Hurricane Sandy: Affecting Millions, Costing Billions

Because of the unique nature of Hurricane Sandy, this document from AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions is intended to explain the effects of this storm and suggest ways of mitigating them.

It is too soon to forecast the exact location of landfall for Sandy, but is becoming more likely that it will be between the Delmarva Peninsula and Long Island, late Monday night or early Tuesday. As we head through the weekend, this picture should become clearer. That being said, the exact spot of landfall is less important than usual because this is a very large storm geographically with high winds – gusts above 80 mph in some cases – spread out across hundreds of miles. This would encompass an area from Virginia northward into New York state and New England. These high winds, especially when combined with rainfalls of 5-10 inches, will cause trees to uproot and power lines to come down. Power may be out for days or weeks in some areas, perhaps stretching to a month. And these impacts will reach the coast well ahead of the storm.

There will be a major storm surge near and north of where the system makes landfall, with tides at least five to ten feet above mean sea level. When combined with wave action (that may exceed 20 feet and higher than usual astronomical tides), coastal areas may be very hard hit.

Hurricane Sandy, while a tropical system, will expand in size and intensity as a result of cold air combining with the system on its west side, creating the threat for heavy, wet snow in the central Appalachians above 1,500 feet. Most of that area will receive six inches with some places receiving two feet. These wet snows, combined with moderate to high winds, will cause power failures.

River flooding can become a serious issue. Those located in one hundred-year flood plains in the region should be prepared for evacuation.
Hurricane Sandy: Affecting Millions, Costing Billions

Because of the unique nature of Hurricane Sandy, this document from AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions is intended to explain the effects of this storm and suggest ways of mitigating them. It is too soon to forecast the exact location of landfall for Sandy, but it is becoming more likely that it will be between the Delmarva Peninsula and Long Island, late Monday night or early Tuesday. As we head through the weekend, this picture should become clearer. That being said, the exact spot of landfall is less important than usual because this is a very large storm geographically with high winds – gusts above 80 mph in some cases – spread out across hundreds of miles. This would encompass an area from Virginia northward into New York state and New England. These high winds, especially when combined with rainfalls of 5-10 inches, will cause trees to uproot and power lines to come down. Power may be out for days or weeks in some areas, perhaps stretching to a month. And these impacts will reach the coast well ahead of the storm.

There will be a major storm surge near and north of where the system makes landfall, with tides at least five to ten feet above mean sea level. When combined with wave action (that may exceed 20 feet and higher than usual astronomical tides), coastal areas may be very hard hit.

Hurricane Sandy, while a tropical system, will expand in size and intensity as a result of cold air combining with the system on its west side, creating the threat for heavy, wet snow in the central Appalachians above 1,500 feet. Most of that area will receive six inches with some places receiving two feet. These wet snows, combined with moderate to high winds, will cause power failures.

River flooding can become a serious issue. Those located in one hundred-year flood plains in the region should be prepared for evacuation.

Business Mitigation Suggestions

What would you do without commercial power for a week or more? If you have generators, are they tested and are fuel tanks full?

If you are in a heavily wooded area, do you have ways of clearing downed trees?

Do you have a satellite phone? It is a small investment that could pay big dividends if power is lost for a period of days.

Proactively move critical infrastructure, files, etc., out of low-lying areas.

In a crisis, cash is king. Make sure you and your employees visit the ATM prior to any power failures. Once the power fails, credit card readers may not work and ATMs may be out of service.

Keep automobile gas tanks full. Purchase some inexpensive power inverters to keep cell phones and laptops charged.

Bottom Line: It is likely the U.S. economy will take a hit of at least $10 billion with this storm and full recovery will take weeks. However, the rebuilding and repair efforts will require considerable resources. This positive effect will be spread out, whereas the losses and disruption will be more immediate.

AccuWeather clients are welcome to call 316-266-8000 at any time for additional consultation. If you are not yet a client, please call to discuss how we can begin service promptly.