

## = Effects of Hurricane Dennis in Mississippi =

The Effects of Hurricane Dennis in Mississippi were mostly minor and included one indirect death . 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 develop , 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 hurricane weakened to Category 1 status before re @-@ emerging in the Gulf of Mexico and intensifying to Category 4 strength . Dennis made landfall on the Florida Panhandle on July 10 as a Category 3 hurricane , then tracked over southeast Alabama and entered Mississippi as a tropical depression .

Dennis lightly affected Mississippi , dropping between 1 ? 5 inches ( 25 ? 125 mm ) of rainfall and producing wind gusts up to 59 mph ( 95 km / h ) , causing several hundred trees to uproot or snap and damaging a total of 21 homes and businesses . Over 40 structures were flooded , forcing 200 people to leave their homes . One indirect death occurred from a traffic accident in Jasper County due to wet roads . During the height of the storm , 24 @,@ 000 customers were without power . In all , Hurricane Dennis caused \$ 2 @.@ 4 million ( 2005 USD ) in damage across the state .

## = Preparations =

At 2100 UTC on July 8 a hurricane watch was put into effect for coastal areas from the Steinhatchee River , Florida to the mouth of the Pearl River . At 0900 UTC on July 9 , the hurricane watch was upgraded to a hurricane warning . The hurricane warning was soon downgraded to a tropical storm warning as Dennis moved inland , and by 0300 UTC on July 10 all advisories were discontinued .

In anticipation of Hurricane Dennis , 190 @,@ 000 people were ordered to evacuate , though many opted not to . Jackson County issued a mandatory evacuation for its residents , while Hancock County called for a voluntary evacuation . Governor Haley Barbour issued a state of emergency , and 600 National Guard soldiers were on standby . Harrison County issued a mandatory evacuation for residents living in low @-@ lying areas , and ordered the closing of its casinos . Also , the Red Cross provided 60 mobile canteens capable of serving 30 @,@ 000 hot meals to staging areas in Hattiesburg and Jackson . 32 law officials were sent to Hattiesburg to assist with traffic control near the intersection with I @-@ 59 and U.S. Route 49 . Additionally , a horse park in Starkville was caring for over 50 horses belonging to residents who were forced to evacuate and had no other location for them .

## = Impact and aftermath =

In Mississippi , damage was not as severe as previously anticipated . As Dennis impacted the state , storm tide of 2 ft ( 0 @.@ 61 m ) ? 4 ft ( 1 @.@ 2 m ) above normal was reported . Rainfall from the hurricane averaged between 1 ? 5 inches ( 25 ? 125 mm ) , and minimum barometric pressure of 994 @.@ 2 mb was reported near Pascagoula . Wind gusts peaked at 59 mph ( 95 km / h ) causing several hundred trees to uproot or snap , damaging a total of 21 homes and businesses .

In Southaven , 40 homes were flooded and 200 were left homeless as a result of the heavy rainfall . A church undergoing construction in Calhoun County was damaged , and a street light in Lee County was snapped . Also , a fallen tree damaged a house in Itawamba County . One indirect fatality occurred in Jasper County from an automobile accident due to wet roads . An estimated 24 @,@ 000 customers lost electric power during the storm . After the storm , several fires were sparked due to downed electrical wires . In all , the weakening Hurricane Dennis left \$ 2 @.@ 6 million ( 2005 USD ) in damage .

Although impact was mostly minor , President George W. Bush initially declared 38 counties in Mississippi federal disaster areas , making them eligible for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency ( FEMA ) . In the city of Meridian , over 300 people sought shelter . More than

885 people took shelter in Jackson County , and 1 @, @ 000 people were in shelters in neighboring Harrison County . On July 15 , three additional counties became eligible for federal assistance , bringing the number of declared disaster areas to 41 .