



GOVERNOR'S DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Texas Department of Public Safety

For immediate release:

**Hurricane Awareness Week:
Learn the Dangers of Nature's Most Powerful Storms**

AUSTIN – 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.**

The Governor's Division of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service have designated May 16-22, 2004, as Hurricane Awareness Week. Hurricane season officially begins June 1 and continues through November 30.

Hurricanes are highly unpredictable, increasing greatly in strength with very little warning. Hurricane hazards include:

- **High winds** from 74 mph to 200 mph or more. Even the weakest hurricane can damage buildings, flood roads and uproot trees. The strongest storms can destroy buildings and property. Hurricane force winds have downed trees and power lines as far away as 175 miles from coastal areas.
- **Storm surge** is an increase in sea level caused by extreme low pressure and very high winds. Storm surge is a dome of high water sometimes 50 to 100 miles wide that sweeps over the coastline as a hurricane makes landfall. The stronger the wind, the higher the storm surge and storm surge occurring in combination with high tides makes the threat even worse. On average, nine out of every ten people killed by a hurricane are drowned in storm surge.
- **Tornadoes** are often spawned by hurricanes. These can occur well away from the center of the hurricane. They can also occur near the eye of the storm.
- **Flooding** caused by the torrential rains can occur in both coastal and inland areas. The slower the storm moves, the greater the flooding may be. Tropical Storm Claudette in 1979 dumped 45 inches of rain near Alvin, Texas. In 2001, Tropical Storm Allison dumped 36 inches of rain on Harris County. The heaviest rainfall can occur 200 miles away from the center of the storm.



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