

Lesson 11

Hurricane Warning!



Betsy, David, and Donna-mention these names and older Bahamians will tell you of the hurricanes they remember because of the damages they did in our islands. Everyone will remember the more recent disastrous hurricanes Frances and Jeanne in 2004 and Hurricane Wilma in 2005.

In one year all the hurricanes are given **male** names; the next year they are given **female** names. The names are arranged in **alphabetical order**.

Early explorers and the missionaries who came to the Caribbean were told by the people they found here of the great storms. They described torrential rainstorms and winds so violent that even the strongest man could not stand upright. Enormous waves destroyed whatever the winds and rain left behind. Every year storms like these kill people, uproot trees and often destroys buildings and property worth billions of dollars.

Storms affecting this part of the world are described in different ways according to the speed of the wind. Hurricanes are measured on the **Saffir-Simpson Scale**.

Types of storms	Wind speeds (per hour)
Tropical disturbance	up to 50 mph or 31 mph
Tropical depression	51 - 61 mph or 32 mph
Tropical storm	63 - 119 mph or 39- 73 mph
Hurricane	120kmph and over or 74 mph and over

The wind speeds also affect the **storm tide**, which is the height of the tide above its normal level.

Hurricanes form far out in the **Atlantic** and move quickly westwards across the ocean. The Bahamas Islands lie in the path of some storms. The official hurricane season is from **June 1st to November 30th**, but hurricanes sometimes develop in other months.

The people who record and identify the weather patterns are called **meteorologists**. They study the weather every day and give information to the public by daily weather forecast issued on the radio, on television and the newspaper.

Our **meteorological** department or **Met Office** cooperates with the **National Hurricane Center** in Coral Gables Florida, which is in close contact with other Met Office in the Caribbean. Together the networking Met Offices makes sure that we receive early warning of any approaching storms. They use modern computer

equipment to provide accurate information.

We should always listen carefully to news broadcasts and be prepared to follow instructions promptly when a storm is approaching. Here are some terms you should know:

STORM/HURRICANE ALERT means

An area in the Bahamas might be affected by storm conditions within 60 hours.

HURRICANE WATCH means

Some parts of the Bahamas may experience storm or hurricane conditions within 36 hours.

HURRICANE WARNING means

A hurricane or storm is expected within 24 hours.

At the beginning of the hurricane season, make sure you have **emergency supplies** in your home as shown below.



When a **hurricane alert** is announced, you should make the following preparations: Check emergency supplies.

When a hurricane watch is notified for your area:

- Pay close attention to official announcements on the radio and television.
- Fix hurricane shutters to windows on upper floors or multi-floor buildings. Keep the shutters for the ground-floor window nearby.
- Secure garbage cans, outdoor furniture, and other loose items.
- Take down television antennas and satellite dishes.
- Clean and fill bathtubs and any spare containers with water.

When a hurricane warning is issued:

- Fix hurricane shutters to all remaining windows.
- Listen to all hurricane warnings on ZNS and other radio stations and follow any advice given.
- Seek refuge in a special shelter if your home is unsafe.

During the hurricane:

You must stay indoors. **DO NOT GO OUTSIDE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.**

After the hurricane:

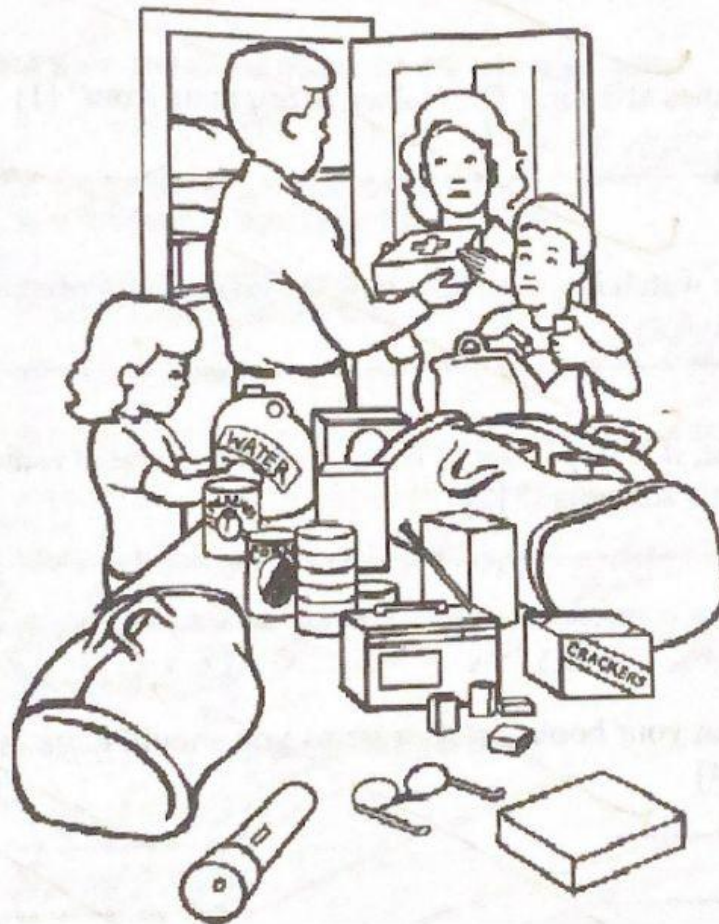
- Seek medical care for anyone injured in the storm.
- Avoid loose, dangling wires. Report any loose wires you see to The Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC) or Freeport Power.
- Check the food in the refrigerator. Throw away any that has been spoiled.
- Stay away from disaster areas.
- Remove shutters and store them for further use.
- Boil water before drinking. It may be **contaminated** (not clean).

In The Bahamas, the **National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)** is the main organization responsible for planning for and managing all national disasters. Many organizations assist NEMA before, during, and after a hurricane to ensure people's safety. Some of these are:

- Bahamas Electricity Corporation
- Bahamas Red Cross
- Bahamas Telecommunication Corporation (BTC)
- Meteorological Department
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Works
- Royal Bahamas Defence Force
- Royal Bahamas Police Force

- ZNS Radio
- Freeport Power

Most of the groups above meet before with NEMA before the hurricane season starts and plans what it is to be done if a hurricane should strike The Bahamas. The Bahamas Air Sea Rescue Association (BASRA) and CB operators also help the work of this committee.



Answer all questions in COMPLETE SENTENCES. Marks will be deducted for incomplete sentences.

1. When does the hurricane season begin and end? (2)
2. What is the shortened form for the meteorological department? (1)
3. Where do hurricanes that affect The Bahamas originate from? (1)
4. When a hurricane watch is given, how long do you have to prepare? (1)
5. During a hurricane, it is important to have a battery operated radio. Give TWO reasons to support this statement. (2)
6. Using the picture in your book, list FOUR items you should have in your emergency supply. (4)
7. After a hurricane, why is it important to boil water before you drink it? (1)
8. Complete the chart for the hurricane terms. (3)

Hurricane Terms	Hours for each
Hurricane alert	
Hurricane watch	
Hurricane warning	