

Damaging Winds and Tornadoes

Hurricane force winds can damage or destroy structures, trees and infrastructure like power, phone and water. Signs, roofing material, siding, and small items left outside can become flying missiles in a hurricane. The strongest winds occur in a region of the hurricane called the eyewall, the ring of thunderstorms that surround the eye. Wind gusts in the right side of the track in the eyewall are the most destructive. Hurricane force wind gusts can be felt well inland, far from the coast, especially for stronger fast moving hurricanes.

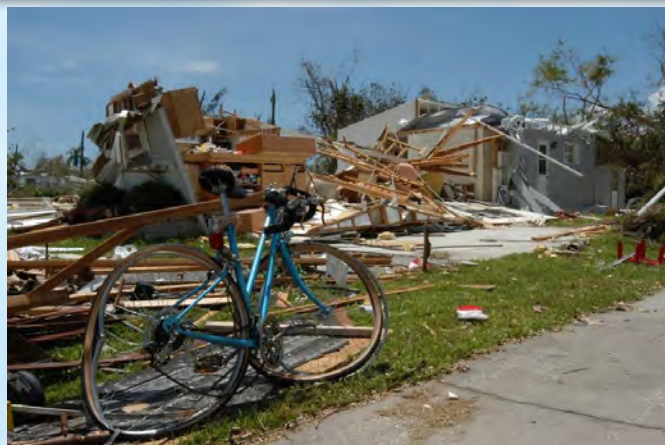


Photo credit FEMA.

Tropical cyclones can also produce tornadoes which most often occur in thunderstorms in outer rain bands on the right hand side of the track, away from the center of the hurricane. They can also occur in the eyewall. Tornadoes produced by tropical cyclones are usually relatively weak and short-lived but not always. A strong tornado that developed in Hurricane Carla's outer bands killed 6 in Galveston in 1961. Twenty-three tornadoes were confirmed with Harvey, all forming in the outer rainbands on the right side of the storm.



Photo credit NOAA.

Mobile homes are especially vulnerable to hurricane winds and tornadoes. Its important for mobiles homes to be properly strapped down, but even then a mobile home is not a safe place to be in a hurricane or tornado! It is better to seek shelter in a more sturdy structure ahead of the storm, prior to the arrival of the stronger winds. Think about where that structure would be, whether with friends or relatives or in a neighborhood shelter. Include that as part of your pre-season hurricane planning.



Photo credit NOAA.

More information on tornado safety can be found on page 24