

Hurricane classifications

Storms are classified by wind speed, barometric pressure and size of storm surge. A tropical storm is a low-pressure system with sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph. When the winds from the storms reach 39 mph, the storms are given names.

Category 1: Minimal storm

Winds: 74 to 95 mph
Barometer: 28.94 inches or more
Storm surge: Up to 5 feet
Examples: Irene, 1999; Allison, 1995



Category 2: Moderate storm

Winds: 96 to 110 mph
Barometer: 28.91 to 28.5 inches
Storm surge: 6 to 8 feet
Examples: Frances, 2004; Floyd, 1999; Bonnie, 1998; Georges (Florida and Louisiana), 1998.



Category 3: Extensive storm

Winds: 111 to 130 mph
Barometer: 28.47 to 27.91 inches
Storm surge: 9 to 12 feet
Examples: Katrina, 2005; Wilma, 2005; Jeanne, 2004; Fran, 1996; Opal, 1995; Alicia, 1983



Category 4: Extreme storm

Winds: 131 to 155 mph
Barometer: 27.88 to 27.17 inches
Storm surge: 13 to 18 feet
Examples: Charley, 2004; Hugo, 1989; Donna, 1960



Category 5: Catastrophic storm

Winds: More than 155 mph
Barometer: 27.17 inches or less
Storm surge: More than 18 feet
Examples: Andrew (Florida), 1992; Camille, 1969; Labor Day (Florida Keys), 1935

