Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

2019 Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins

Hurricane Season is a Reminder to Prepare

FRAMINGHAM – June 1st marked the official start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season which runs through November 30th. While the majority of tropical storms and hurricanes that have impacted New England occurred during the months of August and September, now is the time to begin preparing yourself, your family, your home, and your business. Throughout hurricane season, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will share preparedness information to help residents be aware of, and prepare for, the impacts of tropical storms and hurricanes.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seasonal outlook predicts a near normal number of hurricanes this season. As the outlook is for overall seasonal activity and is not a landfall forecast, all residents are encouraged to be prepared during hurricane season. Whether it is a slow or active hurricane season, it only takes one storm to make landfall and severely impact an area. Tropical Storm Irene, which produced devastating flooding in Central and Western Massachusetts in 2011, is a reminder that hurricanes and tropical storms can impact the entire Commonwealth, not just coastal regions, and that all Massachusetts residents need to prepare for the possibility of hurricane impacts. To learn more about the hazards associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, visit MEMA's hurricane webpage: www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes.

"The beginning of hurricane season is a great opportunity for all residents of the

Commonwealth to prepare for the impacts of a tropical storm or hurricane," **said MEMA Director Samantha Phillips.** "MEMA encourages everyone to learn if they live in a hurricane evacuation zone, make an emergency plan, assemble an emergency kit, and stay informed."

Know Your Evacuation Zone
Massachusetts has defined hurricane evacuation zones, designated as Zone A, Zone B and Zone C, for areas of the state at risk for storm surge flooding associated with tropical storms or hurricanes. If evacuations are necessary because of a tropical storm or hurricane, local or state officials will notify people living, working, or vacationing in evacuation zones to leave the area for their safety. Even areas not directly along a coastline may be at risk for storm surge flooding during a tropical storm or hurricane. Find out if you live, work, or vacation in a hurricane evacuation zone by visiting the 'Know Your Zone' interactive map located on MEMA's website at www.mass.gov/knowyourzone.

Make an Emergency Plan
Develop a plan with the members of your household to prepare for what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in a tropical storm or hurricane. An emergency plan should include:

- Meeting Locations
- Emergency Contact Information
- Evacuation Plans
- Shelter-in-Place Plans
- Considerations for Family Members with Access and Functional Needs, and Pets

For more information, see: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/make-a-family-emergency-plan.

Build an Emergency Kit
Build an emergency kit containing 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. Emergency kits are particularly important during hurricane season, due to potential extended power outages, flooding, and impassable debris-covered roads. While it is important to customize your kit to meet the unique needs of you and your family, every emergency kit should include bottled water, food, a flashlight, a radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, sanitation items, and clothing. Depending on your family's needs, emergency kits should also include medications, extra eyeglasses, medical equipment and supplies, children's items such as diapers and formula, food and supplies for pets and service animals, and other items you or your family members might need during a disaster. For a complete emergency kit checklist, visit: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/build-an-emergency-kit.

Stay Informed

Receiving advance warnings and timely emergency alerts and information from public officials is critical to staying safe during a tropical storm or hurricane. Every family should have multiple methods for receiving emergency alerts. Learn more about different types of alerting and information tools including the Emergency Alert System, Wireless Emergency Alerts, NOAA Weather Radio, Social Media & Traditional Media, 2-1-1 Hotline, Local Notification Systems: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/be-informed-and-receive-emergency-alerts.

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 Emergency Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema.

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