



City of Wharton

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James Cooper/City of Wharton EMC

Learn the Dangers of Nature's Most Powerful Storms

Hurricanes are nature's most powerful storms and can wreak havoc hundreds of miles from the coastal area where they make landfall. The four major hazards from hurricanes include: **storm surge**, **high winds**, **tornadoes** and **heavy rains**.

Hurricane season officially begins June 1 and continues through November 30. Monitor weather broadcasts during storm season and listen to instructions from local officials. If you live in an area threatened by storm surge, called an EVACUATION ZONE, be prepared to leave when officials call for an evacuation.

Storm surge is a dome of high water that can affect hundreds of miles of coastline. Storm surge – produced by a combination of high winds and normal to high tides – can rise as high as 20 feet or more as it sweeps inland, flooding evacuation areas in its path. Much of the Texas Gulf Coast is less than 10 feet above mean sea level. Areas along rivers near the coast also may be affected.

High winds are 74 mph to 200 mph or more. Even the weakest hurricane can damage buildings, flood roads, knock down power lines and uproot trees. The strongest storms can destroy buildings and property. Debris propelled at 74 miles an hour can kill.

Tornadoes can be spawned by hurricanes far from the center of the storm. They may be small, difficult to track by radar and deadly. Hurricane Beulah in 1967 spawned 115 tornadoes throughout central and south-central Texas.

Flooding caused by torrential rains can occur in both coastal and inland areas. The slower the storm moves, the greater the flooding may be. Heavy rainfall can occur hundreds of miles away from the center of the storm. Many people killed by hurricanes drown in inland floods.