

2020 Hurricane Season Key Messages

1. Hurricane Risk

- Peak of hurricane season is August and September
- NOAA predicts above normal hurricane season; but regardless of seasonal forecast, it only takes one storm to severely impact an area
- Entire state is at risk; storm surge threat in coastal areas and high winds, heavy rainfall, and inland flooding possible across entire state, as we saw in Irene in 2011
- While the last hurricane in Massachusetts was Bob in 1991, the Commonwealth has a history of destructive hurricanes
- Threat of tropical cyclones and other natural hazards continue during COVID-19 pandemic

2. How Residents Can Prepare

- Know Your Evacuation Zone
 - Learn if you live or work in a hurricane evacuation zone: www.mass.gov/knowyourzone
- Make an Emergency Plan
 - Develop a plan with the members of your household to prepare for what to do in a tropical cyclone including making an evacuation plan, planning for individuals with access and functional needs, and any extra considerations during COVID-19 pandemic including how you might evacuate and where you might evacuate to. If you are in a high risk population, the safest option may be to evacuate to a location without the general public such as a hotel, relatives' home or other destination. <https://www.mass.gov/info-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 and customize for your family's needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, include face coverings, masks, hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies that you may need. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/build-an-emergency-kit>.
- Stay Informed
 - 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/info-details/be-informed-and-receive-emergency-alerts>.
 - *(Communities can edit/add to this key message to talk about their local notification systems)*

3. What Government is Doing to Prepare

- MEMA and the Department of Public Health have developed guidance for the Commonwealth and municipalities for providing operating shelters and conducting evacuations during COVID-19, which will be used to adjust the Commonwealth's mass care and evacuation plans to help keep individuals both safe and healthy during a disaster.
- State agencies are adjusting plans:
 - Re-evaluating capacities of state-initiated regional shelter sites; preparing for the need for additional evacuation transportation vehicles; adding screening, sanitization, disinfection, and general public health protocols to existing mass care plans; and planning for and preparing to provide sheltering in non-congregate settings such as hotels.
- State providing guidance to communities to update their planning (*Communities can edit this key message to talk about their local planning*)
- "Regular" hurricane season planning and outreach efforts with local, state, federal, and non-governmental partners