

Hurricane Preparedness Tips – Boats (Floatilla Plan)

Purpose of the Plan

- ▶ To make more efficient use of bridge openings during the threat of a hurricane by organizing boat traffic seeking safe harbor.

Command and Control

- ▶ The Officer-in-Charge of the Floatilla Plan is the Broward County Sheriff's Marine Patrol. The On-Scene commander is responsible for coordinating the emergency marine traffic operations.
- ▶ The Marine Command Post will be located at the Fort Lauderdale Police Department Marine Patrol Office (phone: 761-5440) and the docks at S.E. 15th Street.

Communications

The center of communications will be the Marine Command Post and the Fort Lauderdale Police Department Communications Dispatch Center. Communication devices will include department radios, portable radios and telephones.

- ▶ The U.S. Coast Guard will assign personnel to the Marine Command Post to provide communications with the Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- ▶ Broward Sheriff's Office Deputies will be assigned to the Marine Command Post to maintain radio contact with the Coast Guard and Communications Dispatch Center.
- ▶ Drawbridges are equipped with telephone and radio (Channel 13). A listing of bridge locations and telephone numbers will be in the Marine Command Post.
- ▶ Patrol boats and civilian boats will use radios, loud speakers and arm/hand signals.
- ▶ Communications between different agencies on all floatilla movements and operational problems will be channeled through the Marine Command Post.

Phases of Operation (Floatilla operations will begin with the Hurricane Watch Advisory.

Phase I

The Officer-in-Charge will notify all floatilla participants that Phase I operations are in effect.

- ▶ Marine patrols will survey the waterways for hazards (such as barges) and determine ownership so that they may be moved or secured.
- ▶ Boat owners should fuel up prior to moving vessels to safe harbor.
- ▶ Boat owners should store deck equipment.

Phase II

The Officer-in-Charge notifies all floatilla operations participants that Phase II is in effect and that the floatilla movement will cease 3-1/2 hours after the Evacuation Order is issued.

- ▶ The Fort Lauderdale Police Department Marine Patrol will be deployed north and south of New River to supervise and assist in the formation of floatillas.
- ▶ South of New River, form floatillas in the Pier 66 area.
- ▶ North of New River, form floatillas in the Bahia Mar area.
- ▶ The BSO Marine Patrol will be deployed in the I-95 overpass and New River area to assist the westward movement of floatillas.
- ▶ The Florida Marine Patrol will be on standby. Their assistance will be authorized through the State via the Emergency Operating Center.
- ▶ U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels will be deployed to assist and direct boats to the point of floatilla formation. Regular coast guard vessels will be on full alert to render assistance.
- ▶ Communications to the bridge tenders will be via the Fort Lauderdale Communications Dispatch Center and/or the Marine Command Post.
- ▶ During the floatilla movement, disabled boats shall be taken in tow and not allowed to block the river. A report of the disabled boat is made to the Marine Command Post.
- ▶ Small boats that don't require bridge openings don't need to wait for a floatilla to form.

- ▶ When the Marine Patrol Commander feels there is a sufficient number of vessels, the officer will signal for moving up the river. There is no specific time sequence for flotilla launchings.

End of Flotilla Operations

- ▶ The flotilla operations will cease 3-1/2 hours after the Evacuation Order is issued.
- ▶ The Officer-in-Charge will inform all flotilla operations participants of the time that the flotilla movement must cease.
- ▶ The Broward County Emergency Management Division will contact the United States Coast Guard and request that all drawbridges be positioned down and locked in place.
- ▶ The Marine Patrols will continue patrol operations until hurricane conditions force them to seek safe harbor.

BOATS - Small Boats - Under 20 Feet

Portable Boats:

- ▶ If the boat is at home, it may either be left on its trailer or be stored upside down along the side of the residence. If the boat is left on the trailer, water that collects inside of the hull may damage the trailer.
- ▶ Let out some air from the tires of the trailer and block the wheels to prevent rolling.
- ▶ Avoid placing the boat between buildings because of the potential for wind funneling. Tie the boat down by using either buried ground anchors or large, well rooted trees. Use good, strong rope and allow protection for chafing. Check boat cleats for strength. Do not use small cleats or ones screwed into fiberglass. If necessary, tie line fully around boat.
- ▶ If the boat is in storage, the boat owner should check the contract to see if the storage marina is responsible for the boat during the storm.
- ▶ Motors and all boat equipment should be stored inside whenever possible. Canvas should either be removed or rolled tightly, because the wind will get under it and generally rip it.

Non-Portable Boats

Sailboats, in sheltered water, might be sunk, but only after all gear has been removed. If the boat is sunk, there is the possibility of damage if water action moves the boat up and down on the bottom. Otherwise, the boat should be tied out from the docking area by using anchors and lines into deeper water. There should be at least two anchors used; one forward, one aft. Allow sufficient slack for the rise of the water, possibly 4 to 5 feet of tide. Tie off the boat at least 12 to 15 feet from the dock. Clean all cockpit drains and remove any equipment that would be damaged by water. Place boat records into a watertight container (glass jar, for example). Remove batteries.

BOATS - Large Boats - Over 20 Feet

Portable-Boats

Large portable boats should be stored indoors since the freeboard (the difference between the water line and the uppermost full deck) of the boat may act as a sail and move the boat and trailer, possibly tipping the boat over. The boat should be placed in a garage or a carport with the car left outside. If the boat is left outdoors, all equipment should be removed, all drains should be cleaned and trailer springs should be opened and blocked. The boat may also be placed into the water and tied down.

Non portable Boats

Boaters should make arrangements with a property owner before going up any canal with intentions of tying up. Among other things, the boat should have sufficient fuel on board

and working bilge pumps. Exposed gear should be removed, and anything that must be left out should be lashed down. If the boat has cabin space and a deck house, the boater may want to stay on board or crew the boat.

Boaters may not block a canal by lines across while other boats are seeking shelter, unless the boater remains with the boat, thus allowing them passage by control of the lines. Spring lines should hold the boat away from docks. If anchors are used, be sure that the chain is attached to the anchor along with a weight, so as to increase the holding. Trees may be used to secure lines, but they must have large deep roots and be alive. Mangroves are good trees to use as anchors while Australian Pines are not. Boats rafted together must have good fenders such as tires.

Bridges will be closed to boat traffic three and one-half (3-1/2) hours after the evacuation order is issued or when the winds reach 40 miles per hour, whichever is earlier. This may be as much as, or more than 23 hours prior to the hurricane eye making landfall. Callers should be advised to check with local law enforcement agencies or the Coast Guard.

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