

## AND WHAT ABOUT HURRICANES?

All hurricanes are distinctive and different with the four hazards that they pose. At a Coastal Protection and Restoration meeting, John Barry came up with a quip, "If you have been through ONE hurricane, you have been through ONE hurricane." Depending on where you experienced Hurricanes Katrina, Betsy, Isaac or Camille, makes all the difference in the world.

Each storm will have different hazards being more prominent than the next storm. Hurricanes can drown you with storm surge or rainfall, or blow you away with the force of the storm or tornadoes that are spawned from the leading edge of a storm.

The catastrophic storm surge from Camille in 1969 and Katrina in 2005, which destroyed Mississippi with depths of 23 feet and 28 feet respectively, is an example of a hurricane's wall of water. This size storm surge would destroy any community along the Gulf or the Atlantic coast of the United States.

Rainfall from a hurricane is another hazard which has taken lives and destroyed property. After destroying the Mississippi coast, Camille formed a rain system in West Virginia which flooded towns resulting in drowning fatalities. Tropical Storm Allison hit Houston, but dumped over 35 inches of rain in Thibodaux in a five-day period.

Many have experienced the destruction of the powerful winds of a hurricane. The effects are widespread, but the greatest winds are in the eye wall. This area just outside of calm winds of the eye of the storm, are the most powerful winds. It is this ring of wind which gives the storm its category of strength. If a category 4 hurricane hits your area and you do not experience the eye wall, you did not go through category 4 winds.

Tornadoes are the other hazard from a hurricane. They are killers as was experienced in Larose in 1964 when 23 people died from a tornado spawned by Hurricane Hilda. This was and still is the greatest loss of life from a tornado spawned by a hurricane in the United States. In 1992 two people were killed in Laplace by a tornado spawned by Hurricane Andrew.

These factors make any one person's experience with all hurricane hazards limited. Understand that if you have been through one hurricane, you have been through one hurricane. The odds are that the next one will affect you differently and possibly more dangerously.

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