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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 3, 2015

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MEMA OFFERS TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM HURRICANES
Important Information for Homeowners

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

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

It is important to learn the hurricane risks for your area. Find out if your home may be subject to storm surge or inland flooding by contacting your local Emergency Management Director. If you live or work in a coastal community, find out whether you are in a designated hurricane evacuation zone by visiting MEMA's "[Know Your Zone](#)" interactive map.

People located in a hurricane evacuation zone should plan for, and be prepared to evacuate during a tropical storm or hurricane and listen to local public safety officials, as well as news broadcasts and weather forecasts before and during a tropical storm or hurricane for evacuation information. The best way to be prepared for a hurricane [evacuation](#) is to know your evacuation zone and develop your [emergency plan](#) (such as your destination and travel routes) ahead of time.

Citizens throughout the Commonwealth, including those in inland communities, can be at risk for hazards of hurricanes such as flooding, destructive winds and [power outages](#). 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.

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](#) which is located at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/mema/homeowners-handbook-to-prepare-for-coastal-hazards.pdf> in the 'Publications and Reports' section on the MEMA Homepage (www.mass.gov/mema).

Additionally, homeowners should consider taking the following steps to prepare for hurricane season:

- For insurance purposes, make a record of your personal property. Take photos or videos of the interior and exterior of your home and of your personal belongings. Keep an itemized list of your furniture, clothing and valuables to assist insurance adjusters in case you need to file 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 and tropical storms often bring torrential rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.
- Make sure storage sheds, children's playhouses or other outside structures 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 projectile.
- 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, and remember that generators must be used outdoors in well-ventilated areas
- Lock doors and windows to ensure that they are closed tight to help protect against strong winds and rain.

For additional information about MEMA and Hurricane Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema.

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.

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