Introduction to Hurricane Hazards
Hurricanes can Devastate the Infrastructure
Graves were left open to the elements after Katrina
FEMA provided this trailer for a family to set up next to their demolished home.
Hurricanes have left the Gulf Coast Region in ruins.
Careful Planning and Coordination Between Different Agencies is Very Important
Occupational health hazards are a potential threat to all those deployed to areas for assistance and/or clean up following a hurricane.
You May Need Immunizations Prior to Your Assignment
Downed Power Lines can be Extremely Dangerous
Heavy Equipment Operators need to Exercise Extreme Caution Around Damaged Power Lines
If You are Involved in Rescue Efforts it Could Require the Proper Use of Fall Protection
In a Crisis we are Sometimes asked to perform tasks we don’t normally do. Make sure you get specific and adequate training.
Be Alert to Pressurized Vessels that show signs of damage
Standing Water can Contain and Transport all Sorts of Things that can harm us
Navigating Rescue Operations in Floodwater is Treacherous
(Treetops, fire hydrants etc.)
Make sure all Fork Lift Operators are properly trained and Use Proper Lifting Technique
Decontamination of Vehicles and People is a Real Challenge
When a vehicle with a gas tank is wedged between a power line and a high pressure fire hydrant it must be approached with caution.
Proper Foot Protection must be worn when walking through debris
Extreme Caution must be employed when heavy equipment is moving debris while workers are on the ground in the same area.
Hazards and Control Measures

If you are being deployed to assist in recovery efforts you need to protect yourself. If you are injured or become ill you will not be able to accomplish your objective to assist others.

The following list represents potential hazards of working in the damaged area. We will focus only on those you are most likely to encounter.
Heat stress and/or heat stroke
Sunburn
Working in piles of unstable debris
High noise levels
Confined spaces
Potential chemical exposures
Standing water
Downed overhead power lines
Carbon monoxide from generators
Burning hurricane debris
Operating chain saws

Dangers of working around heavy equipment like cranes and bucket trucks
Mold
Trench Foot
Blood-borne disease
Food-borne disease
Water-borne disease
Insect-borne disease
Animal-borne disease
Snakes
Stress

The booklet developed by the WETB will be used for each specific hazard that needs to be addressed.
Personal Protective Equipment

Control Methods
The first option is always to eliminate the hazard requiring the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Typical items of PPE are:
- Respirators
- Gloves
- Boots
- Safety glasses
- Hard hat
- Etc.

Whenever PPE is required the selection must be made by someone with knowledge in selection and must be based on a hazard assessment
Toxicology and Health Effects
During disaster relief efforts there are lots of opportunities to be overexposed to a variety of substances that are toxic and could have an adverse effect on our health.

An introductory class like this cannot cover in detail the vast number of possibilities. You need to be aware that the potential is very real and request air monitoring whenever you suspect the presence of anything toxic.
Do not rely solely on your sense of smell to detect the presence of toxic substances. Be aware of your surroundings and recognize signs of potential high levels of toxic substances such as:

Dead birds and animals
Damaged chemical containers
Discoloring of water
Discoloring of drywall
Etc.
Chemicals can enter the body in three ways:

1. **INHALATION**: through the lungs
2. **INGESTION**: through the mouth
3. **ABSORPTION**: through the skin

**Acute** exposures are one-time or infrequent exposures to large amounts of a chemical.

**Chronic** exposures occur repeatedly but usually involve much smaller amounts of a chemical.
Workers
Rights/Action Planning
The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace free of recognized hazards and to follow OSHA standards. Employer’s responsibilities also include providing training, medical examinations and recordkeeping.

For more information about OSHA, go to www.osha.gov or call 1-800-321-6742.