

## HURRICANES AND BOATING

### PRIOR TO HURRICANES YOU SHOULD

1. If your plan calls for moving your vessel, and you have sufficient notice, do it at least 48 to 72 hours (or earlier) before the hurricane is estimated to strike the area. This may be before a hurricane watch is issued.
2. Make sure that:
  - a. Fuel tanks are full;
  - b. Fuel filters are clean;
  - c. Batteries are charged;
  - d. Bilges are clean; cockpit drains are free and clear;
  - e. Fire fighting equipment is in good order;
  - f. And lifesaving equipment is in good condition, in place and readily accessible (these items will be secured later).
3. Remove and/or secure all deck gear, portable gear, radio antennas, outriggers, fighting chairs, deck boxes, Bimini tops and side canvas/curtains, sails, boom, extra halyards, canister rafts, and dinghies. Make sure that you secure all hatches, ports, doors, lazarettes and sailboat rudder. (The dinghy may be required to take lines ashore).
4. If your vessel is moored at a dock or canal, river, or in a marina near the ocean, it is possible that with an additional 5 - 10 feet or greater storm surge, the vessel could take a beating against the dock or even impale itself on pilings.
5. The best offshore mooring location for a vessel to ride out a storm is in the center of a canal or narrow river where at least doubled mooring lines can be secured to both shores, port and starboard, fore and aft.
6. Do not raft vessels together at moorings or docks, especially if larger and smaller vessels are involved. The probability of damage to the vessels is greater than if they are moored singly.
7. If the vessel must remain dockside at a private dock or marina, heavy duty fender boards (2" x 6") should be used on a bare wood center piling or otherwise installed to prevent damage. Lines should be doubled and even tripled where necessary to hold a vessel in the center of a berth or off seawall or dock pilings. Preventers should be installed at the top of the pilings so lines cannot slip off the top. Note that nylon line will stretch 5 to 10 percent of its length.

## **DURING THE HURRICANE**

1. **DO NOT STAY ABOARD ANY VESSEL DURING A HURRICANE.** If you have taken all the preliminary precautions previously outlined, you have done all that can be done in anticipation of the storm.
2. Stay in a protected and safe place. Attend to the safety of family, home and other personal property.
3. Stay tuned to news broadcasts and weather advisories concerning the hurricane so that you will know when the danger has passed.

## **AFTER THE HURRICANE**

1. After the hurricane has passed, there may be extensive damage in the area. While checking the condition of your vessel is an important concern, there may be limitations such as flooded roads and downed power lines. A check of the vessel should be made as soon as practicable to determine its condition and security.
2. Other vessels may be upriver behind your vessel mooring location. This may require that you modify your mooring if you are in the center of a canal or stream so that other vessels may navigate past you. If you don't, others may just cut your mooring lines and let your vessel drift, causing more damage than the hurricane.
3. A check of vessel security is important if damage has occurred. One security aspect that must be considered is the prevention of looters or others who feel that a damaged vessel is "abandoned" and thus theirs to take.
4. If there has been any theft or vandalism loss or damage to the vessel, other than storm related, a report should be made to local police or other law enforcement authorities so that appropriate actions can be taken. The incident report number and, if possible, a copy of the incident report should be obtained to substantiate any insurance claim or IRS property loss reporting.
5. If damages are incurred to the vessel, immediate action should be taken to save the vessel and/or equipment and prevent further loss or damage. This action is a requirement of all insurance policies. A vessel owner is expected to take those actions that a "prudent uninsured person" would take to save and preserve his property.
6. If the vessel appears to be un-repairable (constructive total loss), arrangements will still have to be made to remove the hull from any navigable waterway as this will probably be required by government authorities. The vessel should be moved to a yard or salvage facility storage area.

7. If salvage removal of your vessel is required (emergency or otherwise) and you are unable to receive advice from your insurance company, agent, marina or yacht club, screen the salvage contractor for competence and cost. Read the contract, know where your vessel is going, and the level of security provided at the location. Save as much equipment from the vessel as possible.
8. Where vessel damages are repairable, immediate arrangements should be made with a reputable repair yard to have the vessel moved there, if necessary, for repairs. Make a list of repair facilities that you would like to work with. Obtain estimates before proceeding with repairs. Those who act quickly will be back in the water first.