

# Timeline of Natural Disasters in the FSM

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## TIMELINE of major natural disasters that have affected islands in the FSM














Natural disasters (such as typhoons, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and other destructive events) have been impacting people since the beginning of humanity. These two pages show the timeline of disasters that have occurred in the FSM over the last two centuries. Of course, disasters have happened before as well, but have not been recorded.

The most common disasters are typhoons and droughts. Disaster can strike any island. The outer islands are most vulnerable, but high islands can experience severe impacts too. Because of that, it is important for everyone, on every island, to be prepared. Even if you have never experienced a disaster in your lifetime, it does not mean that it cannot happen. By being prepared, you will help yourself and your community in time of need.














-  1775 Typhoon Lengkieki ravaged Pingelap Atoll and killed 90% of the people.
-  1815 Destructive typhoon struck outer islands of Chuuk and Yap. Resources were devastated and many people sailed to Saipan and settled there.
-  1845 Another strong typhoon struck the region. During this period, more people migrated to Saipan. Their descendants in Saipan are now known as Carolinians.
-  1874 Typhoon hit the Mortlock Islands. It destroyed homes and taro patches and caused many fatalities.
-  1882 Typhoon struck Pohnpei.
-  1891 Typhoon struck Kosrae. Many people's homes were damaged.
-  1898 Typhoon smashed into a group of Ulithians traveling to Fais on canoes. About 120 people were lost at sea.
-  1899 Typhoon struck Yap, just as the German officials were touring the island. Germany had acquired the Mariana and Caroline islands that year.
-  1905 Typhoon struck Pohnpei and destroyed new administration buildings built by the Germans.
-  1907 Typhoon struck the outer islands of Yap on Good Friday. Many people were killed in Ulithi. Afterwards, the Germans relocated some survivors to Yap and Saipan. Population of Ulithi was reduced from 260 to 70 inhabitants. Woleai also suffered terribly and 230 people were killed there. The Mortlock Islands were also devastated. More than 170 people died on Satawan and Lukunor atolls.
-  1935 Storm struck Etal, Satawan, and Lukunor atolls, then went on to strike the islands of Chuuk Lagoon.
-  1947-1948 Four typhoons hit Yap one after another (on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>). This caused considerable damage to property and food resources. Overall, 60% of the houses on island were destroyed.









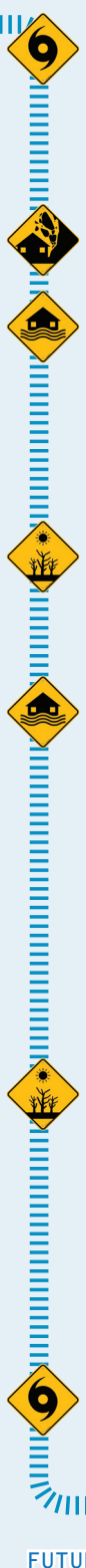
-  1953 Typhoon hit Ulithi. One canoe with five men was lost at sea.
-  1958 Typhoon hit Lamotrek Atoll, Elato Atoll and Satawal Island. Maximum recorded wind speed was greater than 115 miles per hour. Damage to property and vegetation was extensive and visible for several years.
-  1960 Typhoon struck Ulithi Atoll and caused serious damage.
-  1963 Typhoon Olive devastated Saipan. There was great damage in the FSM as well, and major disaster was declared.
-  1964 Typhoon Louise passed over the islands and hit the Philippines, causing great damage there.
-  1967 Typhoon Sally struck in March and caused damage on different islands.
-  1968 Typhoon Jean struck in April and caused damage on different islands.
-  1971 Typhoon Amy struck in May. Windspeed exceeded 110 miles per hour.
-  1976 Typhoon Marie caused damage on different islands.
-  1976 Typhoon Pamela struck the Mortlock Islands. Food crops, houses, and public buildings destroyed. Reefs were damaged.
-  1979 Typhoon Alice struck.
-  1979 Low-lying areas on different islands were flooded due to wave action. A major disaster was declared and FEMA assisted.
-  1983 A severe drought occurred. Many rivers dried up and this stimulated the use of groundwater for the future. As a result, more than 90 wells were drilled on the main islands of the FSM.










