



# Hurricane Risk and Hazard Information Making It Useful

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# Research Goal & Objectives

Generate a model of risk and emergency communication foregrounding the ways that different sectors of the public **seek, access, and respond** to information processes and products related to hurricanes and tropical storms.

- Objective 1** Identify, rank, rate sources of emergency information used by the public.
- Objective 2** Identify demographic and communication factors that influence risk perception and response. Examine official and unofficial information sources, media, personal beliefs, local norms and the relationships among factors.
- Objective 3** Assess the public's trust in and ability to use information sources.
- Objective 4** Evaluate strategies for communicating about risks and emergencies.
- Objective 5** Disseminate recommendations from research.



# Emerging Concepts Relevant to the Warning Process

## #1 There is no general public.

Two publics use watches and warnings

**Public 1:** Individuals, households, businesses, organizations

**Public 2:** Government agencies for emergency management

## #2 One size does not fit all.

- Within publics 1 and 2, there are subgroups.
- Their information needs and uses differ.



# Public 1

## People in Harm's Way

A limited English population of Latino/Latina year-round residents in 1 North Carolina coastal plain county  
(*N=21 interview*)

- Interpret watch/warning text accurately (100%)
- Interpret forecast map inaccurately (majority)
- Use these information sources: radio (local Spanish stations); television (national Spanish or local English channels); telephone alerts by schools; friends/family; internet websites
- Disaster plan: 0%
- Act on watch/warning: prepare (money, food); evacuate (100%)

Year-round residents in 20 North Carolina coastal counties  
(*N=133 interview, N=1079 survey*)

- Interpret watch/warning text accurately (75%)
- Interpret forecast map inaccurately (majority)
- Use these information sources: television (local, national); radio (local station); friends/family; internet websites
- Disaster plan: 68%
- Act on watch/warning: seek more information (66%); prepare (shelter in place 33%); evacuate (7%)



# Businesses and Organizations

## Research participants

### 609 Phone Interviews

- 20 CAMA Counties

### 116 Interviews and focus groups

- 6 counties: Bertie, Carteret, Currituck, Dare, New Hanover, Pitt

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#### Number of Employees

1-10

11-40

41-80

81-<1000

#### Formal Written Plan

35 %

67 %

83 %

100 %





# Emerging Concepts

## Typology for Planning and Decision Making

### Affiliation & Information Seeking Behavior

#### **Independent**

Low levels of input from others about plans but use of more information & more active information gathering

#### **Collaborative**

Higher levels of input from others about plans; use of more information sources & more active information gathering

#### **Isolated**

Little input from others about plans; fewer information sources & less active information gathering

#### **Cooperative**

Higher levels input from others about plans but use of fewer information sources & less active information gathering



## Findings

### Affiliation & Information Seeking as Planning Predictors

#### Collaborative & Cooperative Organizations:

- Scored higher on affiliation
- 26—28% more likely, respectively, to have formal, written emergency plans

#### Isolated Organizations:

- Lowest scores for affiliation and information sources and seeking
- Less likely to have a formal written plan than any other type of organization

