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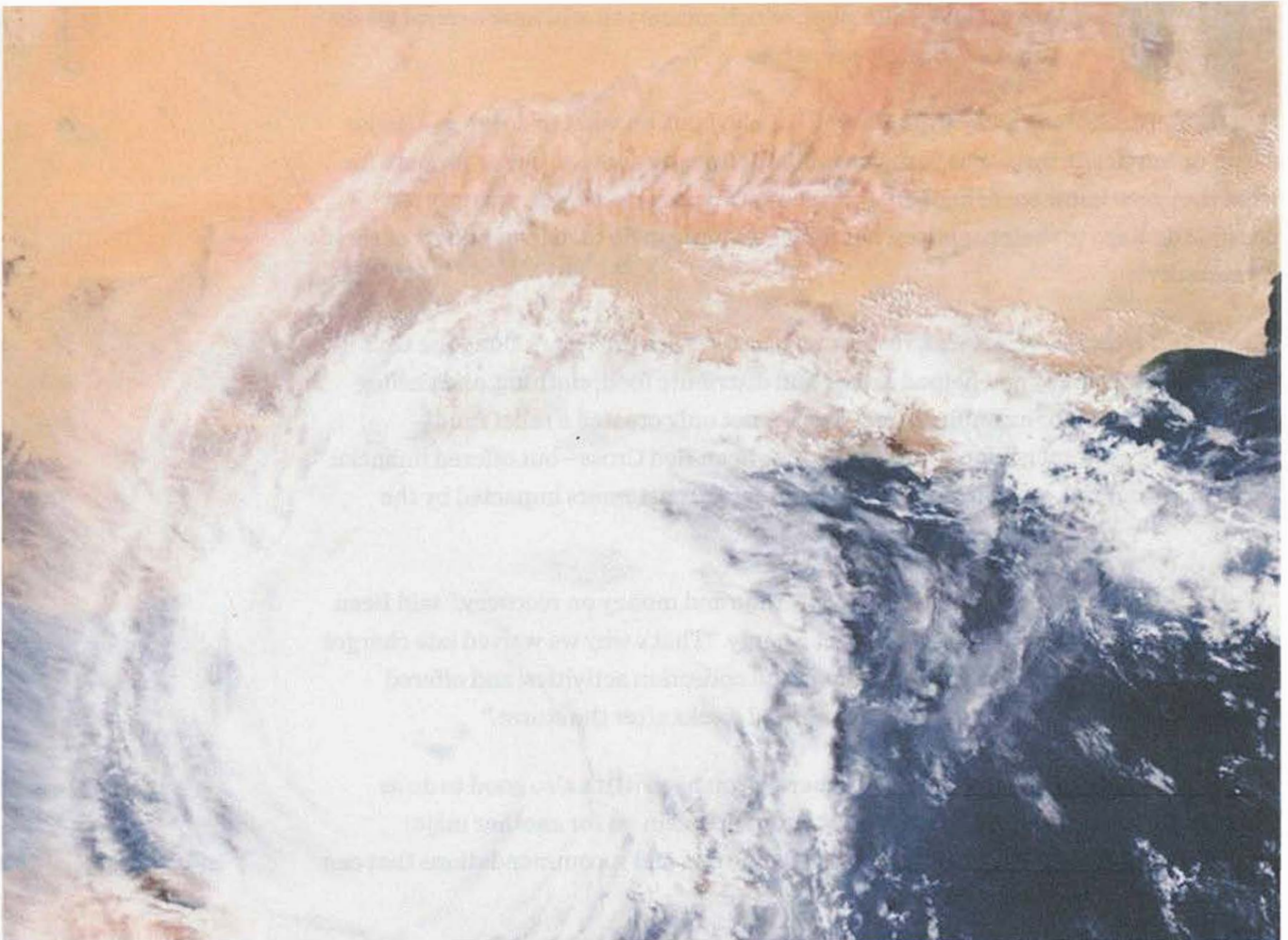
Hurricane Season 2018: What to Do Before, During and After

