

Blog Help Files: Universal Coordinated Time (UTC)

Meteorologists use Universal Coordinated Time (UTC), also called Zulu Time (Z), in lieu of local time. You will find times in UTC (or Z) on National Weather Service forecast discussions, GOES satellite imagery,* GASP images,* and HMS Smoke Text* products, among other places.

UTC is equivalent to Greenwich Mean Time. For the U.S., the time zone conversions are:

- Eastern Standard Time (EST): UTC-5
- Central Standard Time (CST): UTC-6
- Mountain Standard Time (MST): UTC-7
- Pacific Standard Time (PST): UTC-8
- Alaska Standard Time (AKST): UTC-9
- Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time (HST): UTC-10

For Daylight Savings Time, add an hour. So, for example, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) becomes UTC-4.

Figure 1 is a GOES visible satellite image of the Caribbean for 13:45 UTC, August 18, 2009, showing Hurricane Bill at approximately 15° N latitude and 51° W longitude. Eastern Daylight Time is UTC-4, so 13:45 UTC converts to 9:45 AM EDT.

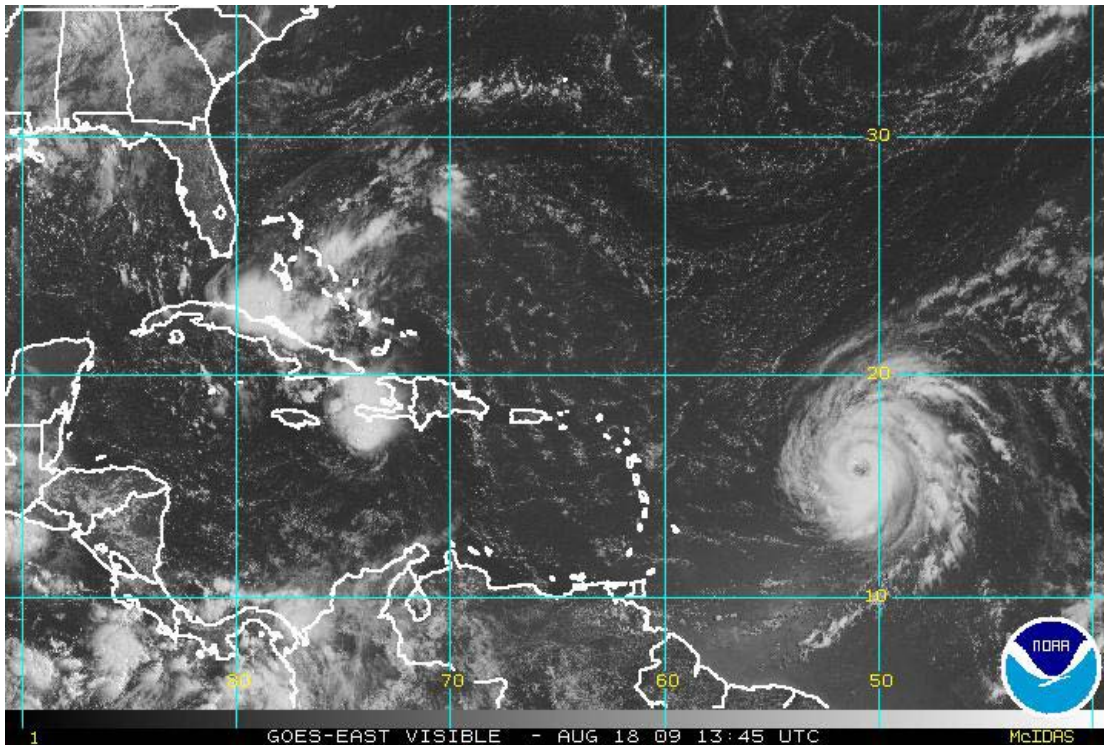


Figure 1. GOES visible satellite image of the Caribbean for 13:45 UTC, August 18, 2009

*For more information about:

- GOES, see the **GOES Imagery Help File**
- GASP, see the **Aerosol Optical Depth Help File**
- HMS, see the **Hazard Mapping System Fire and Smoke Product Help File**