



**NOAA - National Weather Service**

**Tampa Bay Area**

**2525 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Ruskin, Florida 33570**

**813-645-2323**

**<http://weather.gov/tampa>**

## Today Is Hurricanes and Flooding Hazards Day

[En español](#)

In cooperation with the National Weather Service, state and local emergency management agencies and the American Red Cross, this week has been proclaimed as Florida Severe Weather Awareness Week. This week is designed to teach Floridians about the dangers of the different types of hazardous weather found in Florida.

The following hazardous weather topics will be discussed...

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Lightning Hazards</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Marine Hazards</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Tornadoes and Thunderstorms</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Hurricanes and Flooding</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Temperature Extremes and Wildfires</b>

### Overview of the 2012 Season

The 2012 hurricane season was an active one for Florida, with Tropical Storms Beryl and Debby, as well as Hurricane Isaac significantly impacting the state of Florida. Tropical Storm Debby, which made landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida, was particularly damaging, directly causing 5 deaths and producing an estimated \$210 million in damages.

### Hurricane Dangers

Hurricane intensity is expressed by relating wind speeds and potential damage. The Saffir-Simpson Scale ranges from category 1 (minor to moderate damage) to category 5 (catastrophic damage).

### Tornadoes

Tornadoes are a common occurrence with landfalling hurricanes. Most occur with the outer rain bands in the right-front quadrant of the storm. Hurricane-spawned tornadoes are generally less intense and shorter-lived than those in rotating severe thunderstorms. However, they often move at speeds of 50 mph or greater.

### Winds

Hurricane force winds can easily destroy poorly constructed buildings and mobile homes. Lightweight outdoor items (such as lawn furniture), roofing material, and poorly fastened signs can become missiles in a hurricane. Trees and power lines sustain extensive damage in any hurricane, and dangerous storms (category 3 and higher) can cause long-lasting damage to urban infrastructure.

**Date: 2/14/2013**



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The following are high wind preparedness actions that can be taken now by all residents:

- Find out if your home meets current building code requirements for high winds. Structures built to meet or exceed code have a substantially higher chance to survive.
- Protect your windows by installing commercial shutters, preparing 5/8 inch plywood panels, and/or installing hurricane window film. Be sure to also install adequate fasteners or anchoring devices.
- If you do not live in a mobile home, designate an interior room with no windows as a `safe room`.
- Brace garage doors to withstand hurricane force winds. Garage doors are often the first feature of a single family home to fail.
- Assess your landscaping, then prepare it. This includes trimming dead wood and weak branches from all trees and cutting down any dying or dead trees and bushes. If landscaping, consider materials other than gravel or small rocks.

### **Storm Surge**

Storm surge is the greatest threat to life and property along the immediate coastline with a landfalling hurricane. Storm surge is created when hurricane winds blow onto the coast as the storm center moves onshore. As water becomes shallower close to the beaches, the water piles up and is driven inland. How much surge will occur and how far inland it will push depends on many factors, including the strength of the hurricane...its forward speed and the shape of the coastline. However, the effects of storm surge decrease rapidly as you move inland. This is why it is essential to know your evacuation zone and to follow orders from local officials when storm surge threatens your area.

### **Flooding**

Freshwater flooding from torrential rain is responsible for more than half of the fatalities from tropical cyclones in the United States. Flooding impacts can occur hundreds of miles away from the storm center and depends more on the size and forward speed of a storm as opposed to the storm's intensity. Inland flooding can be a catastrophic threat to communities well inland from the coast as torrential tropical rains persist and the water drains and collects into area lakes and rivers.

The following are freshwater flood preparedness actions that can be taken now by all residents:

- Consider flood insurance. Normal homeowners insurance does not cover damage from floods.
- If you live in a flood prone area, acquire materials such as sandbags, plastic sheeting, shovels, work boots and gloves. Contact your local emergency management office to learn how to construct proper protective elements around your home.
- Test drinking water for potability; wells should be pumped and tested as well if they become flooded.

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For additional information about hurricane safety and flooding, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/kids/>

<http://www.hurricanes.gov>