



# Hurricane Terms Glossary

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**Hurricane:** A powerful tropical storm with winds of 74 mph or higher, forming over warm ocean waters.

**Tropical Storm:** A storm system with winds between 39–73 mph. If it strengthens, it can become a hurricane.

**Tropical Depression:** A weaker tropical storm with winds less than 39 mph.

**Eye:** The calm center of a hurricane, often clear skies and light winds, surrounded by the most dangerous weather.

**Eye Wall:** The ring of strong winds and intense rain surrounding the eye—the most violent part of the hurricane.

**Storm Surge:** A dangerous rise in sea level caused by hurricane winds pushing water toward the shore—can cause major flooding.

**Rain Bands:** Curved bands of heavy rain and wind that spiral around the hurricane. These can cause flash floods and tornadoes.

**Category:** Hurricanes are ranked on the Saffir-Simpson scale from 1 to 5 based on wind speed and damage potential.

**Landfall:** When the center of the hurricane reaches land, often bringing strong winds, heavy rain, and flooding.

**Evacuation:** Leaving an area to stay safe before a storm arrives—often ordered by officials in flood-prone zones.

**Watch (Hurricane Watch):** Means a hurricane is possible in the next 48 hours. Be prepared.

**Warning (Hurricane Warning):** Means a hurricane is expected in the next 36 hours or less. Take action now.

**Cone of Uncertainty:** A forecast area showing where the hurricane's center might go—it's not exact!

**Advisory:** An official update with the storm's location, strength, and movement, issued by the National Hurricane Center.

**First Responders:** Trained people like EMTs, firefighters, and police who help in emergencies during and after a hurricane.