

# **Hurricanes**

## **Definition**

Hurricanes consist of high-velocity winds blowing circularly around a low pressure center, known as the eye of the storm. Wind speed can be as high as 155 mph in a Category 5 hurricane. The eye is a region of relative calm and possibly even clear skies that can fool you into believing that the storm is over. One of the most destructive aspects of hurricanes is caused by high winds from one direction followed by a short period of calm, and then high winds from the opposite direction.

## **Causes**

Most hurricanes originate within a narrow equatorial belt known as the doldrums. The doldrums lie between the northeast and southeast tradewinds in the West Indian region, including the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

## **Prevention**

There is no way to prevent a hurricane. However, unlike tornadoes, hurricanes generally build up slowly, giving the weather services more time to track and predict its path. Fortunately, there are usually several days of advance warning before a hurricane strikes which provides more time for preparation and thus minimizes loss of life. However, property damage can be very severe.

## **Prevention of Death or Injury**

If the possibility of a hurricane is not immediate, standard evacuation procedures should be followed, except that employees should be sent home or to the nearest storm shelter. If employees are caught outside, they should seek shelter immediately so as not to be hit by debris.

## **Procedures Checklist**

Notify Campus Emergency Response Team Leader, who will:

- obtain current weather conditions through local radio and television reports
- and determine what type of evacuation procedures should be followed (immediate or impending).
- evacuate employees to nearby interior rooms away from outside walls and windows.
- follow the fire and flood prevention procedures, before leaving the area, if there is sufficient time.