

Mississippi: Overview

Everything in the main manual and the skill guides applies in Mississippi exactly as written. What's different here is the specific hazard profile and the state, local, and legal context around it. This page is the starting point; the other three pages under Mississippi go deeper on laws, local resources, and the data behind the risks named here.

Hurricane Katrina (2005): the Gulf Coast's story, not New Orleans's

Louisiana's page on this site covers Hurricane Katrina through the lens of the levee and floodwall failures that flooded New Orleans, an engineering failure as much as a storm. Mississippi's Katrina is a genuinely different disaster mechanism: the storm made its second landfall right at the Louisiana-Mississippi state line, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast took a direct hit from the highest storm surge ever recorded in U.S. history at the time, more than 27 feet in spots, that reached six to twelve miles inland. There was no levee to fail; the surge simply erased entire waterfront communities. See the Risks page for the full data.

The 2011 Smithville tornado: the other EF5 from Alabama's outbreak

Alabama's page on this site covers the April 27, 2011 Super Outbreak through its two Alabama-based EF5s, Hackleburg-Phil Campbell and Rainsville, while noting that the outbreak's other two EF5s, Philadelphia and Smithville, struck Mississippi that same day. This page picks up that thread: the Smithville tornado tore through the small town of Smithville with 205 mph winds, destroying the large majority of the town's buildings in minutes. See the Risks page for the full data.

What this means for how you use the rest of this manual

The manual's Tier structure and the skill guides apply without modification. What's different in Mississippi: a Gulf Coast location needs the same storm-surge evacuation seriousness this manual gives coastal Louisiana and Florida, since Mississippi's own coast has already recorded the nation's highest measured surge, and Mississippi's tornado risk is genuinely severe enough to have produced one of only four EF5-rated tornadoes in the single largest outbreak in U.S. history.

Sources

- Hurricane Katrina Mississippi Gulf Coast surge, deaths, and destruction: Britannica; WLOX
- 2011 Smithville tornado data: Wikipedia; Tornado Talk

Mississippi: Laws & Legal Considerations

Rainwater harvesting: actively encouraged, not just permitted

Mississippi places no state-level restriction on residential rainwater harvesting, and the state’s own Department of Environmental Quality promotes rain barrel use as part of its stormwater management guidance.

Rule	Mississippi
Source water	Rooftop or other catchment
Permit required	No, at the state level
Permitted uses	Non-potable: irrigation and similar uses
State posture	Actively promoted by MDEQ's stormwater guidance, not merely tolerated

Where to find it: the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (mdeq.ms.gov) publishes stormwater and rain barrel guidance.

Water rights: riparian with a drought-triggered proportional rule

Mississippi water law is built on riparian doctrine: landowners adjacent to a water source may make reasonable use of it, and natural uses like drinking water, livestock, and garden irrigation are generally treated as reasonable by default.

Concept	How it works in Mississippi
Basic rule	Riparian landowners may use any quantity of water so long as it doesn't interfere with other riparian landowners' rights
Drought rule	During drought conditions, extraction can be restricted so all riparian owners share the reduced flow proportionally to their stream-bank ownership
Gulf Coast riparian rights	Separately defined by statute (Miss. Code §49-15-9) given the coast's tidal and littoral geography

Permitless carry since 2016

Mississippi has recognized permitless carry since July 1, 2016.

Requirement	Detail
Standard	Permitless carry, open or concealed, for anyone 18+ legally eligible to possess a firearm
Optional permits	A shall-issue Firearms Permit and an Enhanced Firearms Permit remain available, the latter extending access to a few additional sensitive locations
Why get an optional permit anyway	Reciprocity while traveling to states that don't recognize Mississippi's permitless standard for its own residents

Same April 2011 outbreak, a different state's page

Mississippi’s Smithville tornado struck the same day as the Hackleburg-Phil Campbell and Rainsville EF5s covered on Alabama’s page, part of the same nationwide Super Outbreak. This page doesn’t restate that outbreak’s full national data; see Alabama’s Risks page for the broader event context.

Sources

- Mississippi rainwater harvesting posture: Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
- Mississippi riparian water law and drought-sharing rule: Texas Real Food; Justia, Miss. Code §49-15-9
- Mississippi permitless carry (2016) and optional permits: GunCarrier

Mississippi: Local Resources

MEMA: Mississippi Emergency Management Agency

MEMA coordinates the state's all-hazards emergency management program, including an extensive training catalog for state and local emergency managers, public officials, volunteer relief organizations, and related professionals.

Where to find it: msema.org.

Mississippi State University Extension Service: Master Gardener Program

MSU Extension runs the same category of program as every other state covered on this site.

- **Mississippi Master Gardener Program:** 40 hours of initial educational training, followed by 40 hours of volunteer service within one year to become certified. After the first year, maintaining certification requires 20 volunteer hours and 12 continuing-education hours annually.

Where to find it: extension.msstate.edu/community/leadership/master-gardener lists county chapters.

CERT: a joint MSU Extension and MEMA program

Mississippi's CERT program is delivered through a partnership between MSU Extension and MEMA, giving it a more centrally coordinated structure than the fully county-by-county CERT models covered on some other states' pages, while still operating under CERT's standard DHS policy that teams do not self-deploy.

Where to find it: extension.msstate.edu/community/disaster-preparedness/cert.

Sources

- MEMA structure and training programs: Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
- Mississippi Master Gardener Program requirements: Mississippi State University Extension Service

- Mississippi CERT program structure: Mississippi State University Extension Service

Mississippi: Risks & Trends

Same standard as every other page on this site: every figure below is independently sourced, and figures that vary across sources, or measure genuinely different things, are flagged as such rather than collapsed into one number that looks more precise than the underlying data actually supports.

Hurricane Katrina (2005): the Mississippi Gulf Coast

Metric	Figure
Landfall	Second landfall near the LA/MS state line, August 29, 2005
Storm surge, Biloxi/Gulfport area	26-28 ft above normal tide, the highest measured in U.S. history at the time
Surge penetration inland	6-12 mi along bays and rivers
Mississippi deaths	231-238 (sources vary on the exact figure)
Structures destroyed, beachfront Biloxi/Gulfport/Long Beach/Pass Christian	~90% of all structures between the beach and the railroad
National damage total	\$125 billion (all affected states)

Why Mississippi's Katrina looks different from Louisiana's

Louisiana’s page on this site covers Katrina as a levee and floodwall engineering failure that flooded New Orleans over days. Mississippi’s coast had no comparable levee system to fail; the storm surge itself, among the highest ever measured in the country, simply overran entire waterfront towns directly. Same storm, two structurally different disasters.

The 2011 Smithville tornado: the other Mississippi EF5

Metric	Figure
Date	April 27, 2011
Rating	EF5
Peak winds	205 mph
Maximum width	3/4 mi
Deaths	23 total along the path, 16 in Smithville itself
Injuries	137
Structures destroyed/damaged in Smithville	117 destroyed, 50 damaged
Damage	\$14.4 million (2011 USD, Smithville-area figure)

The same outbreak Alabama's page covers

The Smithville tornado struck the same day as Alabama’s Hackleburg-Phil Campbell and Rainsville EF5s, all part of the April 2011 Super Outbreak, the largest tornado outbreak in U.S. history. Mississippi’s Philadelphia tornado was the outbreak’s fourth EF5; see Alabama’s Risks page for the outbreak’s full national context rather than repeating it here.

Sources

- Hurricane Katrina Mississippi Gulf Coast data: Britannica; WLOX
- 2011 Smithville tornado data: Wikipedia; Tornado Talk