

2005 Hurricane Season Could Pack a Wallop

You may need to get used to the following names given for upcoming North Atlantic hurricanes in 2005: Arlene, Bret, Cindy, Dennis, Emily, Franklin, Gert, Harvey, Irene, Jose, Katrina, Lee, Maria, Nate, Ophelia, Philippe, Rita, Stan, Tammy, Vince, and Wilma. If predictions are correct, you will be hearing those names a lot during the next several months.

According to the Colorado State University tropical research team, the 2005 North Atlantic hurricane season will be "significantly above average." The university predicts that the basin will see thirteen named tropical storms between June 1st and November 30th. Of these, seven are expected to become hurricanes and three intense hurricanes with sustained winds of 111mph or greater (category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson Scale).

In late 2004, the same group of experts predicted eleven named storms with six becoming hurricanes. This prediction was revised just the other day because of a continuing warming trend in the Atlantic Ocean and the decreasing likelihood of El Nino conditions in the Pacific this year. They warned that they may again

revise their predictions upwards if either of these trends continue.

As you may recall, in 2004, meteorologists recorded 15 named storms, nine hurricanes, and six intense hurricanes. Last year was one of the most destructive hurricane seasons on record, with Florida getting the worst of it.

The team also warned that the chances of at least one intense hurricane making landfall in the United States is 73 percent, much higher than the long-term average of 52 percent. For the US east coast, including the Florida peninsula, the probability of an intense hurricane making landfall is 53 percent, up from the average of 31 percent. For the Gulf Coast, the probability is 41 percent, compared with the long-term average of 30 percent.



Residents in hurricane prone areas need to inventory and video household items, keep receipts in a safe location (for claim AND tax purposes), cut plywood to fit windows in advance of the hurricane season and prepare for long term electrical outages.