing ahead is invaluable should a crisis or emergency occur.

What the U.S. Embassy in Nassau is Doing to Prepare:

- Revising Hurricane Action Plan – a continual process
- Keeping contact information up to date
- Seeking new, fast means of communications
- Maintaining accurate lists of shelters
- Strengthening our Warden System
Preparation Diagram

**Phase 1**
**Hurricane Season**
- Register with US Embassy (SMART Enrollment)
- Maintain valid passports
- Keep important docs -- birth and marriage records, vaccination, insurance and bank records in one readily accessible location;
- Plan if – and where – you would evacuate? Does anyone in your family need a visa?
- Organize emergency supplies.

**Phase 2**
**Hurricane Watch**
- Decide if you evacuate or move to a shelter – Purchase airline tickets if needed.
- Maintain communications with family – let them know your plans.
- Finalize your preparations. Secure your home; top off your water and gas tanks.
- Gather your emergency supplies for a shelter, or pack for a flight to the mainland.

**Phase 3**
**Hurricane Warning**
- Move to your shelter or evacuate to the mainland well before the storm hits.
- Provide a detailed itinerary and your contact information with a friend or family member.
What the U.S. Embassy Can and Can’t Do in a Crisis

**Can**
- Provide information on conditions in the country
- Recommend U.S. citizens take certain actions
- Assist in identifying available transportation for evacuation.
- Assist with departure from a devastated region if commercial travel is unavailable. Please note that US law expects you to pay for such transportation.
- Provide transportation in advance of a storm.
- Provide transportation or directly assistance during a storm.

**Can’t**
- Protect your property while away
- Provide legal advice or represent you in court
- Pay legal, medical, hotel, or other fees for you

**Not likely**
- Assist in identifying available transportation for evacuation.
Post Crisis

• Attempt to verify the welfare/whereabouts of American citizens.

• Assist injured Americans with getting proper medical care.

• Assist Americans with returning to the U.S. or with obtaining funds from family/friends

• Assist families of deceased Americans with obtaining documentation and making final arrangements.

• Issue regular updates on local conditions, including travel advisories or alerts if necessary.

• Liaise with persons attempting to locate missing Americans, within the bounds of the Privacy Act.
Useful Links for Crisis Preparedness

General Information:  Travel.State.gov --  http://travel.state.gov

Hurricane Season:  Know Before You Go

Hurricane Preparedness:
http://nassau.usembassy.gov/hurricane_preparedness2.html

National Hurricane Center:  Be Prepared
http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/
http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/outreach/prepared_week.shtml

NOAA Have a Plan Checklist:
http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/prepare/family_plan.shtml

General Info:  Natural Disasters:
http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1207.html

Disaster Help:  Disaster Help.GOV
CDC Natural Disasters
NASA Natural Disaster Reference Database
FEMA Hazards
Any Questions?

U.S. Embassy Website

http://nassau.usembassy.gov

Contact us at:

ACSN@state.gov