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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

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MEMA OFFERS TIPS FOR FAMILY HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

"The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is offering personal hurricane preparedness tips to all of the citizens of the Commonwealth," stated MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz. "The three key tips for preparing for hurricanes, as well any potential emergencies or disasters are to build a kit, create a plan and stay informed."

Build an Emergency Kit

Every home and business should have a stocked basic emergency kit that could be used for any emergency, regardless of the time of year. Everyone should keep certain items around the house and workplace in the event you are isolated for three to five days without power or unable to go to a store. While some items, such as bottled water, food, flashlight, radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, sanitation items and clothing should be in everyone's kit, it is important to customize the kit for the needs of you and your family. Consider adding medications, extra eyeglasses, contact lenses, dentures, extra batteries for hearing aids or wheelchairs, or other medical equipment such as an oxygen tank. A list of allergies, medications and dosages, medical insurance information, medical records and serial numbers of medical devices will provide additional information during an emergency. Do not forget your pets and animals in emergencies. Your kit should include pet supplies such as food, pet carriers and other supplies, as well as vaccinations and medical records for pets and service animals as well any other specialized items your family might need.

See attached emergency kit for a more complete list.

You may also consider making a mobile "go-bag" version of your emergency kit in case you need to evacuate to a shelter or other location, as an emergency shelter may not have all the items you need. At least annually, check your kit for any food, water, batteries, or other items that may need to be replaced or have expired.

Create a Family Emergency Communications Plan

Develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan in case family members are separated from one another during an emergency (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school, camp or at a friend's house). This plan should also address how your family plans to reunite after the immediate crisis passes.

Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person. During and immediately after a disaster, it is often easier to access a long distance telephone number than a local one. Also, it is important to remember that if telephone service is disrupted due to high volume, text messages and the internet often can be a viable alternative for communicating with family.

As part of a Communication Plan, you should create a personal support network and a list of contacts that include caregivers, friends, neighbors, service/care providers, and others who might be able to assist during an emergency. It is important keep a list of contact phone numbers in a safe, accessible place (particularly if your cell phone is lost or dead). Make sure everyone within your family knows the name, address and telephone number of the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person.

To ensure you will be able to reunite after a disaster, it can be helpful to designate two meeting areas for family members – one within your community (your primary location), and one outside of your community (your alternate location). Sometimes an emergency could impact your neighborhood or small section of the community, so a second location outside of your community would be more accessible to all family members.

A Family Emergency Communications Plan can help reassure everyone's safety and minimize the stress associated with emergencies.

Stay Informed

It is important to identify ways to obtain information before, during and after a hurricane. MEMA encourages people who live or work in a coastal community to 'Know Your Zone. The Know Your Evacuation Zone section of the MEMA website enables you to use the interactive Hurricane Evacuation Zone finder to learn if your home or place of work is in one of the three hurricane evacuation zones.

The Know Your Risk section of the MEMA website will help you better understand the hazards associated with hurricanes and their risks, such as Storm Surge, Heavy Rain and Inland Flooding and High Winds.

It is also important to learn how local authorities will warn you of a pending or current disaster situation and how they will provide information to you before, during and after a disaster. Remember that if their plan is not perfect then your personal plan will need to fill those gaps. You should closely monitor the media and promptly follow instructions from public safety officials as a storm approaches.

Severe weather warnings and watches, which can be obtained from media sources, the National Weather Service, a NOAA all-hazards radio, and on your cell phone can provide valuable and timely information. Some communities have local tools to alert residents. Also, consider utilizing *Massachusetts Alerts, which* is a communication tool used by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to disseminate critical information to smartphones. *Massachusetts Alerts* is powered by a free downloadable application that is available for Android and iPhone devices. For more information, go to www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.

Mass 2-1-1 is the Commonwealth's primary telephone call center during times of an emergency and is able to provide information on emergency resources. This system is free to the public, available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week, confidential, multilingual, and TTY compatible. Consider all the ways you might get information during an incident (radio, TV, internet, cell phone, landline, etc) in case one or more of those systems stops working.

SUGGESTED ALL-HAZARDS EMERGENCY KIT

- ❑ Bottled water (1 gallon per person/per day for 3 days)
- ❑ Canned goods and nonperishable foods, particularly those that do not need cooking:
    - Canned meats and fish
    - Canned fruits and vegetables
    - Canned soups and puddings
    - Canned fruit juices
    - Dried fruit and nuts
    - Bread, cookies and crackers
    - Peanut butter and jelly
    - Coffee and tea
- ❑ Manual can opener
- ❑ Radio (battery-powered or hand crank), NOAA Weather Radio and extra batteries
- ❑ Flashlight or lantern, with extra batteries
- ❑ First aid kit
- ❑ Diapers, wipes, baby food, formula, if needed
- ❑ Pet food, supplies, tag, crates, if needed
- ❑ Prescription medications (2-week supply)
- ❑ Extra eyeglasses, contact lenses, and dentures
- ❑ Extra batteries for hearing aids, wheelchairs, or other medical equipment,
- ❑ Medical oxygen tanks
- ❑ Whistle to signal for help
- ❑ Moist towelettes, garbage bags, soap, sanitizer, and other personal hygiene items
- ❑ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ❑ Watch or battery operated clock
- ❑ Copies of important documents and IDs
- ❑ Cell phone and charger (also an auto, solar, or crank charger in case power is out)
- ❑ Cash
- ❑ Water purification tablets and household chlorine bleach
- ❑ Camp stove or grill (outdoor use only) with fuel or Sterno and waterproof matches or lighter
- ❑ Change of clothes and sturdy shoes
- ❑ Sleeping bags or blankets
- ❑ Disposable plates, cups, and utensils
- ❑ Seasonal items such as warm clothes, hat and gloves for winter and sunscreen for summer
- ❑ Books, games, puzzles and other comfort items
- ❑ Duct tape
- ❑ Plastic sheeting or tarp

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, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Continue to follow MEMA updates on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA and *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA. Also, sign up for *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.

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