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2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins

Start of Hurricane Season is a Reminder to Prepare

FRAMINGHAM, MA – Today, June 1st, marks the official start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season which runs through November 30th. While historically the majority of tropical storms and hurricanes that have impacted our region occurred during the months of August and September, it remains important to begin preparing yourself, your family, your home and your business now. Over the next few months the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will share important preparedness information to help residents be aware of and prepare for the impacts of tropical storms and hurricanes.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seasonal outlook predicts an above-normal number of hurricanes this season. Regardless of how many storms develop this year, it only takes one storm to severely impact an area. In 2011, Tropical Storm Irene produced devastating flooding in Central and Western Massachusetts. Irene was a reminder that hurricanes and tropical storms can impact the entire Commonwealth, not just coastal regions and all Massachusetts residents need to prepare for the possibility of hurricane impacts this season. To learn more about the hazards associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, visit the MEMA's hurricane webpage: www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes.

“MEMA urges all residents of the Commonwealth to prepare for the impacts of a tropical storm or hurricane,” **said MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz**. “As hurricane season begins, residents should learn if they live or work in a hurricane evacuation zone, make an emergency plan, assemble an emergency kit, and stay informed.”

Know Your Evacuation Zone

Massachusetts has defined hurricane evacuation zones, designated as Zone A, Zone B and Zone C, for areas of the Commonwealth at risk for storm surge flooding associated with tropical storms or hurricanes. If evacuations are necessary because of a tropical storm or hurricane, local or state officials will use the hurricane evacuation zones to call for people living, working or vacationing in these areas to evacuate. It is important to note that even areas not directly along a coastline may be at risk for storm surge flooding during a tropical storm or hurricane. Find out if you live, work or vacation in a hurricane evacuation zone by visiting the ‘Know Your Zone’ interactive map located on MEMA’s website at www.mass.gov/knowyourzone.

Make an Emergency Plan

Develop a plan with the members of your household to prepare for what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in a tropical storm or hurricane. An emergency plan should include:

- Meeting Locations
- Emergency Contact Plan
- Evacuation Plans
- Shelter in Place Plans
- Consideration for Family Members with Access and Functional Needs, and Pets

For more information, see: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/be-prepared/plan/>.

Build an Emergency Kit

Build an emergency kit of items that will sustain you and your family in the event you are isolated for three to five days without power or unable to go to a store. Emergency kits are particularly important during hurricane season, as there is the threat of extended power outages, flooding, and impassable debris-covered roads. While it is important to customize your kit to meet the unique needs of you and your family, every emergency kit should include bottled water, food, a flashlight, a radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, sanitation items, and clothing. Depending on your family's needs, emergency kits should also include medications, extra eyeglasses, medical equipment and supplies, children's items such as diapers and formula, food and supplies for pets and service animals, and other items you or your family members might need during a disaster. For a complete emergency kit checklist, visit: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/be-prepared/kit/>.

Stay Informed

Receiving advance warnings, timely emergency alerts, and information during a disaster is critical to staying safe during a tropical storm or hurricane. Every family should have multiple methods for receiving emergency alerts. Learn more about different types of alerting and information tools including Massachusetts Alerts Smartphone App, the Emergency Alert System, Wireless Emergency Alerts, NOAA Weather Radio, Social Media & Traditional Media, 2-1-1 Hotline, Local Notification Systems. For more information, please visit: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/be-prepared/be-informed/>.

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 and Emergency Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema.

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