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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 Director Kurt Schwartz. "Unlike many types of storms, hurricanes are closely tracked 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 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:

- Local notification systems such as "Reverse 9-1-1 type" systems. These systems usually require opt-in/registration in advance, so check with your local public safety officials about which system they use and how to register.
- Local notifications from public safety vehicles public address announcements or door to door notifications.
- Outdoor sirens.
- Commercial media.
- MEMA's Ping4 smartphone app
- MEMA's Twitter or Facebook accounts or the social media accounts of a public safety agency in your community.
- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) via radio and television.
- Wireless Emergency Alerts.
- All Hazards National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.
- U.S. Coast Guard Marine Broadcast
- A message on Teletypewriters (TTY).

Planning for Evacuation

- Talk to your local emergency management director about the risks in your community and neighborhood. Learn proposed evacuation routes and locations of public shelters. In addition, if you or a family member requires special assistance to evacuate ask about special assistance programs or registries.

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- Specifically for hurricanes, citizens in coastal community can view the Hurricane Inundation Maps for their community to determine risk of potential inundation for personal and family planning and preparedness. Those who live or work in inundation areas should plan for and be prepared to evacuate during a hurricane and should listen to local public safety officials and weather forecasts before and during a hurricane for evacuation information.
- Make a Family Emergency Plan of what you would do if asked to evacuate. Consider where you would go, how you would get there, what you would bring. In your planning, consider different scales of evacuation – neighborhood, town, county, etc.
- If you undergo routine medical treatments or receive home health services, work with your service provider in advance to understand their emergency plan and to find backup providers that you might use in an emergency.
- If you do not have personal transportation or a way to evacuate, make arrangements with family, friends or your local government.
- Keep your car fueled if evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during an emergency, or unable to pump gas during power outages.
- Assemble an Emergency Kit. Realize that if you have to evacuate you might not be able to bring your entire kit with you, so have the key items you might need in a portable "Go Bag" to take with you.
- Know how to shut off your home's electricity, gas and water supplies at main switches and valves.
- Make a plan in advance of what you would do with your pets if you have to evacuate. While service animals will be allowed inside shelters household pets are not allowed in all shelters. Consider additional options for your pet, such as staying with relatives or friends, a kennel, or pet friendly hotels. Have pet supplies, medicines, carriers and tags for your pet. See MEMA's Pets and Animals in Emergencies webpage. Remember: "If you go, they go!"
- If you require accessible transportation to evacuate an area, identify resources both public and private.

What to do if asked to evacuate

- Gather all persons and pets in the house together.
- Household members outside the area may be advised not to return during an evacuation. They may be directed to a shelter or reception center where you can join them.
- Take only essential items with you (consider your needs and the needs of your family members when deciding what items to take).
- Do not call your 9-1-1 unless you have an emergency. Call 2-1-1 for information or questions.
- Stay tuned to your Emergency Alert System radio station or other news media to get updated information.
- If you need a ride or assistance, contact friends, family, neighbors, or others who can assist you. If you are unable to obtain assistance, listen to your radio or TV for information on provisions being made to assist those who need assistance in evacuating. If necessary, contact your local emergency management office to let them know who you are, where you live, and what kind of assistance you need. Do not wait until the last minute to call for assistance as local authorities may be unable to assist you.
- If designated evacuation routes are established, follow the routes - other routes might be blocked and expect traffic.

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What to take with you

Think of essential items (consider your needs and the needs of your family members when deciding what items to take). Remember you may be away from home for a few hours to a few days.

- Clothing for several days.
- Personal hygiene items (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.)
- Prescription medicines, medical equipment, assistive devices/aids and important medical records.
- Cell phone and charger.
- Identification and important papers.
- Checkbook, credit card and cash.
- Baby supplies.
- Food and water for your trip.
- Blankets, pillows, and towels (particularly if headed to a public shelter).
- Contact information of friends/family/ physicians/service providers, and your insurance agency.
- A map and/or GPS device (you may end up far from home and detours are common).
- An emergency kit for your vehicle.
- Your pet(s) and pet essential pet supplies.
- Any other items or information unique to your needs as emergency shelters might not have the items you need.

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 Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Also, continue to follow MEMA updates on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA; *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA. Download the free *ping4alert!* app to your Smartphone to receive important weather alerts and emergency messages from MEMA. Easy instructions are available at www.mass.gov/mema/mobileappp.

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