

How Hurricanes Move Hurricanes last longer than other storms, usually a week or more. During that period, they can travel quite a distance. Hurricanes that form in the Atlantic Ocean are steered by easterly trade winds toward the Caribbean islands and the southeastern United States. After a hurricane passes over land, it no longer has warm, moist air to draw energy from. The hurricane gradually loses strength, although heavy rainfall may continue for several days.



FIGURE 14
Hurricane Andrew
The path of Hurricane Andrew over three consecutive days can be seen in this photo montage.

Hurricane Damage When a hurricane comes ashore, it brings high waves and severe flooding as well as wind damage. The low pressure and high winds of the hurricane over the ocean raise the level of the water up to 6 meters above normal sea level. The result is a **storm surge**, a “dome” of water that sweeps across the coast where the hurricane lands. Storm surges can cause great damage, washing away beaches, destroying buildings along the coast, and eroding the coastlines.

Hurricane Safety Until the 1950s, a fast-moving hurricane could strike with little warning. People now receive information well in advance of an approaching hurricane.

A “hurricane watch” indicates that hurricane conditions are possible in an area within the next 36 hours. You should be prepared to **evacuate** (ee VAK yoo ayt), or move away temporarily. A “hurricane warning” means that hurricane conditions are expected within 24 hours. **If you hear a hurricane warning and are told to evacuate, leave the area immediately.**

FIGURE 15
Hurricane Katrina
Hurricane Katrina caused tremendous damage to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast in 2005.

Reading Checkpoint What is a storm surge?

