

COASTAL STATE RESIDENTS FAIL HURRICANE SAFETY TEST

Adults who live in states that front the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico lack a significant level of knowledge about hurricanes and how to best prepare for them. When asked a 20 question test about hurricane-related facts and issues, the average coastal state adult was only able to answer 8 correctly – with an overall average of 42 on a 100-point scale. Only 22% were able to answer more than 10 of the 20 questions correctly, and only 2% got a "C" grade or better by answering 14 or more correct (70 on a 100-point scale). An additional 9% passed with a "D" (60-69 on a 100-point scale). Overall, 89% failed the test.

Of more concern is that adults who lived within 10 miles of the coast did not score higher than those who lived inland. Both groups of adults averaged 8 correct answers out of 20. Those who had experienced a hurricane before only scored marginally higher than those who have not – averaging 9 correct answers and an overall average of 44 on a 100-point scale.

HURRICANE TEST – CORRECT ANSWERS OUT OF 20 QUESTIONS

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		AVERAGE	TOTAL SCORE
		CORRECT	(100 point scale)
OVERALL		8	42
CLOSE LIVE TO COAST?	10 miles or less	8	41
	>10 miles	8	42
BEEN IN HURRICANE?	YES	9	44
	NO	8	41

Three of the important questions that a large majority of adults got "wrong" dealt with the most dangerous components of hurricanes. Only 20% correctly identified storm surge as the greatest threat to human life from a land-falling hurricane, and only 15% knew that the majority of hurricane fatalities from drowning have occurred in inland counties. Only 29% knew that tornadoes associated with hurricanes are spawned in the rain bands that are hundreds of miles from the eye of the storm – the large majority thought these tornados were generally limited to within three miles of the eye.

They also gave "wrong" answers on several questions related to hurricane-force winds, such as:

- 96% did not know that a garage door is the most likely structural element to fail first in a hurricane, and
- 54% thought that masking tape will prevent windows from shattering.

This lack of hurricane knowledge combined with the lack of preparedness most residents expressed is a recipe for disaster. This lack of preparation is evidenced by the fact that:

- Only 53% of households say they have a plan if their home is threatened by a serious hurricane,
- Only 43% say they feel vulnerable to hurricanes or hurricane-related damage,
- Only 22% admit that there home could be secured or prepared for a hurricane in a few hours most said they would not begin to prepare until a hurricane watch or warning was issued.

Those who live within 10 miles of the coast appear to be somewhat more prepared, as 63% have a hurricane plan, 54% feel vulnerable and 26% could have their homes secured in a few hours. Those who have experienced a hurricane also appear to be better prepared than most, with 70% having a plan, 51% feeling vulnerable and 28% could have their home secured in a few hours. However, as these results demonstrate, even among the most directly threatened or hurricane-experienced adults, many do not feel vulnerable and are not prepared.

Finally, evacuation could present problems in the event of a major hurricane. A significant 42% said they would only evacuate if emergency officials ordered them to do so, and 19% said they would probably not evacuate if ordered – including 14% who said they would not leave under any circumstances. Only 38% said they would evacuate ahead of an actual order, with most (21%) saying that they would only leave early if the hurricane was Category 3 or higher.

Even among those who live within 10 miles of the coast, 16% said they would probably not evacuate, and among those who have experienced a hurricane, an even higher 20% said they would probably not evacuate. Only 33% of coastal residents would evacuate early, as would only 39% of those who have experienced a hurricane before.

APRIL 2005 HURRICANE AWARENESS POLL RESULTS

1,100 adults in Atlantic and Gulf coastal states interviewed by telephone April 20-26, 2005 by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C. The margin for error is ± -3 .

QUESTION: Have you ever experienced any of the following?

	YES	NO
- A Tropical Storm?	62%	38%
- A Minimal/Category 1 hurricane?	53%	47%
- A Category 2 hurricane?	37%	63%
- A Major/Category 3 or higher hurricane?	32%	68%

QUESTION: How vulnerable do you feel to damage from a hurricane or related tornado or flooding hazards? Do you feel:

Extremely Vulnerable	12%
Somewhat Vulnerable	31%
Not Too Vulnerable	32%
Not At All Vulnerable	24%
Not Sure (DO NOT READ)	1%

QUESTION: Do you have a plan for what you would do if a serious hurricane threatened your home, or not?

