



## Types and names of cyclones in different parts of the world

Tropical cyclones with maximum sustained surface winds of less than 65 km/h are called “tropical depressions”. Once the winds reach 65 km/h they are called a “tropical storm” and given a name.

Depending on the region, if winds reach 120 km/h, they are called a:

- **hurricane** (north Atlantic Ocean, e.g. Caribbean, Florida)
- **typhoon** (northwest Pacific Ocean, e.g. Japan)
- **severe tropical cyclone** (southwest Pacific Ocean, e.g. Fiji, Australia)
- **severe cyclonic storm** (north Indian Ocean, e.g. India, Sri Lanka)
- **tropical cyclone** (southwest Indian Ocean, e.g. Indonesia).

### Naming tropical cyclones

Tropical cyclones are named to prevent the general public being confused when forecasters are describing them. Since the storms can often last a week or longer and more than one can be occurring in the same region at the same time, names reduce the confusion about which storm is being described.

The first time a proper name was used for a cyclone was by an Australian forecaster early in the 20th century. He named tropical cyclones after politicians he disliked.

During World War II, tropical cyclones were informally given women’s names by US military meteorologists who were forecasting and tracking cyclones over the Pacific. They named them after their girlfriends or wives.

Forecasters in the Australian and South Pacific region started giving women’s names to the storms in 1964 and both men’s and women’s names in 1974/1975. They normally follow an alphabetical order.

In Asia the names given have two major differences from those given to tropical cyclones in the rest of the world. Firstly, the names generally are not personal names but are the names of flowers, animals, birds, trees and sometimes foods. Secondly, the *names* are not given in alphabetical order, but in alphabetical order of the *nations* that provided names for the list.