

Fire & Rescue

emergency preparedness



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Hurricane Categories

Hurricanes are categorized by the potential for damage they can create based on a scale from one to five. Herbert Saffir, a consulting engineer who specializes in wind damage to buildings, and Robert Simpson; a former director of the National Hurricane Center, invented the scale during the 1970s.

The table below is a breakdown of the likely level of damage for each of the five hurricane categories. Wind speed is given in miles per hour and storm surge is measured in wave feet. Click on a category to read about the damage classification.

Category	Damage	Winds	Storm Surge
1	Minimal	74-95	4-5
2	Moderate	96-110	6-8
3	Extensive	111-130	9-12
4	Extreme	131-155	13-18
5	Catastrophic	> 155	> 18