



NEWS RELEASE

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Most Americans incorrectly believe wind speeds determine hurricane evacuation

FLASH cites disturbing survey findings and offers new evacuation safety resources

ORLANDO, Fla. – A national Harris Interactive Survey commissioned by the nonprofit [Federal Alliance for Safe Homes \(FLASH\)](#)® has revealed some frightening perceptions regarding hurricane evacuation. The survey found that a vast majority of Americans, 84 percent, mistakenly base their life or death evacuation decisions on the hurricane category and/or wind speed. In fact, hurricane evacuation boundaries are based on the threat of water, not wind, and nearly all evacuation orders are issued due to threat of inland flooding and storm surge.

Today at the National Hurricane Conference, FLASH launched [#bustamyth](#), an initiative to overcome Americans' confusion regarding when to evacuate in a tropical storm or hurricane and to dispel other hurricane myths.

"Most people think of wind with a hurricane, but in recent years, water from storm surge and inland flooding has done the most damage and killed the most people," said Rick Knabb, Ph.D., Director of NOAA's National Hurricane Center (NHC). "Families need to find out if they live in an evacuation zone today, have a plan in place and immediately follow evacuation orders when issued."

Tropical storms, Category 1 and 2 hurricanes, post-tropical cyclones and even Nor'easters can all cause life-threatening storm surge. In 2008, Hurricane Ike made landfall as a Category 2 hurricane, bringing storm surge of 15 to 20 feet above normal tide levels. In 2012, Tropical Storm Debby produced storm surge of seven feet in the Florida Panhandle. Often, heavy rains from hurricanes and tropical storms cause flooding well inland from the initial strike zone.

"People underestimate the force and power of water," said FLASH President and CEO Leslie Chapman-Henderson. "During Superstorm Sandy, the Sochacki family of Union Beach, New Jersey lost their home when it was broken apart and swept out to sea. In the middle of the storm, they were forced to take shelter in an elevated, concrete home next door."

FLASH documents stories of survival like the Sochacki family's in its [Tale of Two Homes](#) series in hopes of saving lives and homes in the future.

New evacuation resources available

Beginning this hurricane season, the NHC will issue an experimental *Potential Storm Surge Flooding Map* for areas along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States that are at risk of storm surge from a tropical cyclone. These real-time maps will show areas where storm surge could occur and how high above ground the water could reach in those areas. The interactive map will be available at www.hurricanes.gov when hurricane or, in some cases, tropical storm, watches or warnings are in effect.

(More)

Additionally, FLASH has compiled available online resources on [evacuation zones](#) and storm surge mapping for the 222 coastal counties, parishes, and regions from Texas to Maine to help families determine if they reside in an evacuation zone.

Other myths revealed

The annual Harris Interactive survey tests homeowners' hurricane beliefs regarding safety and property protection. Some of the other widely held myths included:

MYTH: It costs more than \$10K to make a home stronger against hurricanes

FINDING: 69 percent of Americans believe this to be true

FACT: There are affordable methods and products that minimize damage and the need for costly repairs, including:

- Garage doors are often the most vulnerable opening on a home in a hurricane, but they can be braced for as little as \$150
- Windows and sliding glass doors can be protected from flying debris with temporary plywood shutters for \$275 to \$750 or with corrugated steel or aluminum shutters from \$7 to \$15 per foot
- Roof uplift resistance is critical in high wind and it may be tripled by applying a 1/4 inch bead of APA AFG-01 certified wood adhesive along the intersection of the roof deck and roof rafter or truss chord on both sides of the beam
- Water intrusion through the roof deck joints is a common source of damage; however, peel and stick water barrier can be applied during re-roofing for as little as \$750

MYTH: Taping windows helps prevent hurricane damage

FINDING: 54 percent of Americans believe this to be true

FACT: Taping windows wastes preparation time, does not stop windows from breaking in a hurricane, and does not make clean-up easier. In fact, taping windows may create larger shards of glass that could cause serious injuries. Masking tape, duct tape, window film and specially marketed "hurricane tape" are insufficient and potentially dangerous. Use tested and approved hurricane shutters or other opening protection instead.

About the Survey

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of Salter Mitchell and FLASH from March 3-5, 2014 among 2,112 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact tami@flash.org.

About FLASH

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH)[®], a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is the country's leading consumer advocate for strengthening homes and safeguarding families from natural and manmade disasters. FLASH collaborates with more than 100 innovative and diverse partners that share its vision of making America a more disaster-resilient nation including: BASF, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Florida Division of Emergency Management, The Home Depot[®], International Code Council, Kohler[®] Generators, National Weather Service, Portland Cement Association, RenaissanceRe, Simpson Strong-Tie[®], State Farm[™], USAA[®] and WeatherPredict Consulting Inc. In 2008, FLASH opened the interactive weather experience StormStruck: A Tale of Two Homes[®] in Lake Buena Vista, FL. Learn more about FLASH and gain access to its free consumer resources by visiting www.flash.org or calling (877) 221- SAFE (7233). Also, get timely safety tips to ensure that you and your family are protected from natural and manmade disasters by subscribing to the FLASH blog – Protect Your Home in a FLASH.

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