



# *The Brookings Institution*

## HURRICANE KATRINA TIMELINE

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u> <i>(approx.)</i>	<u>Action</u>
Wed	24-Aug	~	Tropical Depression 12 strengthens into Tropical Storm Katrina over the Central Bahamas. Hurricane warning issued for the southeastern Florida coast
Thurs	25-Aug	~	Katrina strikes Florida as a Cat 1 hurricane with 80 mph winds. Nine people reportedly died. Governor Jeb Bush declares State of Emergency in Florida
Fri	26-Aug	9:00 AM	Windspeed: 75 mph. Expected to become Cat 2 soon.
		~	White House declares impending disaster area. Orders FEMA and DHS to prepare. 10,000 National Guard troops dispatched along Gulf Coast (arrival time unclear).
		5:00 PM	Katrina moves out to Gulf of Mexico. Grows into Cat 2 storm with 100 mph winds. Veers northwest toward Louisiana and Mississippi. Expected to become Cat 3.
		11:00 PM	Center of landfall expected to be Gulfport and New Orleans.
		~	Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco declares State of Emergency.
Sat	27-Aug	5:00 AM	Katrina becomes Cat 3 storm with 115 mph winds. Hurricane warning issued for Louisiana's southeastern coast and for the northern Gulf Coast.
		10:00 AM	Expected Cat 4 storm.
		Afternoon	National Hurricane center Director Max Mayfield calls New Orleans Mayor Nagin to advise for a mandatory evacuation.
		5:00 PM	Nagin declares State of Emergency. Voluntary evacuation order. Residents in low-lying areas encouraged to evacuate.
		~	Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour declares a State of Emergency. A mandatory evacuation ordered for Hancock County.
		6:00 PM	Weather Service Prediction: 45% chance that a Cat 4 or 5 storm will hit New Orleans directly.

*Information taken from a wide variety of media sources / timelines  
(including New York Times, AP, CBC News, NOAA, and Dkosopedia)  
Compiled by Elana DeLozier, Revised by Nina Kamp*

**Sun 28-Aug**    **Early**    DHS Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Director Brown given electronic briefings by Hurricane Center on possibility of levee break.

**7:00 AM**    Katrina becomes Cat 5 storm with 160 mph winds.

**8:00 AM**    Superdome opens. Allows people in.

**9:30 AM**    Nagin announces that Regional Transit Authority (RTA) buses will pick up people in 12 locations throughout the city to take them to places of refuge, including the Superdome. The New Orleans Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan calls for buses to evacuate citizens out of the city (this component not in effect).

**11:00 AM**    Nagin orders mandatory evacuation of New Orleans. Ten shelters set up for those unable to leave (Nagin referred to them as "refuges of last resort" rather than shelters). Evacuation orders posted all along coast. President Bush suggests mandatory evacuation after decision was already made but before it was reported to the public.

**11:30 AM**    President Bush delivers statement vowing to help those affected.

**Noon**    Highways packed. City activates contraflow traffic system so some highways become one-way only.

~    Gov. Blanco requests disaster relief funds (some evidence this request was on 8-27)

~    Alabama Gov. Bob Riley declares a State of Emergency.

~    FEMA sends water, food and supplies to Georgia and Texas in preparation.

~    President Bush declares State of Emergency in Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama.

**3:00 PM**    Superdome has 10,000 people inside. 150 National Guardsmen stationed (~2/3 unarmed).

**6:00 PM**    Nagin orders a curfew of 6 PM.

**7:00 PM**    National Weather Service predicts the levees may be "overtopped" due to storm surge.

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**Mon 29-Aug**    **6:10 AM**    Katrina becomes Cat 4 storm with 145 mph winds. Makes landfall.

**9:00 AM**    Lower 9th Ward Levee reportedly breached. Floodwaters 6-8 feet in this area.

**~11:00 AM**    FEMA Director Michael Brown dispatches 1000 employees 5 hours after landfall - gives them 2 days to arrive. Brown arrives in Baton Rouge at the State Office of Emergency Preparedness.

**2:00 PM**    City Hall confirms 17th Street levee breach. Floods ~ 20% of the city.

**Afternoon**    FEMA issues statement asking first responders to only come to the city if there was proper coordination between the state and local officials.

**1:45 PM**    President Bush declares Emergency Disaster for Louisiana and Mississippi. Frees up federal funds.

~    Superdome damaged (with 10,000 people inside). Refineries damaged, and eight refineries closed. Airports close.

~    Coast Guard rescues 1200 from flood; National Guard called in.

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**Tues 30-Aug** ~ Second levee in New Orleans breaks. Water covers 80% of the city (20 feet high in some places).  
 ~ FEMA activates the National Response Plan to fully mobilize federal government's resources.  
 ~ FEMA stops volunteer firefighters with hurricane expertise due to the insecurity of the city. Asks them to wait for National Guardsmen to secure city first.  
 ~ An estimated 50,000-100,000 remain in New Orleans on roofs, the Superdome, and the convention center. The convention center was discussed as a possible option for refugees by New Orleans officials, but it was never officially chosen as a place of refuge. It was not a shelter listed in the New Orleans Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Unclear as to why it became a shelter.

