

The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar Series

June 28, 2023

Hurricane Preparedness for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing

presented by

Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities AND
HHSC Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services



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Presenters



Trevor Anderson works in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services in Texas Health and Human Services as Communication Access Oversight Specialist. He is the team lead for the Training & Education team that provide trainings to Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers, interpreters, and state agency employees on a variety of topics related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing and/or interpreting. Trevor has experience in deaf education, advocacy, and international relations.

Matthew Dickens is the Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator for the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. Through his work, his goal is to help ensure public services and resources continue to be accessible for people with disabilities as mandated by federal and state laws. Matt's career has a focus on supporting our community through his prior work in business management, employment services, and advocacy.



About GCPD

The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD) has a mission to further opportunities for persons with disabilities to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination.

GCPD recommends changes in disability policies and programs in the areas of accessibility, communication, education, emergency preparedness, health, housing, recreation, transportation, veterans and workforce. The committee also supports a network of committees on people with disabilities, issues awards to promote greater awareness, and promotes compliance with disability related laws.

Contact us at 512-434-0102 (VP) or GCPD@gov.texas.gov



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About DHHS

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) is part of Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) and is the center for awareness and education on deaf and hard of hearing issues and services in Texas.

Our goal is to (1) help connect people to resources and services, (2) raise awareness, and (3) improve communication access.

We oversee 10 programs including Statewide training, Board Evaluation of Interpreters, Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program, DHH Access and Technology Specialists, and more.

Contact us at 512-410-1387 (VP) or DHHS.Mailbox@hhs.texas.gov



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Webinar Purpose

Hurricane Season in the USA is June 1 to November 30

People with Disabilities are frequently disproportionately impacted by hurricanes compared to the general population.

Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people could be at a disadvantage due to communication barriers.

This webinar shares information on how anyone with hearing loss can prepare for hurricane season and protect their lives if their area will be impacted by a hurricane.



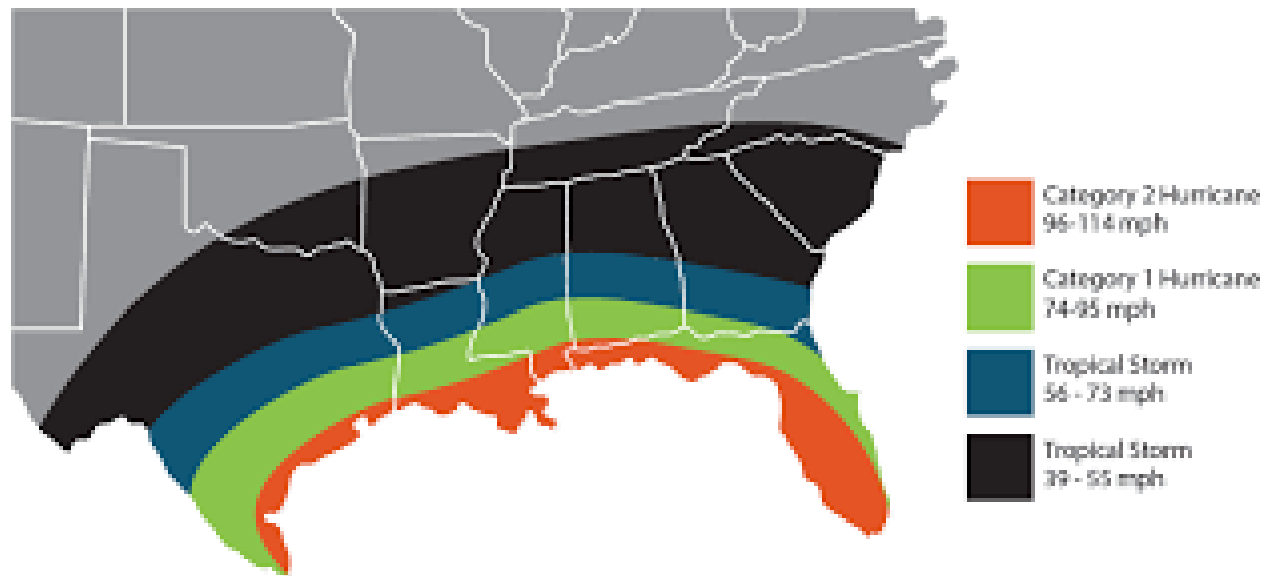
Hurricane Facts

- The average number of severe tropical storms and hurricanes impacting the United States is rising.
- Hurricanes and tropical storms are getting bigger and lasting longer.
- The biggest risks to structures and lives during a hurricane are wind damage and storm surge.
- The biggest risks to structures and lives during a tropical storm are flooding and tornados- still dangerous especially inland.

