

= Effects of Hurricane Dennis in Alabama =

The Effects of Hurricane Dennis in Alabama , USA included \$ 127 million (2005 USD) in damage and three injuries . Dennis made landfall on the Florida Panhandle as a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale on July 10 , 2005 , before tracking over Alabama as a minimal hurricane . In preparation for the storm , about 500 @,@ 000 people were given evacuation orders , and the Red Cross opened 87 shelters . As a result , all southbound lanes of Interstate 65 from Mobile to Montgomery were closed .

Hurricane Dennis caused modest damage in Alabama , mostly related to moderate wind gusts . Several counties within the state reported downed trees and powerlines , leaving a total of 280 @,@ 000 people without electric power . Downed trees also left numerous county and state roads temporarily impassable . Maximum rainfall peaked at 12 @.@ 80 in (325 mm) near Camden and top wind gusts surpassed 70 mph (110 km / h) . Despite the damage , there were no fatalities , although three injuries occurred . Also , an unconfirmed tornado tore the roof off a home , forcing emergency workers to evacuate a man inside .

= Storm history and preparations =

On June 29 , 2005 , a tropical wave emerged off the west coast of Africa . Gradually , the system organized on July 2 and formed a broad low pressure area . The system continued to organize , and became a tropical depression on July 4 . Tracking westward , it became a tropical storm on July 5 and a hurricane on July 7 . Dennis rapidly intensified to attain Category 4 status on the Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale before making landfall on Cuba . The storm weakened to Category 1 status before re @-@ emerging in the Gulf of Mexico and intensifying . Dennis made landfall on the Florida Panhandle on July 10 before tracking over Alabama as a minimal hurricane .

On July 8 , a hurricane watch was put into effect for coastal areas between the Pearl River and the Steinhatchee River . Early on July 9 , the hurricane watch was upgraded to a hurricane warning in anticipation of the storm . Early on July 10 prior to Dennis ' landfall , the warning was discontinued for locations between the Steinhatchee River and the Ochlockonee River , leaving Alabama within the advisory . Just hours after the storm moved ashore , the warning was adjusted to include areas from the Alabama / Mississippi border to Destin , Florida . On July 10 , the coastal hurricane warning was downgraded to a tropical storm warning , although inland hurricane warnings remained in place . At 2200 (UTC) on July 10 , all tropical cyclone advisories were discontinued as the hurricane progressed inland .

About 500 @,@ 000 people were given evacuation orders in the state , mostly in coastal areas . Residents in Mobile County , and those south of I @-@ 10 in Baldwin County , were ordered to evacuate . Similar orders were issued in Mississippi for parts of Jackson , Hancock , and Harrison counties , and for coastal areas in the Florida Panhandle stretching from Escambia County to Bay County .

At 2300 (UTC) on July 9 , 2005 , all southbound lanes on Interstate 65 from Mobile to Montgomery were closed . Traffic was redirected , making all four lanes northbound to allow evacuations . Likewise , military installations such as NAS Pensacola , Whiting Field , Eglin AFB , Hurlburt Field and Tyndall AFB were all evacuated days before the storm . Red Cross officials opened 87 shelters across the state which were able to hold about 14 @,@ 000 evacuees .

= Impact =

As Hurricane Dennis moved through the state , sustained winds reached minimal hurricane force in the interior of the state . In total , 280 @,@ 000 people in Alabama experienced power outages during the storm . No deaths occurred , although Dennis caused three injuries and total damage amounted to \$ 127 million (2005 USD) , mostly due to structural damage . There was also severe damage to cotton crops .

Rainfall typically ranged from 2 ? 4 inches (50 ? 100 mm) , although rainfall in localized areas

reached 12 @. @ 80 in (325 mm) . This caused numerous rivers to overflow causing widespread , locally major , flash flooding . The rainfall flooded numerous state and county roads , some with water up to 5 ft (1 @. @ 5 m) deep . Parts of Interstate 20 were overwashed with water , temporarily closing the highway . In Dallas County , a mudslide closed a section of State Highway 5 . In Greene County , the minor flooding was reported along the Tombigbee River . Throughout the region , numerous bridges were washed away several homes were flooded , sustaining major damage in some cases .

Storm surge generally ranged from 3 ft (0 @. @ 91 m) ? 6 @. @ 5 ft (2 @. @ 0 m) , with the highest surge reported in Mobile Bay as winds became onshore during Dennis ' landfall .

A wind gust of 51 mph (82 km / h) was reported at Dothan , with minimum barometric pressure reaching 999 @. @ 2 mb . It is reported that the worst damage occurred in Escambia and Monroe counties . In the Escambia County city of Atmore , 100 percent of the city 's residents lost electric power for some a period of time during the hurricane . The strongest winds occurred in Escambia County , where gusts surpassed 70 mph (110 km / h) , leaving numerous structures damaged or destroyed as Dennis tracked through the western half of the county . One man in the county was injured by a fallen tree branch . Also , an unconfirmed tornado tore the roof off a home , forcing emergency workers to evacuate a man inside . In Coffee County , local officials reported wind gusts had blown a carport into a wall of a house . Marengo County received moderate damage , mostly limited to power outages and minor roof and structural damage caused by fallen trees and powerlines . Many customers were without electric power for at least a day , and numerous county roads were covered with debris . A person was injured in Dallas County when a tree landed on their car . Five homes and one business were damaged due to high winds , and thousands of people county @-@ wide experienced power outages . Greene County reported hundreds of downed trees and powerlines causing County Roads 148 and 20 and State Highways 11 , 43 and 14 to be temporarily closed . In Forkland , a mobile home caught fire when a powerline fell on the home . A motorist ran into a fallen tree in Boligee although did not sustain injuries . In Perry County , 2 @, @ 200 homes were without electric power for several hours , and several vehicles and homes were damaged . A structural fire occurred in Russell County and was believed to be ignited by downed powerlines .

Wind gusts in Autauga County surpassed 50 miles per hour (80 km / h) , causing \$ 180 @, @ 000 dollars (2005 USD) in damage . The Robinson Springs United Methodist Church had part of its roof torn off in Elmore County , while numerous other homes sustained roof damage . One person was injured in Montgomery County when a tree fell on their vehicle . Another person was injured in Clay County when he ran his vehicle into a downed tree . A structural fire occurred in Randolph County as a result of fallen powerlines .

= = Aftermath = =

On July 10 , just hours after Hurricane Dennis made landfall in the Florida Panhandle , President George W. Bush ordered the federal government to provide necessary disaster resources and assets for the state to aid people who were affected by the storm . Also , 45 counties in the state were eligible for federal funds to pay 75 percent of the approved costs for debris removal and emergency protective services related to the hurricane , including requested emergency work undertaken by the federal government . On July 11 , Escambia County joined Baldwin and Mobile counties to be eligible to receive individual assistance funds .

Shortly after , on July 13 , two Disaster Recovery Centers opened to provide information to those who have suffered damage . The next day , state and federal community relations teams were deployed into Alabama ? s disaster @-@ declared counties , to assist residents who suffered from Dennis . The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security ? s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had 20 federal community relations specialists and their state counterparts working in the disaster areas . Subsequently , three more Disaster Recovery Centers became scheduled to open on July 16 . On July 25 , four Disaster Recovery Centers in Alabama were scheduled to close . By August 19 , over \$ 4 million (2005 USD

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