



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



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2014 HURRICANE SEASON PREPAREDNESS

FRAMINGHAM, MA – Although the Atlantic Hurricane Season is defined as June 1st to November 30th, 75% of the 40 tropical storm systems that have impacted the New England region in the past century have struck during the months of August and September. The fact that Massachusetts was impacted by Hurricane Arthur during early July, reminds us that we must not let our guard down. To increase public awareness of the potential devastating impacts of hurricanes and tropical storms and the preparedness steps we can take to mitigate those impacts and reduce the risk of property damage, injuries and loss of life, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is again making important information available to ensure the continued safety of our citizens and property.

“As recently as 2012, we witnessed the destructive power of Hurricane Sandy in neighboring states immediately to our south. While Massachusetts was fortunate to be spared the worst of that storm, it reminds us of the importance of preparing for the region’s next major storm,” stated MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Prediction Center has forecast a near-normal or below-normal 2014 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Although one might take comfort in such a forecast, history has demonstrated that frequency of storms is not the most important factor, as it only takes one hurricane or tropical storm to severely impact our area.

Massachusetts has been impacted by numerous hurricanes and tropical storms over recent decades. For example, in 1991, Hurricane Bob, a Category 2 Hurricane with winds between 91 and 110 mph, caused almost \$1 billion in damage. The inland portions of Massachusetts have also been greatly impacted by hurricanes and tropical storms, such as 2011’s Tropical Storm Irene, whose rainfall brought devastating flooding in Central and Western Massachusetts.

Because advanced planning and preparation can safeguard lives, protect property and enhance the Commonwealth’s resilience, Governor Deval Patrick has proclaimed the month of July as Hurricane Preparedness Month in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The proclamation can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/mema/hurricane-preparedness-month-july-2014.pdf>.

Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and Hurricane Arthur in 2014 are powerful reminders that Massachusetts residents and visitors must prepare for the next hurricane. MEMA encourages everyone to 1) Know Your Evacuation Zone; 2) Know Your Risk; 3) Be Prepared; and 4) Stay Informed.

Know Your Evacuation Zone

Massachusetts recently established hurricane evacuation zones for coastal communities based upon the extent of storm surge flooding (inundation) an area might experience during a hurricane or tropical storm. If a hurricane or tropical storm is forecast to impact Massachusetts, local and state officials may ask individuals living or working in hurricane evacuation zones – Zone A, Zone B and/or Zone C – to evacuate for their safety. To find out if you live or work in a hurricane evacuation zone, use the interactive Hurricane Evacuation Zone Finder at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/hurricane-evacuation-zones.html>.

Know Your Risk

Understand the hazards that are associated with hurricanes, and what risks they bring. Hurricanes and tropical storms can bring [Storm Surge and Storm Tide](#) to coastal areas, and [high winds](#) and [heavy rainfall](#) anywhere in the Commonwealth. These hazards can cause property damage, widespread loss of power, and catastrophic flooding both inland and along the coast.

Be Prepared

There are important steps everyone should take to prepare themselves and their family for the next hurricane or tropical storm. Being prepared reduces the risk of property damage, injury or death.

- Be prepared to [Evacuate](#) or [Shelter in Place](#);
- Ensure your [family is prepared](#) by building an Emergency Kit and developing a Communication Plan;
- [Prepare your home and property for a hurricane](#).

Stay Informed

Stay informed throughout Hurricane Season: know how to receive warnings and alerts, and critical information before and during a storm.

- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) via radio and television.
- Local “Reverse 9-1-1” type notification systems. These systems may require opt-in/registration in advance, so check with your local public safety officials about which systems are used in your community and how to register.
- [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#).
- MEMA’s free [Massachusetts Alerts app](#) that delivers critical information to your smartphone.
- All Hazards National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.
- U.S. Coast Guard Marine Broadcast
- Traditional media.
- MEMA’s [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) accounts or social media accounts of a public safety agency in your community.
- A message on Teletypewriters (TTY).

Other sources of important information:

- National Hurricane Center - <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>
- National Weather Service (Taunton) - <http://www.weather.gov/box/>
- National Weather Service (Albany) - <http://www.weather.gov/aly/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency - <http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

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 and Hurricane Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Continue to follow MEMA updates on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA; *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA; and *YouTube* at www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA.

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