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Governor Baker Proclaims “Hurricane Preparedness Week”

Residents Encouraged to Prepare Now

FRAMINGHAM, MA – Governor Charlie Baker has proclaimed July 16-22, 2017 to be [Hurricane Preparedness Week](#) to underscore the Commonwealth’s vulnerability to tropical storms and hurricanes and the importance of preparing for the impacts that hurricanes and tropical storms can have on the state’s residents, homes, businesses and infrastructure.

“It is never too early to start preparing yourself, family, home and business for a tropical storm or hurricane,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “As we enter into hurricane season, major storms can occur at any time, and making emergency and evacuation plans now can minimize damage and the impact on public safety.”

“MEMA actively works with our communities in Massachusetts and partners across all levels of government to enhance our readiness for the next hurricane or major storm,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “We encourage residents take the actions necessary to improve preparedness in the event of a major storm or other type of disaster.”

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2017 seasonal outlook predicts an above-normal number of Atlantic Ocean hurricanes this season. “It is important to remember that regardless of the number of storms this season, it only takes one storm to cause devastating impacts in the state,” **said Public Safety and Security Secretary Dan Bennett**, “especially if you are not prepared when it hits.”

“All residents of the Commonwealth should prepare for the impacts of a tropical storm or hurricane,” **said MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz**. “Hurricanes and tropical storms can affect the entire state, and history has shown that these powerful storms can produce devastating impacts, including deadly storm surge, heavy inland rainfall and flooding, and destructive winds, even if they do not make direct landfall in Massachusetts.”

Know Your Evacuation Zone

Massachusetts has established hurricane evacuation zones in each of the state’s coastal communities. These zones, designated as Zone A, Zone B and Zone C, identify the areas of coastal communities that are at risk for storm surge flooding from tropical storms or hurricanes. If evacuations are necessary because of an approaching 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. It is important to note that 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.

New Storm Surge Forecast Products

New for 2017, the National Weather Service will issue [storm surge watches and warnings](#) to alert residents of areas that have a significant risk of life-threatening inundation from an approaching tropical storm or hurricane.

Storm surge is often the greatest threat to life and property from a tropical cyclone, and it can occur at different times and at different locations from a storm’s hazardous winds. While most coastal residents can remain in their homes and be safe from a tropical cyclone’s winds, evacuations are often needed to keep people safe from storm surge. These watches and warnings will help local and state officials make better informed evacuation decisions, and will help people who are in harm’s way because they live or work along, or near the

coast, better understand their need to evacuate in order to avoid the deadly risks associated with storm surge flooding.

Make an Emergency Plan

It's important to have plans in case your family needs to take action before or during a storm:

- Communications Plan — Create a [family communications plan](#) so you can stay in touch and find each other in an emergency.
- Evacuation Plan — Create a family [evacuation plan](#) that details where you will go, how you will get there, what you will bring, and what you will do with your pets.
- Shelter-in-Place Plan — Make sure your family has a plan to shelter in place, which includes stockpiling items you will need to stay comfortable while you are at home. Be prepared to shelter in place for at least 72 hours.

Make sure your emergency plans address the needs of all of your family members, including seniors, children, individuals with medical needs, and people with disabilities.

Have an Emergency Kit

Hurricanes can cause extended power outages, flooding, and blocked roads. You should have an [emergency kit](#) to sustain yourself and your family for at least 72 hours in case you lose power, are stranded in your home, or nearby stores are closed or damaged. While it is important to customize your kit to meet your family's unique needs, every emergency kit should include bottled water, food, a flashlight, a radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, sanitation items, clothing, cash and a charged cell phone. 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.

Stay Informed

As a storm approaches, monitor media reports and follow instructions from public safety officials with these tools:

- Massachusetts Alerts App — Download the free [Massachusetts Alerts](#) app for your iOS or Android device. The app provides tropical storm and hurricane warnings, as well as important public safety alerts and information from MEMA.
- Social Media — Follow MEMA on Twitter ([@MassEMA](#)) and [Facebook](#) for emergency updates during hurricanes.
- Mass 2-1-1 — [Mass 2-1-1](#) is the state non-emergency call center for disasters. Call 2-1-1 to find out about shelter locations, travel restrictions, disaster assistance programs, and more. Mass 2-1-1 is free and available 24/7.
- Local Emergency Notification Systems — Check with your [local emergency management director](#) to see if your community uses an emergency notification system and how to sign up.

For more information, visit the Hurricane Safety Tips section of MEMA's website at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/emergencies/hurricanes/>.

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

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