

The Education Program at the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium

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UNDERSTANDING STORM SURGE

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT UNDERSTANDING STORM SURGE?

Many people think winds are the most damaging and dangerous part a hurricane; however, storm surge is by far the most dangerous, destructive, and deadliest part of a storm. It is the leading cause of death during a storm. In addition to the impact of surge water itself, water levels will climb even higher when combined with high tide.. Directly along the shore, large waves are powerful enough to knock down buildings, roadways, and wash away the land.

Storm surge warnings are not about how you will be affected by wind, but how you will be affected by flood waters. Storm surge water can reach areas not affected by a storm's wind. People are able to hide in their home or other nearby structures to be safe from a storm's wind; however it is much harder to escape when surge water enters a home.

Most emergency vehicles are not built to withstand surging flood waters so during a storm surge, a rescue is not possible. It is even difficult for a boat to attempt a rescue in fast and furious storm surge. There is almost no chance of being rescued from a storm surge until the storm has passed, and even then flood waters can still be a danger to lives.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HEAR A STORM MIGHT HIT THE AREA YOU LIVE IN?

Pay attention to warnings to avoid severe damage to your property and your life! Listen and monitor a storm at www.weather.gov and/or listen to local radio and TV for storm watches, warnings, and mandated evacuations. Some social media sites can also be useful to find storm information and warnings. These include NOAA, National Weather Service, National Hurricane Center, FEMA, and the Red Cross who all have Facebook and Twitter pages that can be trusted.

Make an evacuation plan for you and your family. Where will you go? What will you do with pets? Which important documents should you take with you? See these websites for how to be prepared and plan for an evacuation.

<www.ready.gov>

<<http://hurricanesafety.org/>>



The New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium (NJS GC) is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey's marine and coastal environment. NJS GC meets its mission through its innovative research, education and outreach programs. For more information about NJS GC, visit njseagrant.org.

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/hurricane/resources/TropicalCyclones11.pdf>

<http://www.stormsurge.noaa.gov/preparedness-whattodo.html>

Storm surge watches and warnings, separate from other cyclone/hurricane warnings, have been developed by NHC and NWS to alert the public of life threatening storm surge inundation and serve as a call to action.



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