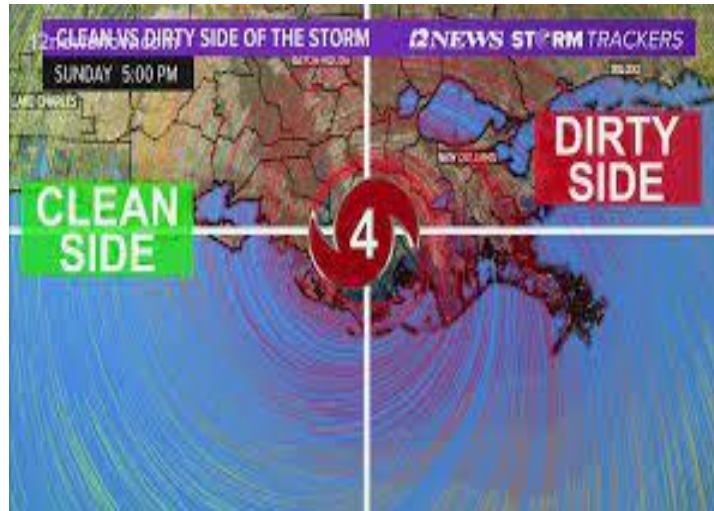


Hurricane Facts

Many people think they are safe from hurricanes because they live inland. This false sense of safety increases their risks.



Hurricane Anatomy



The eye is the center.

All sides surrounding the eye are not good, but the dirty side is the most dangerous.

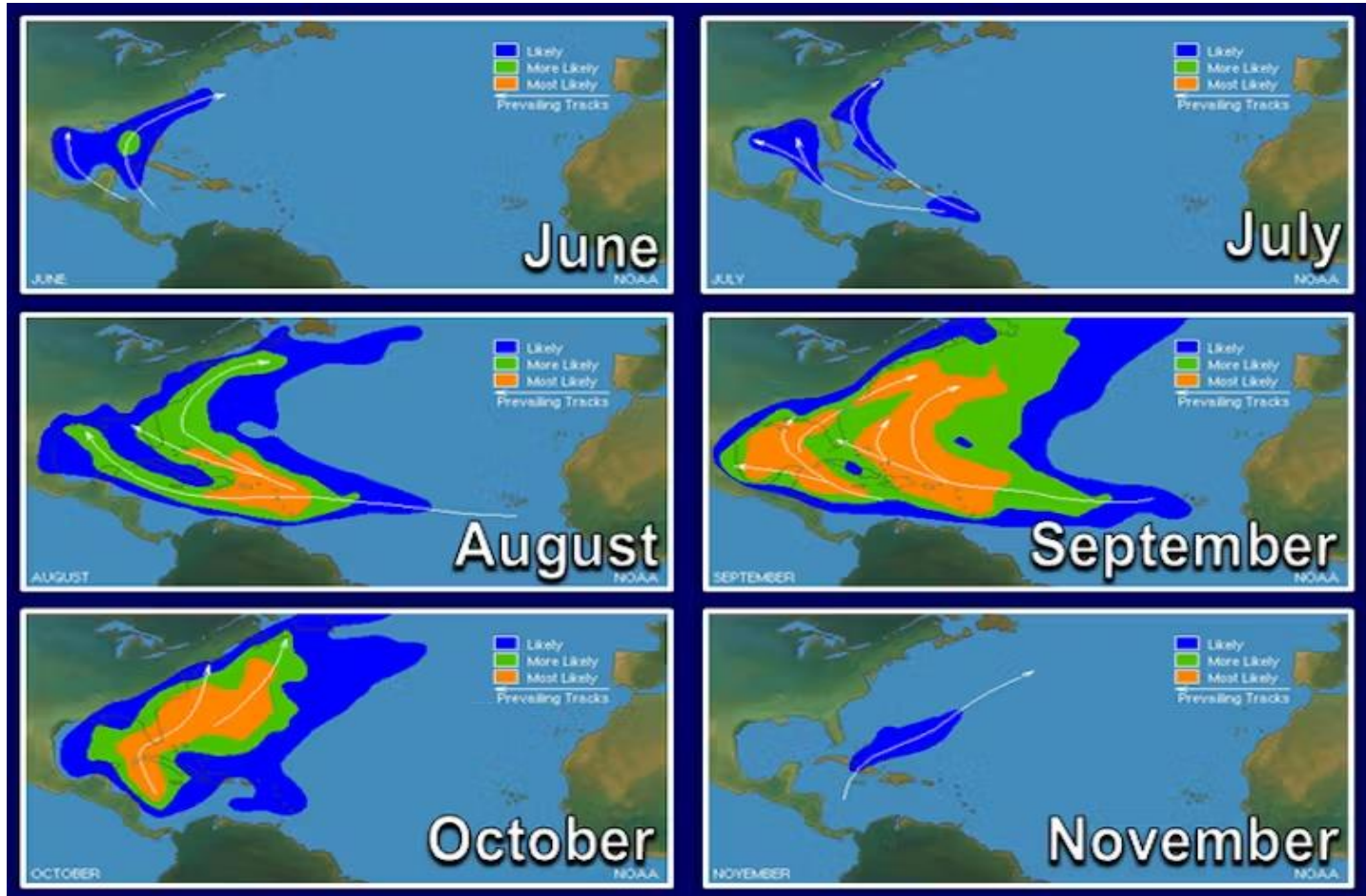
- Higher tornado risk.
- Higher storm surge.
- Strongest winds.



