

NEWS From BoatU.S.

Boat Owners Association of The United States

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PEAK HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE:
TOP FIVE TIPS TO PREPARE FOR THE WORSE**
Free BoatU.S. Hurricane Preparation Guide Available

Is your boat ready for storm surge, driving winds, and torrential downpours? With the peak hurricane season upon us, Boat Owners Association of The United States has these top five tips to help weather the storm:

Keep it high and dry: Boats stored ashore are far more likely to survive than boats in the water. After the boats in its outer harbor were devastated in 1983 by Hurricane Alicia, the Houston Yacht Club responded by devising a comprehensive hurricane plan that includes the evacuation of all vessels. At Martha's Vineyard Shipyard, the marina has put together a list of emergency employees to assist the regular staff with the rush removals, each one being pre-assigned to a specific duty so all goes smoothly.

These marinas, and many others, recognize that the key to weathering the storm is preparation - both by individual boat owners and marina personnel. Now is the time to review your marina's contract or boat club's rules for hurricane preparation and cement a plan with them.

Ensure your marina and boat are ready: There is a huge difference in how marinas prepare for a major storm. How well your marina is currently organized can tell you a lot about how well your boat will fare in the slip during a storm. Boats in poorly maintained, unorganized and cluttered marinas usually fare the worst in hurricanes.

Poorly sited marinas - those in unprotected areas, also face higher risks.

When Hurricane Andrew decimated South Florida in 1992, most boats in the well-protected Coco Plum Marina survived. Marinas with floating docks and tall pilings also provide a safer solution than fixed docks as extra scope is not needed and docks will not float away over the pilings.

If you plan on leaving your boat in the water, be sure you'll have everything you'll need to secure it well in advance. If your plan is to leave it at a slip, take inventory of your dock lines, chafe protection and other items such as fenders and duct tape. After Hurricane Fran hit in 1996, the BoatU.S. Catastrophe Response Team estimated that as many as half the damaged boats at marinas could have been saved by longer and thicker dock lines and adequate chafe protection - the first items to sell out once a hurricane "warning" is posted.

Find the right 'hole': If you plan on moving your vessel to a hurricane hole - a canal, river or harbor that offers better protection - it's important to remember that the storm surge may be ten feet high or greater. Seawalls and jetties that might otherwise protect your boat could be underwater. One other consideration: Plan on moving your boat early, as soon as a "warning" has been posted. Otherwise, you may find the best spots are already taken or that bridges have been locked down to evacuate automobiles.

Check your policy: An up-to-date insurance policy can mean success or failure in quickly returning the vessel to its pre-storm condition. Does your policy include all of your recently installed electronics or other upgrades? BoatU.S. also offers Hurricane Haul Out coverage that will pay half of all costs associated with pre-storm haul out - up to \$500 - for only \$25 a year.

Trailerable boats should be relocated as far as possible above the anticipated storm surge and made secure. Boats on storage racks, davits and lifts should be put on trailers and taken inland.

Read up: For more information on hurricane protection, BoatU.S. publishes a free brochure, *Hurricane Warning: A Guide to Preparing Boats and Marinas for Hurricanes* and includes a free Hurricane Planning

Worksheet that takes boaters step-by-step through the storm preparation procedures. For both of these free valuable tools and for other information on hurricanes, visit <http://www.BoatUS.com> or call 800-283-2883.

BoatU.S. - Boat Owners Association of The United States - is the nation's leading advocate for recreational boaters and provides its 540,000 members with a wide array of consumer services including a group-rate marine insurance program that provides over \$7 billion in hull coverage; the largest fleet of more than 400 towing assistance vessels; discounts on fuel, slips, and repairs at over 700 Cooperating Marinas; boat financing; and a subscription to *BoatU.S. Magazine*, the most widely read boating publication in the U.S. For membership information visit <http://www.BoatUS.com> or call 800-395-2628.

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