

Boat Safety

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Don't let this hurricane season take the wind out of your boating fun. Between June 1 and November 30, boaters should keep tuned into weather events and plan ahead to secure their vessels.

But even the most rigorous protective measures will not guarantee that your boat will survive a storm. These actions will certainly help lessen damages to your vessel and lead the way to smooth sailing through the upcoming hurricane season.

- Always keep your watercraft in good condition. Be sure that all systems are functioning.
- Review your insurance policies and keep them up-to-date.
- Keep batteries fully charged and make certain bilge pumps are fully operational.
- Create a hurricane plan for your boat. Be sure to file a copy of the plan with your marina operator.
- Take photographs of your boat, write a description along with an inventory and put them with your important papers.
- Write up a checklist of actions to take if a hurricane or tropical storm develops. Begin implementing your hurricane checklist when a Hurricane Watch is issued by the National Hurricane Center. Don't wait for a Hurricane Warning or evacuation order to act.
- Purchase and stow mooring line to use in the event of a hurricane. As a general rule, line should be twice the diameter of your normal line.
- Talk with your marina about their hurricane plans and how to protect your boat.
- Remove all loose items on deck including bimini tops, plastic side enclosures, sails and dinghies. Store them on land. Store small, loose items below deck, including antennas.
- Shut off fuel lines at the tank and close through hull fittings.



Keeping Your Trailerable Boat High And Dry On Shore

- Remove your boat and trailer from the water and take it to a safe location on dry land.
- Partially fill your boat with water to provide extra weight and stability. Be sure the water does not touch the engine or batteries.
- Put wooden blocks between the trailer frame and the springs for extra support with the added weight.
- Store the boat and trailer unit in a secure, covered building, such as your garage, if possible.
- Secure the unit to the ground using ground hooks and straps, if left outside.

Boats Left On Water Need Special Precautions

If your boat will be moored at dock:

- Secure all hatches and doors, and tape all windows from the inside.
- Double up on mooring lines as well as spring lines to secure the boat in its mooring.
- Use several cleats to distribute the load on the boat.
- Allow as much line as possible for tide and storm surge.
- Attach chafing gear, such as reinforced radiator hose, where lines will rub. Provide several feet of chafing hose on each side of rub locations.
- Disconnect electric, water and other connections from dock.
- Remove all electronics and valuables to prevent destruction or theft.

If your boat will be anchored out:

- Anchoring your boat on the lee side of protective land rather than mooring to a dock might be a better option.
- Use two anchors and no stern anchor.
- Use anchors that are either Danforth or Yachtman plow types. Line length should be at least six to nine times the depth of the water to compensate for possible storm surge and swing.
- Use chafing gear.
- Remember when making preparations that the position of the boat may change drastically as the storm passes and winds shift.

BOATS	MOORING LINE
20 feet or less	3/8 inch or larger
20 feet - 34 feet	1/2 inch or larger
35 feet - 45 feet	5/8 inch or larger
longer than 45 feet	3/4 inch or larger

If you leave your boat on the water, be sure it is as watertight as possible. Fuel tanks should be filled and water tanks emptied. Put your own personal safety first when tying up your boat.

Remember that battening down the hatches before a hurricane can protect your boat and set you up for clearer skies ahead.

It is not recommended that you stay with your boat during a hurricane emergency. "Live-aboards" who elect to remain with their vessel should notify someone on shore of their intent. Dress in safety gear (wet suits and flotation devices) and have a battery powered radio and distress equipment available to monitor the storm's progress and signal for assistance if necessary.

Unless your vessel can run fast, and you have a good head start, do not try to outrun an approaching storm. Twelve-foot seas can exist up to 150 miles from the center of the storm system.

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