Yes 53% No 47%

QUESTION: When would you begin to prepare your home for a hurricane? (LIST READ)

- 19% When a hurricane watch is issued
- 32% When a hurricane warning is issued
- 22% Your home is already prepared and could be secured within a few hours
- 26% You won't make any special preparations to your home
 - 1% Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: When would you evacuate? (LIST READ)

- 7% If a hurricane watch was issued for your area
- 10% If a hurricane warning was issued for your area
- 21% If a Category 3 hurricane or stronger was going to hit your home within 24 hours
- 42% If emergency management officials ordered you to evacuate
- 19% Probably never
- 1% Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: If you needed to evacuate, where would you go?

- 33% To a local shelter
- 19% To the house of a nearby friend
- 27% As far as possible trying to outsmart the path of the storm
- 14% You would not leave under any circumstances
 - 7% Not Sure (NOT READ)

The rest of my survey questions are actually a quiz to see how much you know about hurricanes and hurricane safety issues. I will read you the question and the possible answers and want you to tell me which one you think is the correct response.

QUESTION: The biggest potential threat to human life from a land-falling hurricane is:

A - Wind	32%
B - Tornadoes	24%
C - Storm Surge	20%
D - Inland flooding	24%

QUESTION: The structural component that most often fails during hurricane force winds is:

A - Garage door	4%
B - A windward-facing wall	1%
C - Roof	49%
D - Windows	46%

QUESTION: During an approaching major hurricane, low-lying escape routes are usually cut off:

D - At least three hours before landfall and much earlier than that in vulnerable areas	61%
C - 30 minutes to one hour before landfall	24%
B - Near the eye of the storm	6%
A - At landfall	9%

QUESTION: For those ordered to evacuate, the best option is to:

D - Arrange in advance to stay with a nearby friend whose home is outside the evacuation zone	34%
C - Drive immediately to the nearest designated shelter	30%
B - Choose a route at right angles to the projected path of the storm	12%
A - Travel as far inland as possible as fast as possible	24%

QUESTION: Preparations to prevent serious property damage during a hurricane can be accomplished:

C - In most cases, only with weeks of planning, inspection and retrofitting	40%
B - Within the time provided by a Hurricane Warning	23%
A - Within the time provided by a Hurricane Watch	37%

QUESTION: One item your Disaster Preparation Kit should not contain is:

A - Cash	19%
B - Candles	22%
C - Keys	26%
D - Important documents	33%

QUESTION: Hurricane forecasting experts generally agree that:

D - We have entered an era of increasing hurricane activity	68%
C - Hurricane activity has remained fairly consistent for more than a century	23%
B - We have entered an era of declining hurricane activity	1%
A - The active 2004 Hurricane Season was a fluke that will not be repeated anytime soon	8%

QUESTION: Geographically, the majority of hurricane fatalities from drowning in the past 33 years have occurred:

A - On the open water	7%
B - Within two miles of the coast	19%
C - In inland counties	15%
D - In coastal counties	59%

QUESTION: Of the 10 most costly catastrophes in the United States, how of them many were Hurricanes or Tropical Storms?

D – Eight	35%
C - Five	39%
B - Three	25%
A - One	1%

QUESTION: If you are not ordered to evacuate, the safest place in a home to ride out a hurricane is:

A - Inside your car in the garage	_
B - The exterior room farthest away from the direction of the strongest wind	8%
C - The most interior room of the house	42%
D - The basement	50%

QUESTION: What type of hazard during a hurricane does standard homeowners insurance not cover?

Α	_	Lightning	17%
В	_	Flooding	60%
С	_	Wind	88
D	-	Falling trees	15%

QUESTION: Most tornadoes associated with land-falling hurricanes are spawned:

A - In rain bands that can occur hundreds of miles from the eye of the storm	29%
B - In the eye wall	12%
C - Within 1 mile of the eye of the storm	22%
D - Within 3 miles of the eye of the storm	37%

QUESTION: Although forecasting has improved greatly in recent years, the projection you can rely least on is:

A - Direction of the storm	39%
B - Intensity at landfall	18%
C - Duration of the storm	22%
D - Forward speed	21%

QUESTION: A hurricane watch means:

	A - Hurricane season has begun	5%
	B - A hurricane has formed over open water	16%
	C - A hurricane may strike somewhere in the United States within a few days	11%
	D - Hurricane conditions are possible in your area within 36 hours	68%
QUESTIC	N: A hurricane warning means:	
	A - A hurricane has formed over open water	88
	B - A hurricane may strike somewhere in the United States within a few days	7%
	C - A hurricane may strike your area within 36 hours	23%
	D - Hurricane conditions are expected in your area within 24 hours	62%
QUESTIC evacuat	N: Where should you take your pets if you must	
	A - To a safe location that has agreed or been designated to accept pets during a storm	36%
	B - To the shelter where you'll be staying	35%
	C - To the local animal shelter	7%
	D - To your veterinarian's office	7%
	E - Leave them in your home with a 3-day supply of food and water.	15%

The final four quiz questions are "True or False" questions.

