

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEMA OFFERS TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM HURRICANES

Important Information for Homeowners and Boat Owners

FRAMINGHAM, MA - Throughout this year's Atlantic Hurricane Season, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) urges homeowners and boat owners to protect their property from strong winds, damaging rains, and flooding that hurricanes or tropical storms can bring to New England.

"There are several steps which we can all take to help make our homes and property more storm resistant," said MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz. "Early planning and preparation can be the key to your safety."

Here are some examples of how to protect your property:

- Learn the particular hurricane risks for your area. Find out if your home is subject to storm surge or inland flooding by contacting your local Emergency Management Director.
- It is important to "[Know Your Zone](#)". As part of the Commonwealth's hurricane preparedness campaign, MEMA, in coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA and local public safety officials, Hurricane Evacuation Zone maps which are located on the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema. Residents and visitors are encouraged to find out whether they live or work in a hurricane evacuation zone by using these interactive maps. Those who are located in potential evacuation zones should plan for and be prepared to evacuate during a hurricane and should listen to local public safety officials and weather forecasts before and during a hurricane for evacuation information. The best way to be prepared for the possibility of a hurricane [evacuation](#) is to know your evacuation zone and develop your [emergency plan](#) (such as your destination and travel routes) ahead of time.
- Homeowners in coastal communities can prepare their homes for hurricanes and other coastal hazards by reading the [MA Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Coastal Hazards](#).
- Citizens throughout the Commonwealth, including inland communities, can be at risk for hazards of hurricanes such as flooding, destructive winds and [power outages during a hurricane](#).
- Visit www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531 to learn more about flood risks, flood maps, flood zones, and flood insurance. Consider buying flood insurance, even if your property is not in a flood zone. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- For insurance purposes, make a record of your personal property. Take photos or videos of the interior and exterior of your home and personal belongings. Keep an itemized list of your furniture, clothing and valuables to assist adjusters in case of a claim.
- Protect your insurance policies and other important documents in a secure place like a safe deposit box or a watertight box. Many people back up important documents online.

- Keep trees and shrubbery around your home trimmed. Remove diseased or damaged tree limbs that could be blown down, causing damage, during a storm.
- Clear clogged rain gutters. Hurricanes/tropical storms often bring torrential rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.
- Make sure storage sheds, children's playhouses or other outbuildings are securely anchored, either to a permanent foundation or with straps and ground anchors.
- Make temporary plywood covers to protect windows and sliding doors. Drill holes for screws or lag bolts in each cover and around each window. To save time, use a numbering or lettering system that shows which cover goes with which window. Store the mounting screws or lag bolts with the covers in a place where they are readily accessible. Note: Taping of windows does not prevent them from breaking.
- Make a list of outdoor items to bring inside in case of a storm, such as lawn furniture, trash barrels, hanging plants, toys and awnings. A list will help you more quickly identify anything that can be broken or picked up by strong winds and used as a missile.
- Learn where gas pilots and water mains are located and how to safely shut off all utilities.
- Consider installing a generator in case of a power outage.
- Lock doors and windows to ensure that they are closed tight to help protect against strong winds and rain.

Tips for Boat Owners

- During the Hurricane Season, boaters should continually obtain the latest available weather forecast for your boating area from local and national weather services, including NOAA Weather Radio.
- Like homeowners, make an inventory, preferably by video, of all valuable fixed items, such as marine electronics, on board your boat.
- If possible, your boat should be removed from the water and secured away from potential storm surge before the hurricane hits. Make plans with your marina operator for removing your boat and understand the marina's plans in advance of a hurricane.
- If unable to remove your boat from the water, work with your marina or harbor master to learn how to secure your boat. Double-up all dock lines and chains and make sure they are of sufficient length to compensate for excessive high water.
- Ensure your vessel is as watertight as possible. Use duct tape and plugs to seal hatches, ports, windows, doors and vents.
- Remove all electronics, valuables and non-essential items. When a storm is forecast for your area, remove detachable items from your boat, such as canvas, sails, cushions, fishing rigging, radios and antennae. Lash down everything that you cannot remove, including booms, tillers, wheels, etc.
- Deflate your dinghy and store it and its outboard off the boat.
- When you are through, help your neighbor. It only takes one poorly tied boat in a marina to destroy an entire dock.
- If your boat is on a trailer, lash it securely. Use tie-downs to anchor the trailer to the ground, let the air out of the tires and weigh down the frame.
- Review your boat insurance policy to determine your coverage, liability and insurance company requirements.

- Have your insurance policies, boat registration, a recent photograph and description of the vessel, gear inventory, marina or storage lease agreement and important telephone numbers (local harbormaster, U.S. Coast Guard, National Weather Service, insurance agent) in a secure place off of the boat.
- Do not stay on the boat or try to ride out a storm on board. No matter how valuable your vessel is to you – both financially and sentimentally – it is not worth your life!

MEMA is the state agency charged with ensuring the state is prepared to withstand, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and disasters, including natural hazards, accidents, deliberate attacks, and technological and infrastructure failures. MEMA's staff of professional planners, communications specialists and operations and support personnel is committed to an all hazards approach to emergency management. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state and local government agencies, and with the private sector - individuals, families, non-profits and businesses - MEMA ensures the Commonwealth's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating threats and hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and strengthening our capacity to rebuild and recover. For additional information about MEMA, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Continue to follow MEMA updates on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA and *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA. Also, sign up for *Massachusetts Alerts* to receive emergency information on your smartphone, including severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service and emergency information from MEMA, download the *Massachusetts Alerts* free app. To learn more about *Massachusetts Alerts*, and for information on how to download the free app onto your smartphone, visit: www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.

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