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MEMA OFFERS TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM HURRICANES

FRAMINGHAM, MA - During this year's Atlantic Hurricane Season (June 1st - November 30th), the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) urges homeowners to protect their property from strong winds, damaging rains, and flooding that hurricanes or tropical storms can bring to New England.

"There are several steps which we can all take to help make our homes and property more storm resistant," said MEMA Acting Director Kurt Schwartz. "Early planning and preparation can be the key to your safety."

Here are some examples of how to protect your property:

- Learn the particular hurricane risks for your area. Find out if your home is subject to storm surge or inland flooding by contacting your local Emergency Management Director.
- Make a record of your personal property. Keep an itemized list of your furniture, clothing and valuables to assist adjusters in case of a claim. Back it up with photographs or video.
- Protect your insurance policies and other important documents in a secure place like a safe deposit box or a watertight box. Many people back up important documents online.
- Keep trees and shrubbery around your home trimmed. Remove diseased or damaged tree limbs that could be blown down, causing damage, during a storm.
- Clear clogged rain gutters. Hurricanes/tropical storms often bring torrential rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.
- Make sure storage sheds, children's playhouses or other outbuildings are securely anchored, either to a permanent foundation or with straps and ground anchors.
- Make temporary plywood covers to protect windows and sliding doors. Drill holes for screws or lag bolts in each cover and around each window. To save time, use a numbering or lettering system that shows which cover goes with which window. Store the mounting screws or lag bolts with the covers in a place where they are readily accessible. Note: Taping of windows does not prevent them from breaking.

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- Make a list of outdoor items to bring inside in case of a storm, such as lawn furniture, trash barrels, hanging plants, toys and awnings. A list will help you more quickly identify anything that can be broken or picked up by strong winds and used as a missile.
- Learn where gas pilots and water mains are located and how to safely shut off all utilities.
- Lock doors and windows to ensure that they are closed tight to help protect against strong winds and rain.
- Buy Flood Insurance. Unlike damage from hurricane winds, water damage from coastal or inland flooding is not covered by homeowners insurance. Contact your local insurance agent or contact the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at www.floodsmart.gov or call (888) 379-9531.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Hurricane Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Follow MEMA updates on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

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