



- Press Release -

ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION SECTION

It's that time of the year. The time to reflect on and be prepared for the hurricane season.

Thursday 1st June marks the beginning of the 2017 hurricane season for the Atlantic Basin. The season runs from the 1st of June to 30th November 2017. However, as seen by the exceptionally rare Tropical Storm Arlene, which was only the second named storm on record to form in April, the formation of tropical cyclones is possible at any time of the year.

The outlook for 2017 suggests that tropical cyclone activity will be slightly above normal in the Atlantic Basin (North Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico) this year. The prediction is for there to be fourteen (14) named storms, of those six (6) are expected to become hurricanes, and three (3) are expected to become major hurricanes (Category 3 or stronger). An average season in the Atlantic Basin consists of twelve (12) named storms, six (6) hurricanes and two (2) major hurricanes.

Agency	Total Named	Hurricanes	Major Hurricanes
Tropical Storm Risk	14	6	3
NOAA	14	7	3
Weather Channel	14	7	3
30-year Average	12	6	2

The 2017 Hurricane Forecast will be updated on July 3 and August 2.

The two main factors that were used in forecasting the severity of the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season are one, the future state of the El Niño Southern Oscillation and two, sea surface temperatures in North Atlantic Ocean.

The El Niño phenomenon which is the abnormal warming of the Pacific Ocean, usually has a suppressing effect on tropical cyclone activity in the Atlantic Basin. If an El Niño develops, it will be weak. Meanwhile near normal to slightly above normal sea surface temperatures are expected in the Tropical Atlantic Ocean during this hurricane season.

What Does This Means for Belize?

There is no strong correlation between the number of storms or hurricanes that form in any given season to the number of storms that make landfall in Belize. One or more of the 14 named storms forecast to develop this season could hit the country, or none at all. Therefore as history teaches us, as a nation located in such a vulnerable area, especially along the coast, we should be prepared each year no matter what the forecast is.

2017 Storm Names

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|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Arlene</i> | <i>Emily</i> | <i>Irma</i> | <i>Maria</i> | <i>Rina</i> |
| <i>Bret</i> | <i>Franklin</i> | <i>Jose</i> | <i>Nate</i> | <i>Sean</i> |
| <i>Cindy</i> | <i>Gert</i> | <i>Katia</i> | <i>Ophelia</i> | <i>Tammy</i> |
| <i>Don</i> | <i>Harvey</i> | <i>Lee</i> | <i>Philippe</i> | <i>Vince</i> |
| | | | | <i>Whitney</i> |

So Belizeans be prepared, stay safe and heed all advice and warnings coming from the National Meteorological Service and National Emergency Management Organization during the 2017 Hurricane Season.