



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



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EVACUATION STEPS FOR A HURRICANE
MEMA Offers Tips To Help Prepare You and Your Family

FRAMINGHAM, MA - "If evacuation is necessary for an approaching hurricane, or any type of natural or man-made emergency, the key is that you and your family respond quickly and responsibly," states Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Acting Director Kurt Schwartz. "Unlike many types of storms, hurricanes are closely tracked and can be followed closely by the Media, for as long as a week before reaching New England, therefore everyone is usually afforded enough warning and should not be taken off guard if you are directed to take precautionary steps, including an evacuation."

Being Alerted

State or local Public Safety officials may alert you by one or several methods. Learn what methods are utilized in your community from your community's Emergency Management Director. The various methods could include:

- Outdoor sirens or horns.
- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) - information provided on the radio and television.
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Alert Radio.
- 'All Call', 'Reverse 911', 'Code Red', etc. – one of a number of automated telephoning systems for sending recorded messages to which your community may subscribe.
- News Media.
- Residential Route Alerting, which dispatches Public Safety vehicles traveling through neighborhoods announcing messages with Public Address systems or literally 'knocking on doors'.
- U.S. Coast Guard Marine Broadcast.
- A message on Teletypewriters (TTY) for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Planning for Evacuation

- Ask your local Emergency Management Office about your community's evacuation plans.
- Learn proposed evacuation routes and locations of potential public shelters.
- If you do not have personal transportation, make plans with friends or your local government.

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- Develop a Family Communications Plan.
- Make a plan with family members for a destination if you have to leave your community. (In your planning, consider different scales of evacuation, i.e.: neighborhood, community, county, etc.)
- Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit.
- Keep your car fueled if evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during an emergency, run out of fuel, or be unable to pump gas during power outages.
- Pre-drill plywood to be able to quickly board up windows.
- Know how to safely shut off your home's electricity, gas and water supplies at main switches and valves.

What to do if asked/told to evacuate

- Gather all persons in the house together.
- Elevate valuable items to higher points within your home.
- Move all loose outdoor items, which could become missiles, indoors. (lawn furniture, hanging plants, trashcans, awnings, toys, etc).
- Household members outside the area may be advised not to return during an evacuation. They may be directed to a reception center or mass care shelter where you can join them.
- Do not call your local fire or police departments (9-1-1) for information. Emergency workers will need their lines open for emergency use. If you need special help, call your local Emergency Management Office or Mass2-1-1, which is available 24/7 to respond to your questions.
- Monitor the Media. Stay tuned to your Emergency Alert System (EAS) radio station.
- Turn off lights and unnecessary appliances.
- Close and lock windows and doors.
- Check with neighbors to see if they need assistance. Offer to share transportation.
- Let others know where you are going.
- If you need a ride, try to get one with neighbors or contact your local Emergency Management Office.

How to travel

- Keep the car radio tuned to an Emergency Alert System (EAS) station.
- Be aware of and follow designated evacuation routes.

What to take with you

Think of essential items. You may be away from home for a few hours to a few days.

- Clothing for several days.
- Toilet articles (Soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.)
- Prescription medicines, medical equipment and important medical records.
- Special dietary foods.
- Baby supplies.
- Blankets, pillows, and towels (particularly if you plan on staying at a public mass care shelter).
- Identification and important papers.
- Checkbook, credit card and cash.

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About your pets

- Only seeing-eye dogs and other service animals will be allowed inside most reception centers and mass care shelters, although in many communities, SMART (The State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team) may be able to assist at these facilities with animal sheltering accommodations.
- Make plans ahead of time to take your pet to stay at relatives, friends or a kennel outside the affected area.
- Learn of pet-friendly hotels and motels in the area.
- Prepare an emergency kit for your pets; include collars & leashes, a 3-5 day supply of food and water, a manual can opener, bowls, litter boxes, photographs of you with your pet, and a week's supply of medications that your pet may be taking, including instructions (in case you and your pet are separated).
- Make sure your pets wear collars with current license and rabies tags, and identification tags that include information on where you will be staying during the emergency.
- Use a pet carrier for each of your pets to make transportation easier.
- Remember: "If you go, they go!"

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Hurricane Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Follow MEMA updates on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

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