

Preparing for Tropical Storms

Tropical storms include hurricanes, typhoons, and cyclones. They typically form over tropical or subtropical water and are named differently based on where they originate:

- Hurricanes – Atlantic Ocean and Northeast Pacific Ocean
- Typhoons – Northwest Pacific Ocean
- Cyclones – South Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean

Tropical storms can cause storm surges, high winds, heavy rain, flooding, landslides, and tornadoes. They may cause widespread damage to infrastructure (such as roads, electricity, and phone and internet service) and create serious shortages of housing, food, potable water, and medical capacity. Tropical storms also can lead to travel disruptions, preventing travelers from continuing their trip, returning home, or seeking evacuation for illness or injury.

When preparing for tropical storms, follow these guidelines:

- Enroll in the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive embassy weather alerts.
- Monitor the [Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System](#), NOAA's [National Hurricane Center](#), local news and weather services, and host country emergency management or civil defense agencies.
- Follow local guidance and directives, including evacuation orders; locate local shelters; let your family, friends, and UW-Madison contacts know how you plan to remain safe during a developing storm.
- Always carry your travel documents (i.e., passport, picture IDs, etc.) and secure them in a safe, waterproof bag.
- Ensure important personal items and technology are stored in a safe place.
- Charge cell phones and carry your charger. If you can, acquire a portable power bank and/or solar charger so you can recharge devices.
- Have appropriate clothes, shoes, and weather gear; fresh batteries; a light source (headlamp or flashlight); an emergency radio; a few days' supply of local currency; drinking water; and canned and/or dry food to last several days; also have a small easily carried bag for important items in case you must quickly relocate.
- Have an adequate supply of first aid materials and prescription medications.
- Monitor the nearest U.S. Embassy website and social media for information about the storm and storm recovery.



Other sources for Weather Preparedness:

- U.S. State Department's [Crisis Abroad page](#)
- U.S. State Department's [Hurricane, Typhoons, and Cyclone page](#)
- FEMA's Ready.gov [Hurricanes page](#)
- The CDC's [Hurricanes and Other Tropical Storms](#) page
- National Weather Service [Tropical Storm or Hurricane](#) page