

Hurricanes: People refused to leave homes

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A University of Central Florida survey of emergency managers indicates many people ignore the threat of hurricanes and refuse to leave their homes.

After Florida had been battered by three hurricanes last year, many residents still ignored evacuation orders issued for Hurricane Jeanne, researchers said Wednesday.

While the earlier storms helped make residents more aware of potential dangers, emergency managers reported noticing more complacency as some residents grew weary of repeated hits.

Thirty-one percent of the emergency managers surveyed indicated many residents did not heed evacuation orders before Hurricane Jeanne. While 31 percent also reported many residents ignored evacuation orders before Hurricane Charley, that number dropped to 15 percent and 16 percent, in that order, for hurricanes Frances and Ivan before increasing sharply for Jeanne.

Also, 37 percent of emergency managers indicated residents' use of hurricane shelters was "significantly below expectations" for Jeanne. That number was only 18 percent for Charley, 28 percent for Frances and 12 percent for Ivan.

Sixty-six Florida county emergency managers participated in the Orlando university's survey.

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