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Hurricane Frequency



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How to Prepare?

- Stay Informed!
- Make a Plan!
- Build a Disaster Kit!
- Know your Rights!
- Get Involved!





Stay Informed!



Benefits of Information

- More time to plan.
- Improved personal safety.
- First in line to resources.



Establish Your News Sources

- Television
- Online News
- Social Media
- Text Alerts

Emergency news announcements should have an interpreter or captions.



Helpful Resources

Resources for Awareness

- **FEMA-** www.fema.gov
- **ReadyGov-** www.ready.gov
- **Texas Ready-**
<https://texasready.gov/>
- **National Hurricane Center-**
www.nhc.noaa.gov



Texting Alerts

- FEMA Alerts
- State and Local Alerts are part of the federal system called IPAWS-Integrated Public Alert & Warning System
- Accessible Hazard Alert System
- Energy Outage Alerts





Make a Plan!



Plan for hurricanes.

Your plans may vary depending on your location and your needs.

For example, if you live inland you should combine with your planning for tornados.



Secure Your Home

Tips:

Shutter or board-up windows.

Check drainage systems.

Check fire equipment.

Bring inside loose building materials.

Know how to turn off your power.

Turn down food storage temperatures.

Fill bottles, sinks, and bathtubs with water.

Protect documents.



Make an Evacuation Plan

Tips:

Have a full gas tank.

Turn off your utilities.

Disconnect appliances and electronics.

Have a plan for your animals.

Identify safe places for you to go.

Learn evacuation routes and follow them.

Take essential items only.



Other Helpful Tips

Make a checklist.

Communicate your plans with others.

Have a Plan B (and C and D...).

Create a Recovery Plan.

Build a Disaster Kit.





Build a Disaster Kit!



What goes in a Disaster
Emergency Kit?

Emergency kits should
have basic things that
everyone needs as well
as specific items for
individual needs.



FEMA checklist https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/ready_checklist.pdf



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Basic Items in Your Kit

Examples of Basic Items

Water- 1 gallon per person per day.

Food- Three days of non-perishable food.

Flashlight and extra batteries.

Moist towelettes, garbage bags, plastic ties.

Manual can opener.

Candles and lighter.

Fully charged cell phone with backup battery.

FEMA checklist https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/ready_checklist.pdf



Individual Specific Items

What Do YOU need?
Communication Needs?



ComputerHope.com



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Power Generator Overview

- Types - Gasoline, propane, and dual fuel
 - All are flammable
 - Take appropriate precautions for storage and handling
 - Gasoline
 - Cannot easily be stored for more than 6-12 months without additives
 - Easier to manage refilling from multiple smaller containers
 - Propane
 - Easier to store long-term and may be safer
 - Ensure propane tanks are full in preparation for a disaster



Power Generator Safety

- Read **ALL** the manufacturers' directions and warnings
- Electric shock hazards
 - Disconnect power from AC sources before connecting to a generator
 - Plug equipment into the generator using heavy duty outdoor rated extension cords
 - Make sure the generator is grounded
 - per manufactures directions



Power Generator Safety

- Fire hazards
 - Store fuel safely
 - Use approved canisters
 - Use fuel additives to maintain gasoline and diesel
 - Maintain fuel supply during use (may be difficult to acquire in a disaster or emergency)
 - Turn the generator off and let it cool before refueling



Power Safety Issues

- Use outdoors, in a dry location, at least 15' away from structures
- Use with adequate ventilation (for carbon monoxide)
- Secure location to prevent theft
- [Using Generator Safely](#) (multiple languages and downloadable pdf)
- **DO NOT PLUG a portable generator (or any power inverter) into your home's electrical panel or circuits**



Generator Storage

- Requires regular maintenance
- Gasoline or diesel fuel cannot be stored in the generator
- Secure storage needed when not using it (threat of theft)
- Lease agreements, local ordinances, and homeowner's association restrictions may limit types of generators and where they can be stored/used
- Must be able to maintain with or without assistance including moving, starting, fueling and adding oil as needed





Know Your Rights!

