



The Safety Net

Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences at Old Dominion University Environmental Health & Safety Newsletter

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Special Interest Articles:

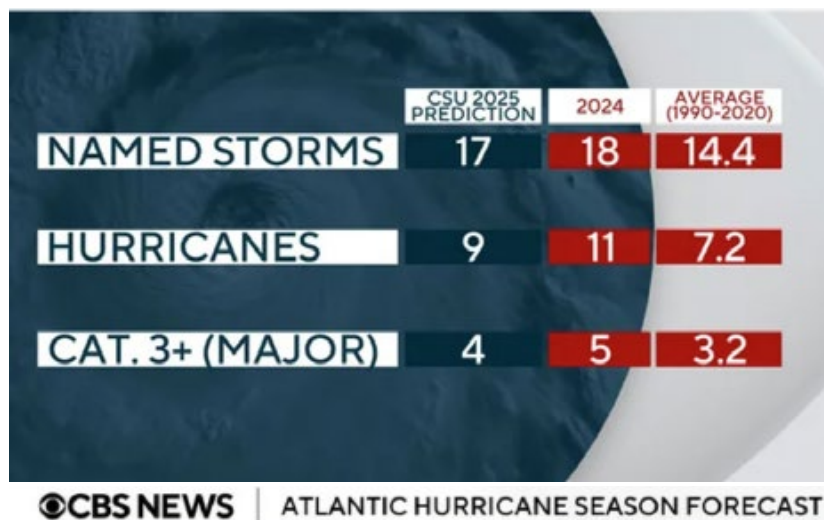
- Hurricane Season
- Hurricane Facts
- Emergency Management
- Evacuation Zone

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Atlantic Hurricane Season Forecast

This Atlantic hurricane season is predicted to be above average. Living along the Atlantic Coast means being aware of the potential impact of hurricanes and tropical storms. Colorado State University (CSU) projects this season's hurricane activity to be about 125% more active than average from 1990 to 2020. Planning early plays a vital role in emergency preparedness, reducing hazards, panic, and increasing your response time.



Experts from the CSU team forecast 17 named storms for the upcoming season, including nine hurricanes. Of those, four are expected to be major hurricanes classified as Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Category 3 hurricanes have sustained winds between 111 and 129 mph and can cause severe damage. Category 4 storms range from 130 to 156 mph, while Category 5 hurricanes, the most destructive, have winds of 157 mph or more. VHS is committed to effectively communicating with faculty, staff, and students to reduce risks during severe weather events. If all VHS campuses are closed due to severe weather, updates will be shared on the VHS-affiliated websites: ([ODU Emergency](#), [EVMS Emergency Preparedness](#)) and through email, text message alerts, and social media.

To help you be better prepared this hurricane season, EH&S has included information in this newsletter on a variety of topics:

- Hurricane Hazard Facts
- Preparedness
- Response/Recovery
- Emergency Management

Hurricane Preparedness and Response

Emergency preparedness includes multiple steps to ensure you are ready for hurricane season. This is especially true during hurricane season. Hurricanes are responsible for creating devastating destruction to communities affected. During the planning process for emergencies it's important to be prepared for many different things. Incorporating planning, equipping, training and exercise will ensure you are one step closer to being prepared.

Planning: Having a clear evacuation plan is essential to ensure worker safety in the event of a hurricane. An effective plan should outline the conditions that activate it, identify the chain of command, assign emergency roles, and detail evacuation routes and procedures. It should also include methods for accounting for all personnel, visitors, and any necessary equipment. In addition to planning, it's crucial to understand hurricane warning terms and be familiar with your local community's emergency alerts, signals, and shelter locations. A hurricane or tropical storm watch indicates possible conditions, while a warning means the storm is expected, usually within 24 hours.

Response/Recovery: After a tropical storm or hurricane, safety remains the top priority. Stay indoors until local officials confirm the storm has fully passed, as debris and hazards like live wires, gas leaks, and flooding may be present. If you evacuated, do not return until given official clearance, and bring ID and proof of residency. Conduct a basic damage assessment, avoid sightseeing, and contact family to confirm your safety. Use only bottled or approved water, avoid candles and indoor use of grills or generators, and stay informed via official media. Assist neighbors if safe but avoid overextending your abilities. In the following days, expect power outages and road closures. Follow food safety guidelines, document damages for insurance claims, and contact FEMA if a disaster declaration is issued. Wear protective gear when cleaning up, stay hydrated, watch for wildlife and hazardous materials, and dispose of debris per local guidance. Care for pets, talk to children about the event, and prevent mold by drying out water-damaged materials quickly.

FEMA mobile app!

[Download the FEMA app](#) Get National Weather Service alerts for up to five U.S. locations and sign up for FEMA text updates using your phone.