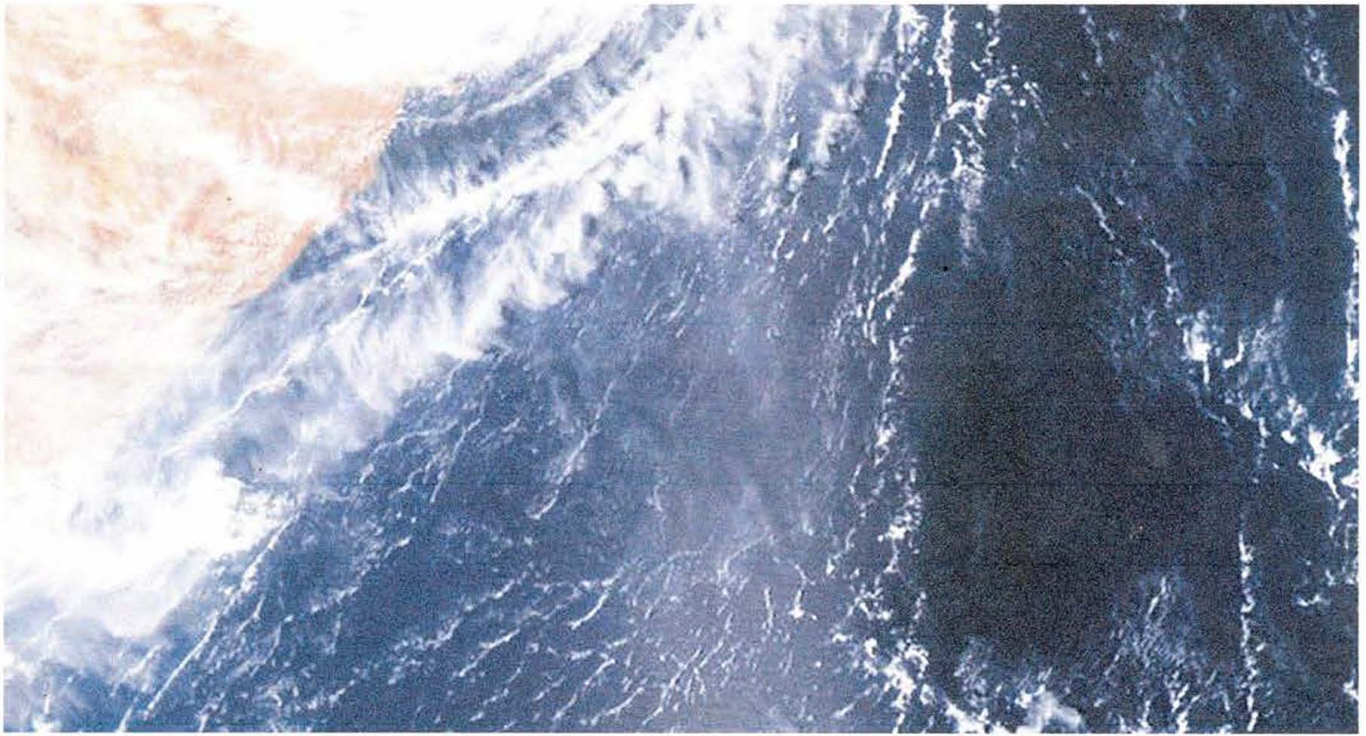
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DATE JUN 5, 2018





While the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey may seem barely behind many Texans, another hurricane season began June 1 and will run through November. And the good news? According to the *Texas Hurricane Handbook*, most major storms hit Texas in August and September, which means you still have several weeks to get adequately prepared.

One thing Texans took away from Harvey is a playbook on what to do when a major storm or hurricane threatens to make landfall. Homeowners can better prepare for what they now know *could* happen. Businesses can prepare as well, not only for possible damage to their premises, but for what they can do to help members of their community.

During and after Harvey, stores, restaurants, and service providers along the Gulf Coast donated money and helped gather and distribute food, clothing, and shelter for those in need. For example, Direct Energy not only created a relief fund—matching its customers’ donations to the American Red Cross—but offered financial relief to residential, small business, and commercial customers impacted by the storm.

“We wanted people to be able to focus their time and money on recovery,” said Beau Gjerdingen, Senior Meteorologist, Direct Energy. “That’s why we waived late charges and fees, suspended power disconnections and collection activities, and offered flexible and deferred payment plans for several weeks after the storm.”

While it’s good to know that help is out there if you need it, it’s also good to do as much as you can to prepare your home, family and business for another major weather event. To that end, we’ve collected some tips and recommendations that can help you stay safe during the 2018 hurricane season.

Before the Storm

Avoid confusion, long lines, and empty shelves by organizing certain things at the beginning of hurricane season.

First, review evacuation procedures with your family. You can find the evacuation protocol for your area online. Make sure the whole family knows exactly what to do, because you'll have to move quickly when the evacuation order comes.

Next, put together the items and documents you'll need if the power goes out or if you have to evacuate. A partial list follows. For a more comprehensive list, along with more tips and recommendations for storm season, check out Direct Energy's dedicated website, "How to Prepare for a Hurricane."

Items to have in a "Hurricane Kit"—a large plastic bin with a secure lid, for instance:

- Bottled water, one gallon per person for up to three days
- Cell phone and charger (Is your phone set up to receive WEA alerts?)
- Spare keys
- Important phone numbers
- Plastic bags
- Help whistle
- Medications and copies of prescriptions
- Flashlight and batteries
- Non-perishable food items
- Manual can opener
- Clean clothes
- Bedding
- Important documents and records in a waterproof container
- First-aid kit

And remember, if you have pets, plan ahead for how to care for them in case of evacuation.

During the Storm

If you are not evacuating the city or going to a designated shelter: