

## FEMA and NHC Web Sites

The Federal Emergency Management Agency Web site <[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)> is a good place to get basic news about assistance regarding disasters or emergencies in your area. The FEMA site is in a frames format that provides navigation bars in the left side margin. These bars consist of the following topics: About FEMA, News, Maps, Project Impact, FEMA for Kids, Y2K issues, Tropical Storm Watch, Disaster Assistance, (U.S.) Fire Administration, Mitigation, Preparedness, Flood Insurance, Job Opportunities, Info for Business, and Regional Offices. The main frame has links to current news stories. For example, an early August page has information on August Nevada Wildfires, Tropical Storm Outlook, East Drought Conditions, a FEMA grant to Puerto Rico, and current news on the Emergency Information Infrastructure Partnership (EIIP). The current picture gallery has photographs from the Iowa Floods and an illustration Safe Room Construction gallery.

Clicking on the "Regional Offices" link takes you to a FEMA interactive map where you can link to the Atlanta (Southeastern) Regional IV home page. Here the same frame navigation system covers: About FEMA (including a message from and a picture of FEMA Director James Lee Witt), Project Impact, News, Conference, Winter Storm Update Center, Mitigation, Regional Offices, and Tribal Policy. These links appear to loop back to the main FEMA server. In the right frame are links to About Region IV, What's New in Region IV, Region IV News Desk, Region IV Partners (state directors), Project Impact in Region IV, and the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP). The latter is a map with locations of chemical weapon stockpiles in the United States. Also on this page are a message from the Region IV Director, John B. Copenhagen; directions to the Region IV Office; details of Region IV organization; and hyperlinks to Region IV State Emergency Management Agencies (including the North Carolina State Emergency Management Agency: <[www.dem.dcc.state.nc.us](http://www.dem.dcc.state.nc.us)>).

The National Hurricane Center/Tropical Prediction Center <[www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)> serves as a current database of historical tropical cyclone information as well as a real-time source of current official weather observations, forecasts, and warnings concerning active cyclones (worldwide). Also constructed in frames format, the NHC/TPC site contains the most comprehensive array of tropical cyclone information available. Left hand navigation bars are divided into five broad categories: Current Season; Historical Data; General Info (FAQ, Awareness, Saffir-Simpson Scale, Forecast Models, Inland Wind Model, Glossary); Storm Names; and Links About NHC/TPC.

This site also has a navigation bar across the top of the page with hyperlinks to "Other NHC/TPC Products." These links go to Active Cyclones, Forecasts, Imagery, About TPC, and Reconnaissance. The Tropical Cyclone Products Page (called Active

Cyclones in the top bar) is arranged by broad geographic areas (Atlantic and East/West Pacific). In each area you will find posted advisories, graphics, tropical outlook (what you hear most often in the news media as a press release), and tropical discussion (meteorological analysis of current conditions). The Forecasts link provides access to marine forecasts, aviation products, satellite products and discussion, tropical analyses/graphics, and the sea temperature analyses. Most of these links, while attractive and interesting, are of prime use to meteorologists.

The imagery page contains links to current weather satellite graphic images (GEOS 8 -Atlantic and GEOS 10 -Pacific). For each satellite you get the current real time images for visible light, infrared light, and water vapor. In addition, a composite page provides full disk images from both orbiting satellites. The water vapor link is perhaps the most useful. The "About TPC" page gives links to more detailed information on the Center and its branches. Other useful links are Personnel, NOAA locator, and What's New (with this Web site). Other links go to educational sources such as FAQ, NOAA Educational Brochures, and general information sources such as Storm Names, Glossary, and Historical Information. On this link you will find a downloadable Hurricane Tracking Chart. The Reconnaissance link at the top of the NHC/TPC page contains information about the 53rd USAF Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (AKA Hurricane Hunters) located at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. Here you will find its daily flight schedule, "routine" reports of hurricane data, current observations from airborne aircraft, "Vortex" messages, Dropsonde reports (weather balloons), a data archive of previous flights, and a link to the "Hurricane Hunters" home page. The Hurricane Hunters home page includes neat stuff such as a cyberflight into the eye of a hurricane, kid stuff, photo gallery, history and aircraft, and a homework "Steering Winds" page. This is a really interesting site and I urge you to visit it.

During times of active cyclones the NHC/TPC site gets a lot of traffic. Additional links are available through the "Alternate Cyclone Forecast Sites." My favorites are the University of Hawaii Storm Page <[lumahai.soest.hawaii.edu](http://lumahai.soest.hawaii.edu)> or <[www.solar.ifa.hawaii.edu](http://www.solar.ifa.hawaii.edu)> or <[www.hawaii.edu/News/storm.tracks.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/News/storm.tracks.html)> and the Ohio State Tropical Weather Page <[asp1.sbs.ohio-state.edu](http://asp1.sbs.ohio-state.edu)>. A good commercial news hurricane site for east coast storms is the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, newspaper, the *Sun Sentinel* Hurricane Central page <[www.sun-sentinel.com/storm](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/storm)>. Also of interest is the Amateur Radio Hurricane WatchNet <[www.hwn.org](http://www.hwn.org)>, an interesting mirror site that becomes much busier during active storms when hams are sending in live reports. Hopefully your library will not be visited by many storms this season, but the above sites will prove useful to patrons needing information about current and past disasters from a national and worldwide perspective.