

# Planning for the 2020 Hurricane Season

Considerations in the Light of the Covid Pandemic

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FST UWI Virtual Conference June 2020

# Purpose

The prospect of managing the Covid 19 pandemic and potentially a major hurricane presents a unique challenge for Disaster Risk Management practitioners and will require adjustments to approaches to planning and preparedness.

We examine some issues to be taken into account in planning for the 2020 Hurricane Season in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic.

# 2020 North Atlantic Hurricane Season

The April and May forecasts on the 2020 North Atlantic season call for an above average season.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forecasts **13-19 named storms**,  
of which **6-10 could become hurricanes**,  
with **3-6 major hurricanes** (Cat 3,4,5)

# 2020 Hurricane Season vs 30 Year Average

(Colorado State University)

## 2020 SEASON

## AVERAGE - 30 YR (1981 – 2010)

Named storms	16	12.1 (12)
Hurricanes	8	6.4 (6)
Named storm days	80	59.4
Hurricane days	35	24.2
Major storms	4 (Cat 3-5)	2.7 (3)
Major hurricane days	9	6.2

## What does this mean ?

For the Caribbean, still managing Covid 19, there is the potential for two major concurrent events with the potential to become major disasters

# What Adjustments to Planning May be Required?

Emergency Shelters

Physical distancing PAHO recommends :

18h 4.5 ft separation

Longer than 18h - 6ft separation

Additional **safe** shelter space to be identified (How much additional space capable of withstanding Cat 5 can be found?)

# Evacuees in shelter, Jamaica

Source: Jamaica Observer



# Adjustments to Planning

Preparedness - Exercises, Training

Traditionally May-June used to practice Standard Operating Procedures and Plans by Training and Simulation Exercises

Some of these can be done virtually .

Training of community teams presents more difficulty as some training has to be physical  
e.g. Search and Rescue, First Aid



# Earthquake Simulation Exercise, Portland

Source: JIS



# Emergency Shelter

Additional Shelter Supplies (800+ shelters)

Shelter supplies should include

Disposable masks, gloves, fluid resistant aprons,  
shoe covers, goggles

recommended for cleaning and disinfection (PAHO 2019)

# Additional training required for shelter volunteers

Management of Personal Protective Equipment(PPE)

Recommendation that persons cleaning/disinfecting common areas in shelters wear PPEs

Training in putting on taking off and disposal of PPEs

# Emergency Shelters

Layout of shelter

In addition to additional space changes to layout required  
—

Isolation areas for potential positive cases

Separate areas for elderly

Sanitising stations/hand washing stations

# Additional Changes Required

## Ventilation

20 – 30 cubic metres per person per hour of airflow/exchange

Not clear how this will be achieved during hurricane especially if system stalls over land

20 -25 C ideal temperature- Assumption of air conditioning ?



# Public Information



## ODPEM HURRICANE SAFETY

**Hurricane Season: June 1 - November 30**

### BEFORE THE HURRICANE SEASON



- Check into National Emergency Alert System of your area.
- If you live in a flood-prone area, know where the nearest shelters are or make arrangements to stay with relatives or friends.
- Keep the auto tires inflated that cover damage your house, broken or clogged up when facing a hurricane.
- Check your buildings & make sure they are not for returning impact.
- Always have on hand an emergency supply of water, food and fuel.
- Know the proper procedure for evacuation.

### THE HURRICANE WATCH

This advisory means that the hurricane could pass near the coast within 48 hours. Start Preparing.

- Bring in everything that could be blown away: garbage cans, pots, bowls, lawn furniture.
- Pick up kids from trees.
- Stock up on water. Store drinking water to last at least five days.
- Stock up on nonperishable food.
- Gather tools for job repairs and odd necessities that might be needed.
- Check your battery-operated radio and flashlight and stock up on batteries.

### THE HURRICANE WARNING

A means that the hurricane is expected to hit the 24 hours.

- If you live near the coast or are elsewhere, know the way out, knowing going to stay with relatives and friends in safer areas or to a safe shelter.
- Listen more cautious and move with others to

### WHEN UP



- Stay indoors. Stay until you are told that it is safe to go outside.
- Stay in a doorway, hallway, or bathroom, away from windows and doors.
- Stay in drinking water until you are allowed that or until you have been released.
- Stay in a safe place.

### AFTER THE HURRICANE

- Stay indoors. Stay until you are told that it is safe to go outside.
- Stay in a doorway, hallway, or bathroom, away from windows and doors.
- Stay in drinking water until you are allowed that or until you have been released.
- Stay in a safe place.

# Precautionary Messages

Precautionary Messages would have to be redone to explain differences due to Covid 19 – Ideally combination of both hurricane and Covid 19 in messages

Cost of redoing PSAs

# Post Impact - Management of Humanitarian Personnel and Supplies

Border status will depend on global situation

If there is a second wave of Covid 19 Governments will have to decide – Will humanitarian assistance be allowed to enter the region

Will there be conditions

Develop scenarios and responses before any impact and communicate to partners



# Stress Management

Long term effects of Covid 19 will be severe and long lasting (APA 2020)

Stressors due to Covid 19 (APA survey 2020)

Managing distance/online learning

Access to food, housing, healthcare

Missing major milestones – wedding, graduations (funerals?)

Work

# Stress Management

Potential Stressors due to Hurricanes

Procuring emergency supplies

Need to evacuate

Physical damage/loss of homes

Injury and accessing medical help

Access to supplies (especially post-impact)

Lack of communication with family, friends

Resources for recovery

# Stress Management

There ( is now and ) will be need to provide psycho social support for a large segment of the population to help manage Covid 19 and hurricane-related stress

# Recovery

Possibility of long term shelter needs

Potentially during second wave?

Possibility of Covid 19 plus hurricane recovery financing being required

# Opportunities

Organise simulation exercises - this is first opportunity to manage 2 major events simultaneously – one real. Good training opportunity which will pay off if there is a real event.

Damage Assessment – use of geo-spatial technology to overcome access issues, speed up assessments. The way of the future.

Leverage technology, data developed for COVID for other major events

# Finally

A disaster is a terrible thing to waste.....

Grasp the opportunities.