Hurricane Facts:

- Hurricanes are powerful tropical cyclones characterized by rotating air and sustained wind speeds of at least 74 miles per hour.
- The most intense hurricanes can exceed wind speeds of 155 mph, causing catastrophic damage to communities and infrastructure.
- The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June through November, with peak activity typically occurring between August and October.
- Regions along the Atlantic Coast, the Gulf of Mexico, and parts of the Southwestern United States are especially vulnerable to these storms.
- Hurricanes pose a variety of hazards, including storm surges, heavy rainfall, flooding, and strong winds.
- Find out more on [OSHA's Hurricane Preparedness and Response page](#), which offers vital information on hurricane warnings, potential hazards, and safety precautions that workers and employers should take during and after a storm.

Stay Safe, Stay Informed, Stay Prepared: Emergency Management

Before a Hurricane

Preparation saves lives. Take these steps early:

- **Plan:** Know your evacuation zone, route, and shelter options.
- **Secure Your Home:** Bring in outdoor items, cover windows, and clear gutters.
- **Pack Emergency Kits:**
 - Go-Kit: 3-day supply of essentials for evacuation.
 - Stay-at-Home Kit: 2-week supply for sheltering in place.
 - Protect documents in waterproof storage.
- **Stay Informed:** Sign up for local alerts; keep radios and phones powered.
- **Learn Safety Skills:** CPR, generator use, and powered medical equipment basics.

If you have malfunctioning equipment in your lab, follow the below procedures.

During a Hurricane

Follow local instructions and stay safe:

- **Evacuate if Ordered:** Leave immediately with your Go-Kit; use official routes.
- **Shelter in Place:** Stay indoors, in a windowless interior room on a low, dry level.
- **Avoid Floodwaters:** Never walk, swim, or drive through them— “Turn Around, Don’t Drown!”

After a Hurricane

Dangers remain even after the storm:

- **Return Safely:** Wait for officials to say it’s safe. Watch for power lines and debris.
- **Avoid Carbon Monoxide:** Never use fuel-powered devices indoors.
- **Clean Up Carefully:** Use gloves, boots, and disinfect everything that got wet.
- **Stay Healthy:** Discard spoiled food/meds. Drink only safe water.
- **Prioritize Mental Health:** It’s okay to need help—call 1-800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 667
- Check out Virginia Hurricane Evacuation Guide for more information
(<https://www.vaemergency.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-hurricane-evacuation-guide-1.pdf>)

“Know Your Zone”

Virginia has an evacuation initiative for the 1.25 million residents living in the hurricane-prone coastal region. Covering 23 localities, it uses tiered zones (A–D) to guide residents on whether to evacuate or shelter at home based on their street address and storm severity. Before a major storm, officials will issue zone-specific evacuation instructions through news and social media. To find your zone, visit www.KnowYourZoneVA.org and enter your address in the interactive map. If you don’t have internet access, call 2-1-1 or contact your local emergency management office.

How to Evacuate:

If told to evacuate, leave immediately. Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters—just six inches can disable a car. Don’t Park near streams or rivers during storms. If flying or taking a train, check for delays. Arrange lodging in safe areas early, and use smartphone apps to find fuel, traffic updates, and hotel vacancies. Keep loved ones informed of your location and follow local news and official updates throughout your evacuation.

Eastern Shore

- U.S. Route 13 North toward Salisbury, MD.

Southside

- 264 West and Interstate 64 Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel
- Interstate 664 North (Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge tunnel)
- U.S. Routes: 17 North, Route 58 West, 460 West



**LOOK FOR THESE SIGNS
DURING AN EVACUATION**



How Hurricanes get their Names

Hurricanes are named to improve communication, tracking, and public awareness. Once a tropical cyclone reaches 39 mph and becomes a tropical storm, it’s assigned a name from a rotating list maintained by the World Meteorological Organization. There are six alphabetical lists used in rotation for Atlantic storms; for instance, the 2024 list runs from “Alberto” to “William” and will be reused in 2030.



This system, first introduced in 1953 and expanded to include men’s names in 1979, replaced earlier, inconsistent naming methods. Names help officials and the public clearly identify storms. Particularly destructive storms, like Katrina or Harvey, have their names retired to avoid confusion or insensitivity. If all 21 names are used in a season, a supplemental list (not the Greek alphabet) is now used. This naming process ensures clarity and reinforces public safety.

Notes from the Office

EH&S Training Courses.

Course	Date/Time	Location
Chemical Hygiene Plan	June 5, 2025 9:30 AM -12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
	June 12, 2025 9:30 AM -12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
	June 18, 2025 9:30 AM -12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
Radiation Safety in the Laboratory	Contact EH&S	
Biosafety in the Laboratory Biological Materials Shipping Autoclave Safety Training OHSP Training Respiratory Protection	Available on SciShield!	https://evms.scishield.com/
HAZCOM Bloodborne Pathogens Biological Materials Shipping (Clinical)	Available on Blackboard!	https://evms.blackboard.com/