



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY**



MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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GOVERNOR BAKER PROCLAIMS “HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK”

FRAMINGHAM, MA - Governor Charlie Baker has proclaimed July 17-23, 2016 to be Hurricane Preparedness Week (<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/mema/hurricane-preparedness-week-2016.pdf>) to promote the importance of preparing for the potential impacts hurricanes and tropical storms can have on the Commonwealth's residents, homes, businesses and infrastructure. In addition to preparing for the strong and damaging winds that are associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, the Commonwealth's residents must also prepare for destructive and potentially deadly coastal flooding from storm surge and inland flooding from torrential rainfall. Indeed, flooding accounts for the majority of storm-related deaths during tropical storms and hurricanes.

“The Commonwealth needs to prepare for tropical storms as well as hurricanes. Although it has been 25 years since a hurricane has made landfall in Massachusetts, history has illustrated that tropical storms can also produce devastating impacts, including heavy rainfall, deadly storm surge, and flooding, even when they do not make direct landfall in the Commonwealth” stated Massachusetts Emergency Management Director Kurt Schwartz. “More often than not, water - not wind - poses the greatest risk to life and property. We experienced firsthand significant coastal and inland flooding in Massachusetts related to storms that made landfall elsewhere: Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.”

Although the Atlantic Hurricane Season runs from June 1st through November 30th, the vast majority of tropical storms and hurricanes that have impacted our region have occurred during the months of August and September. While the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seasonal outlook forecasts a near-normal number of hurricanes this season, it is important to remember that it only takes one storm to severely impact an area. For this reason, it is important for Massachusetts residents to begin preparing for the possibility of a hurricane or tropical storm now, and be prepared for this season.

The first step to preparing yourself, family, home and business is to learn more about the hazards associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, including storm surge, heavy rain, coastal erosion, inland flooding, and

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widespread power outages. For detailed information on these hazards, visit the Hurricane Safety Tips section of MEMA's website at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/emergencies/hurricanes/>.

Know Your Evacuation Zone

Massachusetts has defined hurricane evacuation zones, designated as Zone A, Zone B and Zone C, for areas of the Commonwealth at risk for storm surge flooding. If evacuations are necessary because of an oncoming tropical storm or hurricane, local or state officials will use the hurricane evacuation zones to call for people living, working or vacationing in these areas to evacuate. To find out if you live, work or vacation in a hurricane evacuation zone, visit the 'Know Your Zone' interactive map which is located on MEMA's website at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/emergencies/hurricanes/hurricane-evacuation-zones.html>.

Build an Emergency Kit

Building an emergency kit is an important component of personal preparedness. Emergency kits should include items that will sustain you and your family in the event you are isolated for three to five days without power or unable to go to a store. An emergency kit is particularly important during hurricane season; hazards associated with hurricanes and tropical storms pose the potential for extended power outages, as well as flooding and debris-covered roads which could make accessing stores difficult during the initial days after a storm.

While some items, such as bottled water, food, flashlight, radio and extra batteries, first aid kit, sanitation items and clothing should be in everyone's kit, it is important to customize the kit to meet your needs and the needs of your family. Consider adding medications, extra eyeglasses, contact lenses and solution, dentures, extra batteries for hearing aids or wheelchairs, and other medical information and supplies such as oxygen tanks, lists of allergies, medications and dosages, medical insurance information, and medical records. Additionally, your emergency kit should include supplies for your pet, such as food, pet carriers and other supplies, medications, and vaccination and medical records. For a complete emergency kit checklist, visit: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/be-prepared/kit/>.

You should also consider making a mobile "go-bag" version of your emergency kit in case you need to evacuate to a shelter or other location. At least annually, check your kit for any food, water, batteries, or other items that may need to be replaced or have expired.

Create a Family Emergency Communications Plan

Families should develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan in case family members are separated from one another during a hurricane or other emergencies. A Family Communications Plan can help family members more readily learn the location and status of their loved ones by identifying how family members will communicate and reunite after an emergency once the immediate crisis passes.

Family Emergency Communications Plans should detail the name of a relative or friend who has agreed to serve as the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person. Ideally, this person should reside out-of-state to increase the likelihood that they are not impacted by the same event. As part of your Family Emergency Communications Plan, you should create a personal support network and a list of contacts that include caregivers, friends, neighbors, service/care providers, and others who might be able to assist during an emergency. In addition to electronic copies, keep a hard copy of your list of contacts in a safe, accessible place and make sure everyone within your family knows the name, address and telephone number of the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person.

You should also designate two meeting areas for family members – one within your community (your primary location), and one outside of your community (your alternate location). An emergency may impact your neighborhood or small section of your community, so a second location outside of your community may be more accessible to all family members.

Remember, if cellular service is interrupted during an emergency, texting services may remain available. For more information on Family Emergency Communications Plan, please visit MEMA's website at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/be-prepared/plan/>.

Stay Informed

It is important to identify ways to obtain information before, during and after a hurricane or tropical storm. You should consider all the ways you might get information during an incident (radio, TV, social media, Internet, cell phone, landline, etc.) in case one or more of those systems stops working.

Contact your local officials to learn what communications and alerting tools are used in your community to warn individuals of a pending storm, evacuation or shelter in place requirements, or any other emergency information. Additionally, MEMA utilizes Massachusetts Alerts to disseminate critical information to the public through smartphones. Massachusetts Alerts is powered by a free downloadable application that is available for Android and iPhone devices. Learn more about Massachusetts Alerts at www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.

When a storm is approaching, closely monitor media reports and promptly follow instructions from public safety officials. Information on severe weather watches and warnings will be available from media sources, the National Weather Service, a NOAA all-hazards radio, and on your cell phone. These warnings can provide valuable and timely information.

In addition, you may call 2-1-1 if you have questions or need information on emergency resources. Mass 2-1-1 is the Commonwealth's primary non-emergency telephone call center during times of disasters and emergencies. 2-1-1 is multilingual, TTY compatible, free to the public, and available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

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 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, coordinating response operations, and strengthening our capacity to rebuild and recover.

For additional information about MEMA, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Also, follow MEMA on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA; *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA; and *YouTube* at www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA.