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Public Safety



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MEMA OFFERS TIPS AS HURRICANE SANDY APPROACHES

FRAMINGHAM, MA – With the possible threat of Hurricane Sandy following a track that could have a major impact on New England early next week, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) recommends actions that people can take to minimize the potential damage from this storm.

"Early planning and preparation can be the key to your safety," states MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz. "It is important to use your time wisely and not wait until the last minute to ensure your family's safety."

Here are some examples of steps you should be taking:

Make sure you have a well-stocked Family Disaster Kit in the event you lose power or are isolated for a number of days.

- Trim back trees and shrubbery around your home. Remove diseased or damaged tree limbs that could be blown down, causing damage, during a storm.
- Clear clogged rain gutters. This storm brings the potential for torrential rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.
- Bring in outdoor items such as lawn furniture, trash barrels, hanging plants, toys and awnings that can be broken or picked up by strong winds and used as a missile.
- Make sure storage sheds, children's playhouses or other outbuildings are securely anchored, either to a permanent foundation or with straps and ground anchors.
- Elevate articles in your basement that could be damaged from even minor flooding.
- Make temporary plywood covers to protect windows and sliding doors. Drill holes for screws or lag bolts in each cover and around each window. Note: Taping of windows does not prevent them from breaking.
- Keep you vehicles fully fuelled.
- Have a certain amount of cash available. If power is lost, ATMs may not be working.
- Make a record of your personal property. Keep an itemized list of your furniture, clothing and valuables to assist adjusters in case of a claim. Back it up with photographs or video.
- 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.

- Learn where gas pilots and water mains are located and how to safely shut off all utilities.
- Lock doors and windows to ensure that they are closed tight to help protect against strong winds and rain.
- Boat owners, who plan on taking their vessel out of the water soon, should consider doing so this weekend.
- Download the free *ping4alert!* app to your Smartphone to receive important weather alerts and messages from MEMA. Easy instructions are available at www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.

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 Storm 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; and **YouTube** at www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA.