

### 3. Variations in the Curves

The haste in which evacuees depart is mainly a function of the perceived urgency of leaving sooner rather than later. Variations from storm to storm are usually a function of forecasts. If a forecast changes to indicate that landfall will occur sooner than previously anticipated, more people will start leaving. If intensity of a storm increases, indicating that additional areas of a community need to evacuate, departures from those areas will increase. These changes influence public response primarily through evacuation notices and instructions provided by local officials. Officials can significantly affect the distribution of departures by when they issue evacuation notices and how they word the notices and related announcements.

In each threat scenario occupants of less vulnerable areas (e.g., inland) will tend to wait longer to evacuate than those living in more hazardous locations (e.g., beaches). Variation in the curves is a function of variation in the perceived urgency of evacuating promptly, not demographics.

People prefer not to evacuate at night but will do so if necessary. Examples are Eloise, Elena, and Opal. Relatively few people leave prior to the issuance of evacuation notices by officials. People are willing to leave before watches and warnings are posted by the National Hurricane Center if asked to do so by local officials.

### 4. Examples of Actual Response Curves

Respondents to the SRES survey were not asked when they departed in past evacuations because too much time had passed between the evacuations and the interviews to trust the accuracy of recollections. The questions would also have made the interviews unacceptably lengthy. There are ample actual response curves that have been documented in other surveys.

#### Two-day Evacuations

If officials issue evacuation notices more than 24 hours prior to anticipated landfall, evacuation departures will be distributed over a period longer than 24 hours. Some evacuees will leave shortly after the evacuation notice during daylight hours, then departures will essentially stop on the evening of the first day, and then resume on the morning of the second day.

Most of the recent evacuations in Florida and elsewhere have taken place over a period of more than 24 hours. This has been the result of evacuation notices having been issued more than 24 hours prior to arrival of the storms. Curves were constructed for 11 different coastal regions in Florida, for example, including four regions in Florida, and all 11 curves were distributed over more than a 24-hour period. All four of the 2004 major hurricanes in Florida (Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne) had evacuations that covered more than 24 hours. Evacuation departures in Katrina in Mississippi and Louisiana and in Rita in Texas in 2005 occurred over a period of two days or more. The

same was true of Bertha and Fran in South Carolina in 1996, Georges in Florida in 1998, Lili in Texas and Louisiana in 2002, and Isabel in Virginia and Maryland in 2003.

### **One-day Evacuations**

The prevalence of two-evacuations stems from good forecasts and a precautionary approach by public safety officials, particularly in stronger storms. If the National Hurricane Center goes forward with plans to extend the lead times for Hurricane Watches and Warnings by 12 hours, early issuance of evacuation notices will probably continue.

However, good early forecasts won't always be the case, or for other reasons evacuations notices won't be issued early enough to afford the luxury of having two days in which to evacuate. In those instances evacuations in certain areas will need to be rushed to completion following issuance of evacuation notices, and the duration of evacuations will be less than two days. If the goal of clearance time calculations is to estimate the minimum amount of time necessary to complete an evacuation safely, response curves of shorter duration than two days should be assumed.

The quickest of the one-day curves assumes that all evacuees depart within 12 hours of an evacuation notice being issued, with just 10% having left prior to the evacuation notice. Examples of approximately 12-hour response curves are Broward and Miami-Dade Counties in Andrew in 1992, Pinellas County in Elena in 1985, and Escambia County in Frederic in 1979. Storms in which evacuation departures were distributed over a 12 to 18 hour period include David in Miami-Dade in 1979 and Opal in northwest Florida in 1995. Eloise in northwest Florida in 1975 is a rare example of evacuation departures occurring over a period of just six hours, but in some locations as little as 45% of the public evacuated.