Hurricane Evacuation Economic Impacts
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- $3 million per midweek day
- $8 million per weekend day
- More per holiday weekend or special event day
Restarting Tourism Flow

- Once evacuation is terminated, people just don’t begin returning!
- Depending on situation, a large marketing effort is likely desired.
- Post-storm budget could be anywhere from $15K to $100K or more.
Role of TDC in Hurricane Preparedness
Protecting Lives and the Economy In the Florida Keys
Responsibility
In 1998, TDC Began an Innovative Attitude Towards Hurricane Safety

“Not burying our heads in the proverbial beach sand”
How it began
Challenges for Keys EM

- One highway in and out of the Keys
- Low islands affected by surge
- Exposed bridges and highways
- 73,000 residents
- 15,000 to 50,000 overnight visitors depending on season
- More evacuation notice than most coastal areas
Purpose

Protect lives

Protect economy
Three Distinct Phases

• Pre-hurricane season
• When a storm threatens
• After the storm
Tourism Council Involved With Emergency Management Throughout Every Phase
Before the Winds Blow

- Media visits
- Pre-season conferences
- Workshop for Keys Tourism
When a Hurricane Threatens the Florida Keys
In the Keys, Visitors Are the First Group To Evacuate
Practice exercise to assist visitors:

Website:

Fax/e-Blast Advisory Code Red Voice Call Info to Assist Visitors

Communicate with the Industry
TO REGISTER:
www.fla-keys.com/alert
Web Site Honestly Informs Travelers
Keys Multi-Lingual Visitor Assistance

1-800-771-KEYS
Communicate with Media and Transportation Companies to (Politely) Discourage Travel To Destination Until Safe
Work out of NHC or EOC to Assist With Communications
Evaluate Evacuation Process And Research Alternative Methods of Egress
Following Visitor Evacuation, Provide Support for Any Necessary Resident Evacuations
Proactively Inform and Educate Travelers On Keys Hurricane Safety Program

www.FLA-KEYS.com
Let us be the first to welcome you to our islands! We invite you to use our website to plan and visualize every aspect of your dream vacation to the Florida Keys.

Visit our accommodations search to select the features you desire in a property. Peruse our calendar to time your trip around one of our many events. Or, plan a perfect Florida Keys wedding with information on venues and more.

You'll find the Keys are far richer in cultural opportunities than most tropical getaways. If the outdoors are your thing, you can explore our wild side through guided eco-tours, walking trails and environmental centers. Numerous dive operators and charter captains are ready to show you North America's only living, coral barrier reef. And anglers have a full-range of world-famous fishing opportunities.

We provide web cam, video, downloadable brochures, and seasonal weather information to help you visualize your trip. Don't forget to make use of our interactive maps and Getting Here information.

If you're in the tourism or travel writing businesses, please visit our media/press, meeting planners and travel agents sections.
When a Hurricane Threatens

Traveling to the Florida Keys During Hurricane Season

Frequently Asked Questions About Traveling to the Florida Keys During Hurricane Season

When a Hurricane Threatens

When you live and play in paradise, Mother Nature occasionally likes to remind you that the same forces that created the beautiful coastline and luscious landscape can be dangerous as well. In California or Japan, the reminder might be an earthquake; in Indonesia, a tsunami; in Hawaii, a volcanic eruption.

In the Florida Keys, the same forces that create balmy breezes and warm waves also bring high winds, heavy rain, and tidal surge. Because they are on the northern fringe of the Caribbean, the Florida Keys occasionally are threatened by tropical cyclones, a generic name for low-pressure weather systems with organized thunderstorms, a generic name for a tropical cyclone reaching a sustained 74 mph, it is activity and circular winds. When the wind speed of a tropical cyclone reaches a sustained 74 mph, it is classified as a hurricane.

In the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean tropical cyclones can present a threat to most Caribbean islands. Fortunately, unlike with earthquakes and tsunamis, modern-day tropical weather forecasting programs provide ample time for preparation to protect lives and property.

The Monroe County (Florida Keys) Tourist Development Council (TDC) has formal communications programs that are highly coordinated with local emergency management officials to provide crucial information to help visitors safely exit the Florida Keys in the event a hurricane threatens the region. The Council has developed this program because the citizens of the Keys care deeply about the information to help visitors safely exit the Florida Keys in the event a hurricane threatens the region.

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The TDC provides honest, trustworthy information about traveling to and from the Keys when it is not appropriate to travel to or from the Keys and even advises people when it is not appropriate to travel to or from the Keys.

The TDC’s visitor safety program has been a model for other destinations in hurricane-prone regions. In 2007 both the National (US) 51 and Florida Hurricane Conferences honored the Keys program with public awareness awards. It was the first time in the 30-year history of the National Hurricane Conference’s awards program that a tourism entity was honored.

An example of the council’s advisory to travelers and other industry entities can be viewed by clicking here. See what can be found at the home page of the Florida Keys Web site linked above.