QUESTION: True or False? Masking tape will help prevent windows from shattering.

True 54% **False 46%**

QUESTION: True or False? Some insurance companies offer significant discounts on home insurance for hurricane-proofing your home.

True 69% False 31%

QUESTION: True or False? Candles are a good source of light in the event of a power failure.

True 56% **False 44%**

QUESTION: True or False? Opening a window on the sheltered side of house lessens the potential for wind damage.

True 38% **False 62%**

NUMBER OF CORRECT RESPONSES:

1-0 11- 118 (11%) 2-0 12-63 (6%) 3 – 20 (2%) 13-32 (3%) 4 – 49 (5%) 14-12 (1%) 5-104 10%) 15-12 (1%) 6-16-* 117 11%) 1 7-137 13%) 17-1 8 – 137 (13%) 18-1 * 9 – 19-180 (16%) 0 10- 116 (11%) 20-0

AVERAGE 8.35 correct SCORE 41.75 on 100 point scale

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Do you live in:

Detached House	829	(75%)
Townhouse	75	(7%)
Apartment or Condo	122	(11%)
Mobile home	71	(7%)
Refused (NOT READ)	3	

- How long have you lived in your current residence?

Less	than 2 years	111	(10%)
2 to	5 years	177	(16%)
6 to	10 years	168	(15%)
More	than 10 years	642	(58%)
Refus	sed	2	

- Do you live:

In sight of the ocean	21	(2%)
Within 3 miles of the coast	57	(5%)
More than 3 miles but less than 10 miles from the coast	130	(12%)
More than 10 miles from the coast	890	(81%)
DK/Refused (NOT READ)	2	

AGE:	18-34	244	(22%)
	35-49	317	(29%)
	50-64	297	(27%)
	65+	239	(22%)
	Refused	3	

RACE/ETHNICITY:

White/Caucasian	803	(73%)
Black/African American	172	(16%)
Hispanic/Latino	105	(10%)
Other/Refused	20	(2%)

SEX:	Male	532	(48%)
	Female	568	(52%)

REGION:

Southeast	300	(27%)
Southwest Gulf	285	(26%)
Mid-Atlantic	205	(19%)
Northeast	310	(28%)

SOUTHEAST: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina & North Carolina.

SOUTHWEST GULF: Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana & Texas.

MID-ATLANTIC: Virginia, Maryland, Delaware & New Jersey.

NORTHEAST: New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire & Maine.

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 1 (STORM SURGE)

OVERALL	20%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	16%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	21%
MEN	27%
WOMEN	14%
SOUTHEAST	23%
SOUTHWEST GULF	23%
MID-ATLANTIC	18%
NORTHEAST	16%
EXPERIENCED STORM	23%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	13%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 2 (GARAGE DOOR)

OVERALL	4%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	3%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	4%
MEN	2%
WOMEN	5%
SOUTHEAST	8%
SOUTHWEST GULF	4%
MID-ATLANTIC	3%
NORTHEAST	-
EXPERIENCED STORM	5%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	2%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 3 (AT LEAST 3 HOURS)

OVERALL	61%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	63%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	60%
MEN	56%
WOMEN	66%
SOUTHEAST	64%
SOUTHWEST GULF	64%
MID-ATLANTIC	59%
NORTHEAST	57%
EXPERIENCED STORM	64%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	55%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 4 (STAY WITH FRIEND)

OVERALL	34%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	42%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	33%
MEN	30%
WOMEN	39%
SOUTHEAST	35%
SOUTHWEST GULF	42%
MID-ATLANTIC	29%
NORTHEAST	30%
EXPERIENCED STORM	36%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	30%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 5 (WEEKS OF PLANNING)

OVERALL	40%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	33%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	42%
MEN	47%
WOMEN	35%
SOUTHEAST	46%
SOUTHWEST GULF	37%
MID-ATLANTIC	42%
NORTHEAST	37%
EXPERIENCED STORM	43%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	35%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 6 (CANDLES)

OVERALL	22%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	27%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	21%
MEN	19%
WOMEN	25%
SOUTHEAST	20%
SOUTHWEST GULF	31%
MID-ATLANTIC	22%
NORTHEAST	16%
EXPERIENCED STORM	21%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	23%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 7 (INCREASING ERA)

