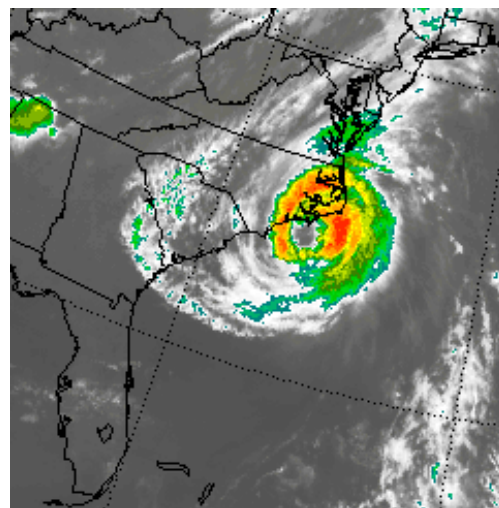
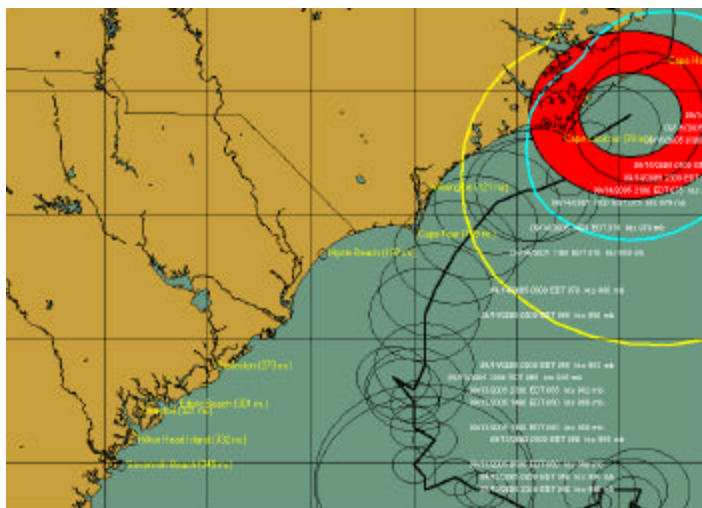


# The FIRE Report

A special report of Fire Department activities to City Council in response to Hurricane Ophelia September 15, 2005



## Hurricane Ophelia



Left: A graphic plot of Ophelia's path as it passed the Carolina Coasts. Right: Enhanced Satellite view.

Our initial response began Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM with a meeting at the Georgetown County Emergency Operations Center. We received information that the Governor may be planning a mandatory evacuation for Sunday morning.

Ophelia's slow pace delayed any further response until Monday when the Governor ordered a voluntary evacuation of areas East of Highway 17.

Ophelia was forecast to brush South Carolina with, at one point, 40 to 50 mph winds and heavy rain. But she only made slow progress. At night she would wobble, remaining stationary. During the day she would inch towards the South Carolina coast at a meager 2 or 3 miles per hour.

Following procedure, City Departments geared up for Tropical Storm conditions and made preparations accordingly. Police and Fire operations were enhanced with additional personnel early Tuesday morning. Electric, Public Works, Water and the Vehicle Service center readied their departments as well.

As daylight broke Wednesday morning crews began assessing damage and, as thought, very little damage occurred. At 11:00 AM, the Hurricane Warning was dropped to a Tropical Storm Warning, which was lifted at 5:00 PM.

Officially we recorded sustained winds at 32 mph and a total rainfall of 1.23 inches.



## Public Information



WGEO rotated a 10 minute audio briefing containing storm information 6 times an hour.

The audio briefing contains:

- Station Identification with notation of Emergency Broadcast
- The City of Georgetown Local Statement (English)
- The City of Georgetown Local Statement (Spanish)
- The National Hurricane Center Public Advisory
- The National Weather Service Wilmington CWA (County Warning Area) Local Statement
- The National Weather Service Georgetown Weather Forecast
- The National Hurricane Center Tropical Outlook

Each statement is issued every three hours on staggered hours so we updated the station about every hour.

Our emergency broadcast began September 10 at 11:15 am with the initial Hurricane Watch.

The total broadcast was 97.5 hours. The audio briefing ran 585 times. That represents nearly 4,100 separate messages were broadcast during the storm.

To ensure as much information, from the City, gets out to all possible media outlets, we developed the City of Georgetown Local Statement.

The statement contains official information about actions citizens should take, what preparations the City is making and information regarding shelters, flooded areas and tidal information, damage, and when city services will be available.

The COG Local Statement is a part of the audio briefing on WGEO. It is also available from the City's and the Fire Department's web sites and emailed to our Weather Users group.

After it is issued it is faxed to the following media:

The Georgetown Times, The Sun News, WGTV - AM 1400, WLWC - AM 1470, WBTW Channel 13, WPDE Channel 15, WCBT Channel 2, WCIV Channel 4, and WCSC Channel 5

For the first time, we coordinated with the First Spanish Assembly of God to have the COG Local Statement broadcast in Spanish.

We appreciate the efforts of Pastor Manuel Sierra and Pastor Brad Morris of the First Assembly of God for helping us accomplish this and get important information out to Georgetown's Hispanic community.

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*On the horizon:* A well organized system 1000 miles ESE of the Southern Windward Islands has the potential to become a depression over the next couple of days. If named, it would be Philippe. NHC 09-15-05

### Don't Forget Our Troops

Thomas Shane Singletary serving with the 178th Field Artillery Unit - Georgetown; SC Army National Guard - Iraq and Kuwait

