



## Hurricane Preparedness Guide – What you need to know



Storm erosion and destruction – 1900

### **Tips for Homeowners:**

- Make sure that if you live on the coast, your home is outfitted with the latest hurricane-proofing building materials (roof ties, wind and wave velocity-withstanding architecture, etc.) Go to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is posted on the CRMC web site, at [http://www.crmc.state.ri.us/news/pdf/ri\\_shmp.pdf](http://www.crmc.state.ri.us/news/pdf/ri_shmp.pdf), for more information.
- Floods and flash floods occur in all 50 states. Have flood insurance if your home and property is located in a high risk area for flooding. To find out at which risk level your property rates, go to [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov), an official site of the National Flood Insurance Program or call 800-720-1090.
- Prepare a family disaster plan now – a well-designed plan of action for you and your family could go a long way in reducing potential suffering from a natural disaster. Household emergency plans should be kept simple so that they are easy to remember. Post emergency numbers by the phone and teach children how to call 911 for help. Teach appropriate family members how to turn off the utilities, and identify meeting places in case you are separated; choose a place in a building or park outside your neighborhood. Ask an out-of-state friend or relative to serve as the family's contact and make sure everyone knows the number of this person. If you have a boat, you need to consider marine safety and how your boat could be affected by a hurricane.
- Before a hurricane strikes, plan a safe evacuation route that will take you out of the flood zone – it can be a matter of going inland a few blocks and staying with neighbors. Call your local emergency management office or Red Cross chapter to get the community preparedness plan, and look up your house on the Flood Smart web site to determine if you are in a flood zone.

- Keep disaster supplies on hand, including flashlight and extra batteries, battery-operated radio, first-aid kit, emergency food and water, non-electric can opener, essential medicines, cash and credit cards, sturdy shoes and a change of clothing, and important papers like bank accounts, insurance and household inventory records. (This is a partial list.) For more information on a disaster supplies kit, go to [http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/assemble\\_disaster\\_supplies\\_kit.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/assemble_disaster_supplies_kit.shtm)
- Protect your home as much as possible – board up windows and doors, trim dead or weak branches from trees, bring inside or anchor outdoor objects like lawn furniture and toys, etc.
- Once a hurricane warning has been issued, prepare by turning the refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings if not instructed by officials to turn off utilities; fuel your car and if possible, an extra gas jug (gas pumps may not be working post-storm); store valuable and personal papers in a waterproof container.



Waves from Hurricane Isabel



Hurricane Floyd's aftermath

### After a Hurricane

- Return home only after authorities say it is safe, and enter with caution. Open windows to ventilate or dry your home; do not use candles or open flames inside. Be aware of downed or loose power lines, and report them immediately.
- Check for gas leaks; if you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, leave immediately, leave doors open and call the gas company. Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or frayed wires, turn off power at the main fuse box and if you have to step in water to reach the box, call an electrician for help.
- Check for sewage and water-line damage, and if you suspect such damage call the water company. Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until notified it is safe.
- Take photos of the damage for insurance claims and contact your agent. (*Source: RI Dept. of Health*)
- Go to the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency's web site for additional and updated hurricane information.  
<http://www.riema.ri.gov/hazards/hurricane.php>
- Also check out NOAA's information on hurricane basics at <http://hurricanes.noaa.gov/pdf/hurricanebook.pdf>. Keep up to date on weather and storm warnings across the country at NOAA's National Weather Service

page, at <http://www.noaawatch.gov/> or click on the direct link for weather warnings at <http://www.weather.gov/largemap.php>.

- Go to the CRMC web site, [www.crmc.state.ri.us/news](http://www.crmc.state.ri.us/news) and scroll down to the bottom for the new Rhode Island State Hazard Mitigation Plan.



Galilee storm surge – 1954



Between Misquamicut and Weekapaug - 1954

## **CRMC Regulations:**

### **Catastrophic Storms Assent**

Under the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's CRMP or Red Book, the Executive Director may grant emergency assents or permits when catastrophic storms, flooding and/or erosion has occurred at a site under CRMC jurisdiction and where, if immediate action is not taken, the existing conditions can cause the following:

1. Immediate threat to public safety and health; and
2. Immediate and significant adverse environmental impacts.

These Emergency Assents will permit only action at the affected site that will correct the conditions of #1 and in a manner that is consistent with the other policies of the CRMP and CRMC.

### **Post Hurricane and Storm Permitting Procedures**

The CRMC also has the authority to, under its own policies, establish emergency procedures for the issuance of assents in the event of the following:

- A hurricane, severe storm or other disaster has caused severe and widespread damage in portions of CRMC jurisdiction; and

- The Governor has submitted a formal request to the President to declare areas within CRMC jurisdiction a major disaster area;
- The Executive Director of the Agency determines the probable number of applications for CRMC assents directly resulting from the disaster will cause major delays in the orderly processing of the assents and therefore impose an undue hardship on disaster victims and other applicants; and
- The CRMC will provide adequate public notice of its decisions to impose these emergency procedures.

(The CRMC also encourages other state agencies to adopt similar emergency permitting processes in order to speed appropriate reconstruction and minimize adverse economic and environmental impacts.)

In the event of a hurricane, severe storm or other disaster, the CRMC may also impose a temporary moratorium for a maximum of 30 days from the disaster declaration. The purpose of this is to provide adequate time for the Agency and affected coastal communities to assess damages, determine changes in natural features that may change vulnerability to damage, and identify mitigation opportunities, if instituted. Temporary moratoriums shall apply to applications for new alterations and activities requiring an assent not resulting from the disaster, and reconstruction of all residential and associated residential structures, commercial and recreational structures in both A-zone and V-zone that were destroyed by 50 percent or more by storm-induced flood, wave and wind damage.

During the moratorium, priority will be given to necessary and/or emergency alterations, reconstruction or replacement of essential public facilities (roads, bridges, public utilities, etc.).

Procedures and priorities for addressing post-storm reconstruction applications after the moratorium are as follows:

1. The CRMC will give priority to consideration of applications for reconstruction of structures which were physically damaged or destroyed 50 percent or more by storm-induced flooding, wave or wind damage.
2. Applicants for repair or reconstruction in A, B or C flood zones, as delineated in the FEMA maps, may follow the procedures in Section 300.14 Maintenance.
3. The CRMC will give final priority to any application for new alterations and activities unrelated to the disaster.
4. If the executive director determines that a large number of post-storm applications will be received, and that the normal processing will result in an undue burden or hardship to storm victims, and the executive director determines there is no overriding programmatic policy or goal to be served by holding a group of applications, then the executive director may, in specific instances, waive the requirements of a new assent for structures physically destroyed 50 percent or more by storm-induced flood, wave and wind damage and allow for emergency permits to be issued.