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Hurricane Katrina was the eleventh named tropical storm, fourth hurricane, third major hurricane, and first Category 5 hurricane of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. When it hit Miami as a Category 1 storm on August 25, 2005 it was predicted to grow, and grow it did -- by the time it hit the Central Gulf Coast near Buras-Triumph, Louisiana, it was a strong Category 4, and gearing up to become a 5.

As the storm's eye neared New Orleans, City Mayor C. Ray Nagin called the first-ever mandatory evacuation for the entire city. Many, however, weren't able to evacuate for reasons beyond their control.

Katrina's storm surge broke the levee system that surrounds New Orleans, flooding the city, and bringing with it one of the greatest humanitarian disasters in United States history.

Other parts of Louisiana, and coastal parts of Alabama and Mississippi were all directly affected by the storm, with similarly disastrous results.

The official death toll surpassed 1,300 in mid-November. Over 273,000 people were left homeless due to the storm.

Damage caused by Katrina in New Orleans alone is estimated at \$70 to \$130 billion; the storm therefore surpasses Hurricane Andrew as the most expensive natural disaster in U.S. history.

President Bush, after taking an aerial tour of the city, said, "It's as if the entire Gulf Coast were obliterated by the worst kind of weapon you can imagine. And now we're going to go try to comfort people in that part of the world."

5,000 New Orleans' residents were still missing or unaccounted for as of mid-November.

\* Sources: wikipedia.org, whitehouse.gov