

Hurricanes and Storms Impacting Optical Buying Habits

A vast majority of US adults (81.8%) reported there were no changes in their rate of purchases for general retail goods two months after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria hit the US. About 13.1% reported that spending increased either slightly or a lot more three months after the hurricanes hit the U.S. Residents located in areas most heavily impacted by the storm experienced greater spend on retail goods in comparison to the national average. Nearly 30% of respondents from Florida reported spending more post-storms on retail goods; specifically, 34.9% of residents from Miami, 30% of residents from Tampa, and 24.9% of respondents from Jacksonville reported a greater rate of purchases for general retail goods. In general, respondents from Coastal/Storm Zones reported increased spending three months post-storms (27.6%).

When adults were queried about their rate of purchases for eyewear post-storms, across the board respondents mentioned there was no change in eyewear buying habits (92.5%). In fact, only 4.8% of all respondents reported an increase in rate of purchase for eyewear products. Respondents under 45 years old mentioned spending increased for eyewear at a higher rate than overall average, 9.4%. It is interesting to note, respondents from the Coastal/Storm Zones reported increased spending for eyewear, about 6.8%, which is slightly higher than overall average. Specifically, respondents from New Orleans and Miami, reported increased spending on eyewear purchases post-storm, 12.5% and 10.9% respectively.

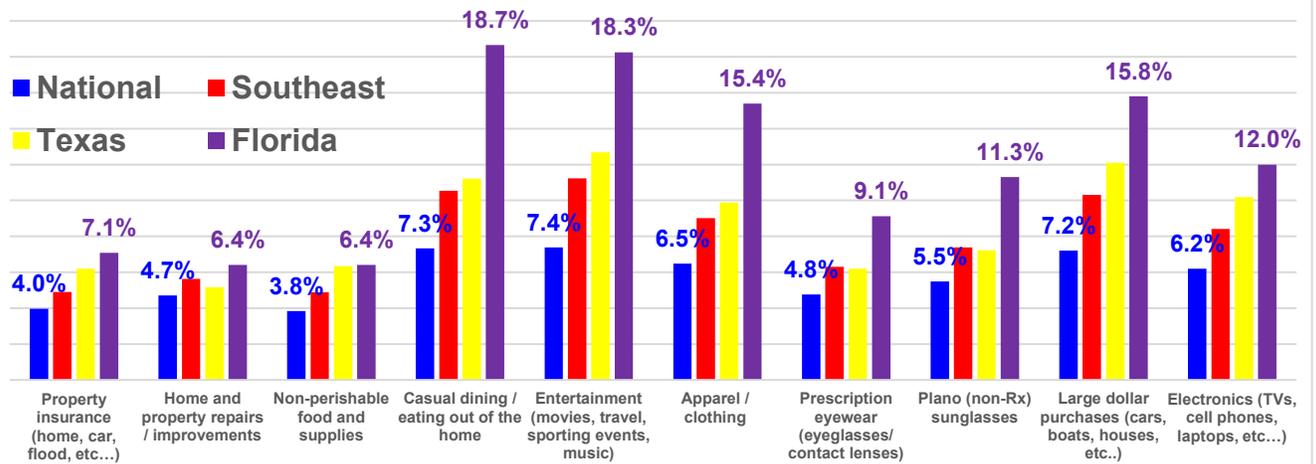
To conclude our study we queried respondents about how the 2017 storms impacted spending immediately after the storms and in the future for ten product categories. Nearly 50% of respondents mentioned spending had increased for non-perishable food and supplies immediately after the storm. 37.1% of respondents mentioned spending will increase for home and property repairs/improvements. With respect to eyewear purchases, 57.8% of respondents and 55.9% of all respondents, respectively, said spending has remained the same for prescription eyewear and plano sunglasses. 17.3% and 15.4% of respondents reported increased spending for prescription eyewear and plano sunglasses, respectively. It is interesting to note, respondents within the Coastal/Storm zone reported significantly less spending for prescription eyewear and plano sunglasses in comparison to the overall average, 10.3% and 11.4% respectively. Those figures were even lower for respondents from Florida, 8.9% for prescription eyewear and 9.6% for plano sunglasses.

When consumers were asked about future spending and the storms' impact, most respondents suggested spending will remain the same across product categories, with the exception of some categories. Nearly 42% of respondents mentioned spending will increase in the future for non-perishable food and supplies. Additionally, 35.2% of respondents mentioned spending will increase for property insurance and home and property repairs, 35.2% and 37.3% respectively. This was especially true for residents in Texas where 37.5% of respondents reported more future spending on property insurance. In general, 40.7% of respondents from Coastal/Storm Zones reported greater spending on home repairs and improvements.

With respect to eyewear purchases, about one-fifth of all respondents intend to increase spending on prescription eyeglasses and about sixteen-percent plan to increase spending on plano sunglasses. In areas within the storm zone, that figure is significantly less. Only 14.4% plan to spend more on prescription eyewear and 9.9% plan to spend more on plano sunglasses. Within the storm zone, residents from Florida reported an even smaller increase in spending for those categories, 11.5% and 6.7% respectively.

Data for this article was developed from the October 2017 VisionWatch Storm Impact Report. Based on a demographically representative sample of 10,390 US adults, and conducted during October of 2017, The Vision Council deployed a consumer survey about the 2017 hurricane storms (Harvey, Irma and Maria) that impacted the USA during 2017. Participants were asked how the storms influenced their purchasing decisions, especially within the optical industry, and about their buying behaviors immediately before the storm and how their behaviors changed post-storm. For more information about the report, please contact Steve Kodey, Senior Director of Industry Research at The Vision Council, at 703-740-1095.

*Percentage of Population That Have REDUCED
Spending Money on Items Below As a Result of
Recent Hurricane/Storms/Weather*



Percentage of Population Whose Eyewear Purchases
Are Influenced by Any of the Factors Below

