



## Hurricanes- What is a Hurricane?



A hurricane is a tropical cyclone in which the maximum average **wind speed near the centre or eye exceeds 74 mph or 119 km/h.**

Hurricane winds blow in a large spiral around a relative calm center known as the "eye." **The "eye" is generally 20 to 30 miles wide, and the storm may extend outward 400 miles.**

As a hurricane approaches, the skies will begin to darken and winds will grow in strength. As a hurricane nears land, it can bring torrential rains, high winds, and storm surges.

A single hurricane can last for more than 2 weeks over open waters and can run a path across the entire length of the eastern seaboard. **August and September are peak months during the hurricane season that lasts from June 1 through November 30.**

### **Advice for the period before, during, and after a hurricane**

#### **Preparation BEFORE a tropical storm:**

- check your house/apartment and surroundings, in order to prevent important damage;
- find out where the closest shelter provided by civil protection services is;
- make sure the gas and water tanks are securely fastened, as well as the TV or parasol antennae, the solar boiler, air-conditioning compressors and/or all other objects found on the roof or around the house/apartment;
- pull the antenna connection plug before taking it down. In doing so, be careful to avoid the antenna coming into contact with the electric lines;
- park your automobile far away from trees or electricity posts;
- check your tools and material used to secure buildings against wind gusts;
- listen regularly to the official bulletins and follow their instructions;
- prepare your automobile by filling up its fuel tank, and by checking batteries, lights, and brakes, etc.;
- keep all important documents such as property titles, passport, etc., at hand; look over the house pharmacy, and replenish whatever medicines might be missing;
- please make sure to inform the consulate of all address and/or changes of place of residence.

#### **DURING the hurricane:**

- stay inside the house/apartment or shelter;
- do not leave safety, even if you hear windows breaking or other powerful noises;
- keep windows and doors closed. Stay away from windows and doors, especially if these are of glass;
- pull all the plugs of electrical appliances, even if the electricity still happens to be working. Interrupt the house's/ apartment's electricity supply by turning it off in the external fuse box, as water might penetrate and cause a short circuit;
- use the telephone only for emergency calls.

### **AFTER the hurricane:**

- wait for the authorities to inform you that the danger has passed;
- inform the consulate, should you have knowledge of injured or deceased Swiss nationals;
- do not ingest food which might have come into contact with contaminated water;
- reduce the consumption of food and water; -do not touch any electrical cables, and do not try to right electricity posts or trees, as this could put you in danger of death.

## **Objects, food, precaution measures**

### **First-Aid articles**

- alcohol, bandages and band-aid, iodine, cotton swabs, fever thermometer;
- medication prescribed by a doctor;
- cough syrup;
- anti-bacterial soap;
- a pan with special layering, so one can boil water in it;
- nose, ear, and eye-drops;
- gauze, scissors and application bandages;
- aspirin, medication against fever, diarrhea, and stomach acidity

### **Tools, personal hygiene material, pyjamas, and clothes**

- pocket lamp with extra batteries;
- candles, matches, and batteries;
- a pick, shovel, bush knife, pickaxe, hammer, knife, scrubber, water bucket, broom;
- pincers and flat pincers, screwdriver, manual can-opener, battery-powered radio;
- cellular telephone with charged batteries;
- soap, WC-paper, wash-cloth, kitchen towels, diapers, toothpaste and toothbrush;
- bed-sheets, wool blankets, cushions, towels;
- raincoats, shoes, boots, gym shoes and clothes, as well as underwear for at least 3 days.

### **Food**

- powdered milk, chocolate
- biscuits and flat bread
- canned vegetables
- disposable plates and cups
- gallons of drinking water (approx. 1 gallon per person and day)
- canned fruit juices, canned meat
- baby and toddler food
- sugar and coffee
- food not requiring refrigeration.

### **Precautions to be observed concerning the use of water**

When using water after a hurricane, one should distinguish clearly between water to be used, and drinking water. Only water conserved in closed plastic containers before the hurricane may be used as drinking water. After the hurricane, no water from the water pipes may be drunk, unless it has previously been prepared (purified). To clean the water so it is of drinkable quality, one of the following methods may be used; after this, the water should be allowed to stand another 30 minutes. before drinking is allowed.

- Cook water in the especially layered pan for 10 minutes; or
- add 8 drops of chlorine per gallon of water (without lemon or any other additives) or
- add 4 tablets of chlorine per gallon of water (for ex. micropur®).
- To improve the water's taste, mix same well, so it is becomes enriched with oxygen.

**In following links you will find more information about hurricanes and the weather situation in the Caribbean:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical\\_cyclone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_cyclone)

<http://stormcarib.com/>

<http://www.weather.com/newscenter/tropical/?from=footer>

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>