OVERALL	68%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	68%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	68%
MEN	65%
WOMEN	70%
SOUTHEAST	74%
SOUTHWEST GULF	67%
MID-ATLANTIC	66%
NORTHEAST	63%
EXPERIENCED STORM	73%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	57%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 8 (INLAND COUNTIES)

OVERALL	15%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	10%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	16%
MEN	15%
WOMEN	15%
SOUTHEAST	13%
SOUTHWEST GULF	14%
MID-ATLANTIC	21%
NORTHEAST	15%
EXPERIENCED STORM	15%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	16%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 9 (EIGHT)

OVERALL	35%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	41%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	33%
MEN	38%
WOMEN	32%
SOUTHEAST	33%
SOUTHWEST GULF	34%
MID-ATLANTIC	37%
NORTHEAST	36%
EXPERIENCED STORM	35%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	33%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 10 (INTERIOR ROOM)

OVERALL	42%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	52%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	40%
MEN	40%
WOMEN	45%
SOUTHEAST	44%
SOUTHWEST GULF	58%
MID-ATLANTIC	28%
NORTHEAST	37%
EXPERIENCED STORM	47%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	32%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 11 (FLOODING)

OVERALL	60%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	52%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	62%
MEN	61%
WOMEN	60%
SOUTHEAST	60%
SOUTHWEST GULF	65%
MID-ATLANTIC	55%
NORTHEAST	60%
_	
EXPERIENCED STORM	62%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	56%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 12 (RAIN BANDS)

OVERALL	29%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	11%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	33%
MEN	32%
WOMEN	26%
SOUTHEAST	28%
SOUTHWEST GULF	38%
MID-ATLANTIC	29%
NORTHEAST	21%
EXPERIENCED STORM	31%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	25%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 13 (LANDFALL INTENSITY)

OVERALL	18%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	16%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	18%
MEN	18%
WOMEN	18%
SOUTHEAST	19%
SOUTHWEST GULF	21%
MID-ATLANTIC	16%
NORTHEAST	15%
EXPERIENCED STORM	18%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	17%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 14 (POSSIBLE WITHIN 36 HOURS)

OVERALL	68%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	67%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	68%
MEN	68%
WOMEN	68%
SOUTHEAST	74%
SOUTHWEST GULF	66%
MID-ATLANTIC	63%
NORTHEAST	66%
EXPERIENCED STORM	68%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	68%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 15 (EXPECTED WITHIN 24 HOURS)

OVERALL	62%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	63%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	62%
MEN	60%
WOMEN	64%
SOUTHEAST	62%
SOUTHWEST GULF	53%
MID-ATLANTIC	69%
NORTHEAST	66%
_	
EXPERIENCED STORM	60%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	66%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 16 (DESIGNATED LOCATION)

OVERALL	36%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	34%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	37%
MEN	34%
WOMEN	39%
SOUTHEAST	33%
SOUTHWEST GULF	37%
MID-ATLANTIC	35%
NORTHEAST	39%
EXPERIENCED STORM	40%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	28%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 17 (TAPE - FALSE)

OVERALL	46%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	47%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	46%
MEN	43%
WOMEN	48%
SOUTHEAST	47%
SOUTHWEST GULF	43%
MID-ATLANTIC	49%
NORTHEAST	46%
EXPERIENCED STORM	44%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	49%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 18 (TRUE – DISCOUNTS)

OVERALL	69%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	74%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	67%
MEN	72%
WOMEN	65%
SOUTHEAST	71%
SOUTHWEST GULF	65%
MID-ATLANTIC	75%
NORTHEAST	66%
EXPERIENCED STORM	69%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	68%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 19 (FALSE – CANDLES)

OVERALL	44%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	46%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	43%
MEN	40%
WOMEN	48%
SOUTHEAST	41%
SOUTHWEST GULF	43%
MID-ATLANTIC	45%
NORTHEAST	47%
EXPERIENCED STORM	43%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	46%

CORRECT RESPONSES: TEST QUESTION 20 (FALSE – OPEN WINDOW)

OVERALL	62%
LIVE WITHIN 10 MILES OF OCEAN	60%
LIVE >10 MILES FROM OCEAN	63%
MEN	62%
WOMEN	62%
SOUTHEAST	58%
SOUTHWEST GULF	59%
MID-ATLANTIC	67%
NORTHEAST	67%
EXPERIENCED STORM	61%
NOT EXPERIENCED STORM	66%