



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SAFETY



Charles D. Baker
Governor

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

400 Worcester Road Framingham, MA 01702-5399

Tel: 508-820-2000 Fax: 508-820-2030

Website: www.mass.gov/mema

Kurt Schwartz
Director

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Daniel Bennett
Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 23, 2016

Christopher Besse, MEMA PIO
christopher.besse@state.ma.us
(508) 820-2039

THE IMPACT OF HURRICANES ON INLAND LOCATIONS
Major Inland Flooding Can Be A Serious Issue

FRAMINGHAM, MA – Hurricanes and tropical storms are not just coastal events. As we saw in 2011 with Tropical Storm Irene, the strong winds and torrential rainfall that often are associated with hurricanes and tropical storms can cause widespread damage well inland and across the entire state. A storm's strong winds can destroy buildings, down trees and power lines, and result in widespread power outages across the entire state. Additionally, large amounts of rain, particularly over a short period of time, can trigger destructive inland flooding.

“The sometimes forgotten threat associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, particularly in our inland communities, is flooding,” stated Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Director Kurt Schwartz. “Torrential rainfall often occurs far inland, particularly along the west, or left side of the track of a hurricane or tropical storm as it crosses, or passes by Massachusetts.”

Intense rainfall is not directly related to the high wind speeds of hurricanes and tropical storms. Even relatively weaker tropical cyclones may produce devastating amounts of rainfall, particularly with slower moving storms, and storms that cover large geographical areas. Accordingly, residents in all areas of the state must plan for severe inland flooding when preparing for a hurricane or tropical storm.

Historically, some of the state's most devastating flooding from hurricanes and tropical storms has occurred in central and western Massachusetts. For example, although weakened to a tropical storm prior to landfall in the Commonwealth, the worst of Hurricane Floyd's impacts in 1999 were associated with rain induced flooding that caused severe damage as far west as the Berkshires. In 1938, up to 17” of rain fell in conjunction with the ‘Hurricane of 1938,’ and 25” of rain fell over a 5-day period in August 1955 from ‘Connie’ and ‘Diane,’ both of which reached Massachusetts as tropical storms. More recently, in 2011, destructive inland flooding in central and western Massachusetts occurred when Tropical Storm Irene produced nearly 10” of rainfall.

Safety Tips

- Have a Family [Emergency Kit](#).
- Develop a [Family Communication Plan](#).

- Educate yourself about your community's Emergency Management Plan, including emergency warning systems, potential evacuation routes and locations of public shelters by contacting your local [emergency management director](#). Learn your area's vulnerability to flooding, as well.
- In highly flood-prone areas, keep materials on hand like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, plastic garbage bags, lumber, shovels, work boots and gloves.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels and areas known to flood, so you or your evacuation routes are not cut off.
- As a storm approaches, continually monitor the event on local media. Also, download the [Massachusetts Alerts](#) app for your Smartphone from NOAA and MEMA.
- If advised to evacuate by Public Safety officials, do so immediately.
- Avoid driving into water of unknown depth; as little as 6" of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- Avoid downed power lines. Assumed a downed wire is a live wire.
- Have flood insurance. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policy. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a pre-disaster flood mitigation and insurance protection program. The National Flood Insurance Program makes federally backed flood insurance available to residents and business owners.
- For safety tips and information on how to prepare for floods, see MEMA's [Floods](#) webpage.
- Also, remember that when approaching water on a roadway, "Turn Around, Don't Drown"!

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 Hurricane Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. 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.

[Massachusetts Alerts](#): to receive emergency information on your smartphone, including severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service and emergency information from MEMA, download the *Massachusetts Alerts* free app. To learn more about *Massachusetts Alerts*, and for information on how to download the free app onto your smartphone, visit: www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.