**4:30 PM** Officials call for anyone with boats to help with rescue mission.  
**5:50 PM** President Bush announces that he will cut vacation short.  
**6:30 PM** Nagin issues urgent bulletin that waters will continue to rise - 12-15 feet in some places. He reports that pumps will soon fail.  
**8:10 PM** Reports suggest looting is widespread.  
**8:55 PM** Army Corps of Engineers begin work on 17th St levee.  
**10:15 PM** Gov. Blanco orders an evacuation of the Superdome. She sets no timetable.

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**Wed 31-Aug** ~ President Bush authorizes draw of oil from Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Gas prices rise above \$3/gal (from average of \$2.60 to \$3.20).  
**Morning** Gov. Blanco requests more National Guardsmen from President Bush. Orders total evacuation of city.  
**10:00 AM** Texas Governor spokesperson says that Superdome refugees will be put in Astrodome.  
 ~ HHS Secretary declares federal health emergency throughout the Gulf Coast. Sends in medical supplies/workers.  
 ~ Buses begin arriving to evacuate Superdome. 25,000 people in Superdome. 52,000 people in Red Cross shelters.  
**12:30 PM** Refugees begin arriving in Houston at the Astrodome.  
 ~ Pentagon sends four Navy ships with emergency supplies. Launches search-and-rescue mission.  
 ~ Water level stops rising in New Orleans.  
 ~ Looting grows exponentially. Police forced to focus on violence/looting rather than search and rescue.  
 ~ London Avenue canal breached  
 ~ Military transport planes take seriously ill and injured to Houston.  
 ~ FEMA deploys 39 medical teams and 1700 trailer trucks.

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**Thurs 1-Sep** ~ Military increases National Guard deployment to 30,000. Violence, carjacking, looting continues. Military helicopters shot at while evacuating residents. FEMA water rescue operations suspended because of gunfire.

~ Nagin issues a "desperate SOS" for more buses.

~ President Bush appoints George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton to fundraise for hurricane victims.

~ Halliburton awarded Navy contract for storm cleanup.

~ Sandbags arrive for levees.

~ Superdome and Convention Center now housing up to 45,000 refugees.

~ Senators return from recess to being work on emergency aid bill.

~ DHS Secretary Chertoff states in an interview that he was not aware of the people at the convention center until recently.

~ **8:00 PM** Brown states (on Paula Zahn's show) that he became aware of the convention center problem only a few hours before.

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**Fri 2-Sep** ~ President Bush tours Gulf area. Acknowledges failures of government. Calls the results "not acceptable."

~ More National Guardsmen arrive; 6500 arrive New Orleans, 20,000 by day's end in LA and MS.

~ Congress approves \$10.5 billion for immediate rescue and relief efforts.

~ U.S. and Europe tap oil and gas reserves (2 million barrels a day).

~ Explosions at chemical storage plant in New Orleans. Scattered fires.

~ Fifteen airlines begin flying refugees out of New Orleans to San Antonio.

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**Sat 3-Sep** ~ Bush orders 7,200 active duty forces to the Gulf Coast.

~ 40,000 National Guardsmen now on Gulf Coast.

~ U.S. Labor Department announces emergency grant of \$62 million for dislocated workers.

~ New Orleans police report 200 officers have walked off the job, 2 committed suicide.

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**Sun 4-Sep** ~ Superdome fully evacuated (except stragglers).

~ Gov. Blanco declares State of Public Health Emergency.

~ Carnival Cruise offers cruise ships for 7000 victims.

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**Mon 5-Sep** ~ Gap in levee closed. Still repairing another gap.  
~ Bush returns to the region. 4,700 more active duty troops dispatched.  
~ Former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton announce hurricane fund.  
~ 500 New Orleans officers unaccounted for.  
~ Some refineries restart production.  
~ Other countries frustrated with relief efforts of their citizens (Europe, Canada, S. Korea, etc)

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**Tues 6-Sep** ~ Executive and legislative branches pledge separate investigations into federal response.  
~ US Army Corps of Engineers begins pumping New Orleans. Now 60% underwater.  
~ Less than 10,000 people still in New Orleans. Streets secure. Four fires.  
~ FEMA: Victims will be given debit cards for necessities.  
~ Labor Department pledges \$62 million for Louisiana, \$50 million for Mississippi, \$75 million for refugees in Texas, and \$4 million for Alabama for dislocated workers.  
**Late Evening** Nagin issued his emergency declaration authorizing police and military to remove anyone who refused to leave their homes. Unclear as to whether force will actually be used at this time (reports suggest not).

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**Wed 7-Sep** ~ President Bush calls for another \$52 billion in aid to compliment the \$10.5 billion already approved by Congress.

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**Thurs 8-Sep** ~ \$52 billion in aid approved by Congress.