-  1986 Typhoon Lola struck in May, disaster was declared in June. This was the most destructive typhoon to hit Pohnpei in nearly 30 years.
-  1987 Typhoon Orchid struck Ulithi, Fais, and Faraulap and caused extensive damage. FEMA funded the rebuilding of homes.
-  1987 Supertyphoon Nina struck Chuuk in November.
-  1990 Typhoon Owen struck in November. Major disaster was declared a month later.
-  1990 Typhoon Russ struck in December. Major disaster was declared a month later.
-  1991 Typhoon Yuri destroyed a radio tower on Pohnpei and caused \$3 million in damages.
-  1991 Landslides in the mountains of southeast Pohnpei. Several sakau farms were destroyed. Sediment dammed two rivers and destroyed several shellfish-rich areas along the coast.
-  1992-1993 Drought in Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Chuuk. State of emergency was declared and relief sent to Chuuk State.
-  1992 Typhoon Axel struck Kosrae and Pohnpei states. On Kosrae there were loss of crops, trees, and vegetation; some buildings destroyed. Pingelap and Mwoakilloa had some buildings destroyed and airstrips severely damaged by storm surge. More than half of low-lying vegetation was uprooted. In Pohnpei, power supply was disrupted and buildings in low-lying areas flooded. Steep areas experienced landslides. Nearly 10 inches of rain fell in 24-hours.
-  1996 Typhoon Fern struck Yap in December 1996. Major disaster was declared.
-  1997 Over 30 different landslides and debris flows in Pohnpei killed 20 people and destroyed many homes. These events were triggered by rain from typhoon Isa and tropical storm Jimmy.



-  1998 Drought across the FSM. Shortages of drinking water and food (coconuts, yams, taro, bananas, breadfruit, etc.) happened on many different islands and major drought emergency was declared by the government. All four states were affected, including all atolls. Many areas, even schools and public facilities, were without water or had to ration water. Rivers dried up. Wells had low water levels and high salinity. On Kosrae, islanders drilled deep wells to cope. There were major concerns about public health crisis due to contaminated water. Taro and other crops were stressed. There were increased risks of fire and Chuuk suffered lots of fires during this period. Conditions were the worst on outer islands. The government had to sent emergency water supply to outer islands in Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap states.
-  2002 Typhoon Mitag struck Yap State. Many outer islands suffered badly and emergency food supplies were delivered to Eauripik, Elato, Ifalik, Lamotrek, Nguluw, Satawal, and Woleai.
-  2002 Major drought occurred and a disaster was declared in May. About \$3 million was spent for emergency relief.
-  2002 Tropical Storm Chata'an hit Chuuk. Heavy rains from the storm caused over 30 landslides and mudslides, killing 47 people and injuring dozens of others. This is the deadliest disaster in Chuuk's recent history. One death occurred on Pohnpei as well. Total damages in the FSM were \$100 million.
-  2002-2003 Typhoon Pongsona struck in early December 2002 and a major disaster was declared in January 2003. Chuuk State suffered the most damage.
-  2003 Typhoon Lupit struck Chuuk and Yap, where hundreds of homes were destroyed. The worst damage was suffered by Ulithi and Fais. Throughout the affected islands, food crops were harmed and drinking water contaminated.



-  2004 Typhoon Sudal struck Yap. The storm lasted about 5 hours and windspeed exceeded 125 miles per hour. The typhoon hit during a high spring tide and submerged many coastal areas under 6-12 feet of water.
-  2004 A major landslide occurred in Pehleng area on Pohnpei.
-  2007 Extremely high tides across FSM cause flooding, erosion, loss of beaches, destruction of croplands, and salt contamination of drinking water. In some of the outer islands of Chuuk State more than 90% of all taro was destroyed by saltwater inundation.
-  2007 Drought majorly impacted Chuuk and aid had to be provided to outer islands across the state. Saltwater in the soil damaged taro patches and breadfruit trees.
-  2008 Extremely high tides led to a state of emergency throughout the FSM. Soil and food resources were damaged across the country. In Kosrae, several houses were flooded and the shoreline was seriously eroded in places. In the outer islands of Yap, many areas were flooded and coconut trees uprooted. On Kapingamarangi, the taro patches were completely flooded and 90% of taro was lost. The concrete bridge connecting two islands collapsed.
-  2010-2011 Drought affected the outer islands of Yap and Pohnpei states, where water supplies, food crops (taro, breadfruit, banana, tapioca, and coconut crops), and vegetation were damaged. Most affected was Kapingamarangi Atoll, where rainfall during the rainy season was less than 20% of normal and food plants suffered severe damage.
-  2012 Typhoon Bopha caused major damage to housing and livelihoods in the lower Mortlock Islands region of Chuuk State.



**FUTURE:** We do not know what future will bring. The past teaches us that dangerous natural events will happen again and again. We must be prepared for them in order to minimize their impact and avoid disasters.