Federal laws guarantees your right to reasonable accommodations during and after a disaster.

Rehabilitation Act
of 1973



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Reasonable Accommodations

- ASL interpreter
- Relay services
- Written communication
- Quiet location for audio communication
- Power outlet for communication devices

- Secure site for sleeping
- Effective lipreading techniques
- Accessible announcements
- Service animals
- Repeated information

As overwhelmed as you might be- don't assume accommodations are automatically given.



DHHS Resource Specialists

- Your local Access and Technology specialists are here to support you during any disaster.
- They can get you resources you need and work with you to advocate for your rights.
- Find your local specialist at:
<https://dhhs.hhsc.state.tx.us/providers/contractors.asp?ptype=Access>



HHSC ODHHS SPECIALISTS FY23

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access Specialists

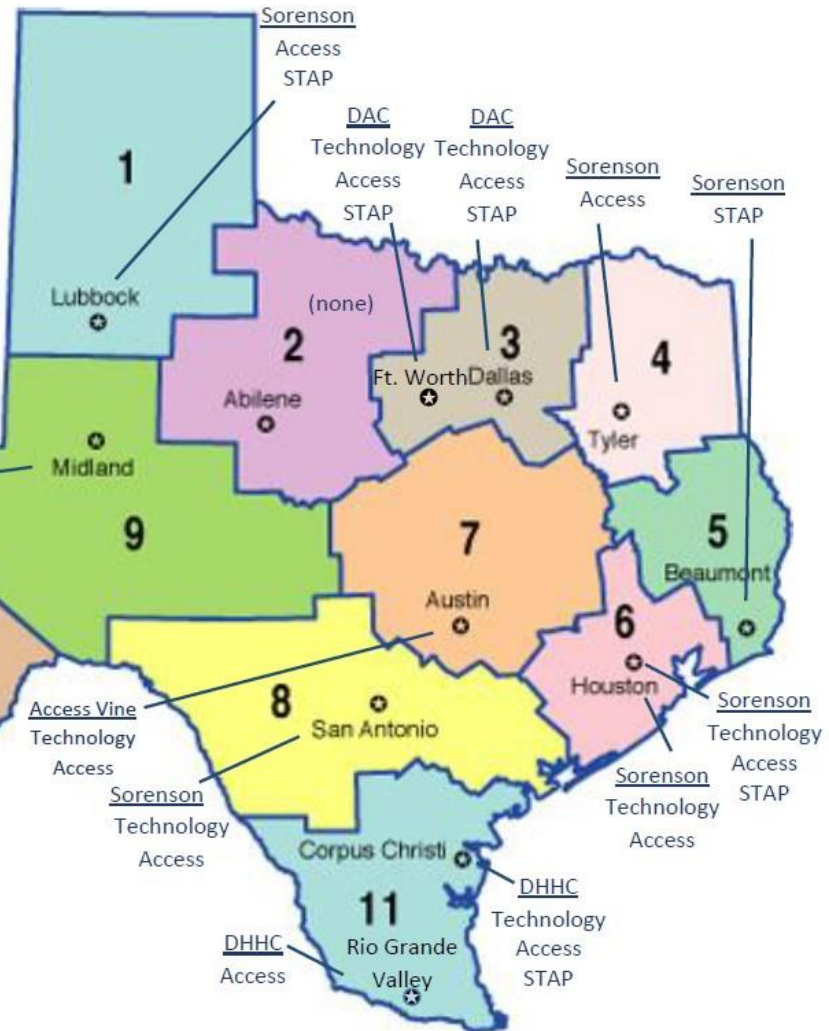
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Technology Specialists

STAP Specialists

Sorenson
Technology

Southwest
STAP

REGIONS	CONTRACTORS
7	Access Vine
3	Deaf Action Center
1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10	Sorenson Communications, LLC
9, 10	Southwest Hearing Aid Solutions, Inc.
11	The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center



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Get Involved!

Meetings with Local Committees for People with Disabilities.

Engage with Emergency Management Planning Teams

Form community alliances with friends, family, and neighbors.



Thank You!

Q&A if Time Permits



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