

HUGO25 FACT SHEET



Hurricane Hugo made landfall north of Charleston Harbor on the South Carolina coast the night of Sept. 21, 1989, affecting an estimated 1.8 million people. Presidential declarations were issued for 24 counties seeking federal disaster assistance.

Hugo arrived just before midnight with estimated maximum sustained wind of 138 miles per hour. The eye of the Category 4 hurricane was 30 nautical miles wide, with storm surge flooding 15-20 feet above normal. It cut a path through the state just north of Charleston and continued inland to Lake Moultrie and west of Sumter, through Chester and York counties and by 5 a.m. was in the area of Charlotte, N.C.

The primary coastal damage was caused by storm surge flooding, surge-related erosion, wave action and high winds with rainfall. Inland counties also received unexpected high winds and torrential rains. Falling trees and

high winds broke power lines, crushed cars, and blocked roads while also breaking windows, peeling roofs, destroying mobile homes and causing widespread damages to homes and buildings. Many areas lost utilities for up to two weeks. Despite conditions, only two tornadoes were confirmed: a small tornado apparently developed in western Sumter County and another one near Kershaw in Lancaster County.

Counties that were declared disasters were Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dorchester, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Richland, Sumter, Williamsburg, and York.

Hurricane Hugo was the most severe hurricane to strike South Carolina the 20th century. Hurricane Hazel in October 1954 brought winds of 106 miles an hour and tides of up to 16.9 feet. Before Hugo, Hurricane David in 1979 was the last storm to hit South Carolina.

In its wake, Hugo left:

- 13 directly related deaths, 22 indirect deaths, and several hundred injuries
- \$6.5 billion in damages
- 264,000 evacuated from their homes in eight counties
- 270,000 temporarily unemployed
- 60,000 left homeless
- 54,000 state residents seeking disaster assistance

Other response actions required because of Hugo were:

- The Red Cross opened 191 shelters that housed 89,968 people at the height of the evacuation. Red Cross workers provided mass feeding in shelters and on mobile feeding routes for 30 days.
- \$62 million in food stamps were issued to more than 200,000 households
- An initial effort to rebuild dunes cost the state and federal governments \$3.8 million.
- More than 3,000 active duty service members were employed in support and execution of assigned tasks.
- 30 assistance centers were established to receive applications for loans, grants, housing and other types of needs.
- The forest communities lost more than 6.7 billion board feet in timber valued at \$1.04 billion. The damaged timber, concentrated on 4.5 million acres, represented 36 percent of the state's woodlands.
- Primary and secondary schools received \$55.6 million in damages. Crop damages topped \$2 billion.