

**Appendix G:**  
**Definitions and Terminology**

## Definitions and Terminology

The following weather related terms are in common usage and may prove helpful in reading this plan.

**Tropical Disturbance** – This is the first stage of unstable weather that could escalate. No strong wind, but there is rotary circulation.

**Tropical Depression** – Clearly defined low-pressure area with highest wind speed of 38 miles per hour.

**Tropical Storm** – This is a low-pressure area with a defined rotary circulation. Winds range from 39 to 73 miles per hour.

**Tropical Storm Watch** – An announcement that a tropical storm or one that might be developing, poses a threat to an area, generally within 36 hours.

**Tropical Storm Warning** – An announcement that tropical storm conditions with 39 to 73 miles per hour sustained wind may hit a specific area within 24 hours.

**Hurricane** – Is a violent storm originating over tropical or subtropical waters with sustained wind over 74 miles per hour. The winds, as in tropical depressions or storms, blow around the center in a counterclockwise direction. The diameter of these storms may range from 100 to 1,000 miles.

**Storm Surge** – Rapidly rising tide as a storm makes landfall. Salt water flooding cripples communications, overwhelms storm sewers, and contaminates drinking water supplies. Check the County Emergency Management Web Site to find the surge area for your home.

**Hurricane Watch** – Is an announcement that a hurricane poses a threat to a specific area, generally within 36 hours.

**Hurricane Warning** – An alert that a hurricane is expected to hit a specific area within 24 hours. In instances where the course of a hurricane is erratic, this alert may be issued only a few hours before hurricane conditions begin.

**Tornado** – The most violent of atmospheric phenomena, winds may whirl at up to 300 miles per hour. A spinning tornado may sound like the roaring of an airplane or a locomotive. Tornadoes are usually short-lived and may be extraordinarily destructive over a small area.

**Waterspout** – Is a tornado over water.

**Tornado Watch** – An announcement by the National Weather Service that a severe weather condition exists that may spawn a tornado.

**Tornado Warning** – Means a tornado was sighted. The announcement generally gives anticipated course.