When Hurricane Jean appeared to threaten the Florida Keys, the tourism council developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions About Traveling to the Florida Keys during the summer and fall.

These questions and answers are intended to assist travelers in the event of a hurricane and help them to enjoy the Keys as much as possible, whether by boat or by road.
When you live and play in paradise, Mother Nature sometimes likes to remind you that the same forces that created the comfortable climate and lush landscape can damage them as well.

In California or Japan the reminder might be an earthquake, in Indonesia, a tsunami in Hawaii, a volcano eruption. Sometimes it's the Florida Keys that are threatened by tropical cyclones, a name for a low-pressure weather system with organized thunderstorm activity and cyclonic winds. When sustained wind speed reaches 74 mph (119 km/h), it is classified a hurricane.

The Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC), the agency responsible for marketing Monroe County, has a formal communications program with emergency officials to communicate our need for visitors to leave in the unlikely event a hurricane threatens the region.

The Council has developed this program because the Keys tourism industry cares about visitors and their safety. The TDC provides reliable and accurate information about traveling to the Keys and evacuation steps when it is not appropriate to travel in the event of a storm threat.

Constantly Monitoring Tropical Weather

Throughout the summer and fall, emergency management officials receive continuous information from the National Hurricane Center and the Key West National Weather Service Office. They are alerted to all developing tropical weather systems.

When a hurricane appears, its potential threat to the island chain, the community, and visitors must be communicated with various local and state officials as well as the tourism industry to discuss visitor and resident evacuation.

Hurricane forecasting is not an exact science, and despite the accuracies of computer models and the ability of forecasters to provide early warning, a community may lose or be in an area not impacted by a hurricane. This is why the Florida Keys are a mandatory evacuation zone because of a storm's intensity and is only ordered if there is a significant threat.

If you are interested in a weather and emergency management director, the TDC and e-mails lodging facility information for about evacuation orders and details or leaving the Keys.

If you are not in the Keys and hear of a storm threat, check with your lodging's front desk, visit www.floridakeys.com, call the 1-800-F-Keys (393-7 stu), for the Keys visitor services office at (305) 295-1316.

Should a similar evacuation order be necessary, officials advise to leave it is the planning to evacuate with ample time to make alternative travel arrangements.

The Lodging Association of the Florida Keys & Key West encourages its members to provide refunds of any unused nights as soon as an official issue a visitor evacuation order.

There is no need to panic, but visitors are urged to follow emergency directives in a timely manner, to avoid delays and leave safely. Visitors are also encouraged to respond to the warning quickly because of the time needed to secure watercraft. If the storm continues to track toward the Keys, the Overseas Highway and two bridges eventually will be ordered shut open forward, to avoid delays for swimmers and kayakers.

Visitors who plan to travel to the Keys but have yet to arrive must temporarily delay their trip until the risk has passed.

Please Expect the Unexpected

Officials fully understand that an evacuation order can cause an unwelcome interruption in visitors' vacation plans. But human safety takes priority.

If you must evacuate and find it inconvenient to return home, other parts of Florida not in the storm's forecast track may be an option. To call state of Florida at (800) 287-8989 to locate lodging in safe area.

When Visitors Can Return

Once the storm passes, officials will assess the area's infrastructure. If the storm has had little or no impact, visitors should be able to return quickly.

Visit www.floridakeys.com or call (800) 345-KEYS in the U.S. and Canada to check the devastation's impact, infrastructure, travel, and recommended dates for visitors to return.

Source: Florida Keys News Bureau, Key West, News Media of Florida, 2005-2005
Publicize Safety Program

The Florida Keys' tourism website, fla-keys.com, takes a proactive approach, posting frequent updates during major storms. -AP

… the Florida Keys’ website, fla-keys.com, posted a downloadable "Prepared in Paradise" guide... “why not let people know the steps we’re taking to protect their safety before they come down?”

– Gannett News Service
Tourism boards should imitate Keys’ Web page

“When you live and play in paradise, Mother Nature occasionally likes to remind you that the same forces that created the comfortable climate and lush landscape can damage them, as well.

“In California or Japan the reminder might be an earthquake; in Indonesia, a tsunami; in Hawaii, a volcanic eruption.”

That’s on the first page of the Florida Keys’ new online brochure about hurricanes.

This is on the tourism Web site, flakeys.com. To find the brochure, click on the red-and-black flags icon near the bottom of the destination’s home page.

The Keys brochure can be printed out, folded and stored in a travel bag or purse.
The Former National Hurricane Center Director Speaks About TDC’s Storm Program
Award-Winning Program

National Hurricane Confab
Florida Gov. Hurricane Confab
SATW Gold Crisis Award
Post-Storm Actions

Strategize recovery before storm arrives or misses the Keys.

Evaluate Infrastructure and project when visitors can return.

Marketing effort involves all facets of TDC promotional engine.
Responsibility

FLA-KEYS.COM