The Town of Edgartown

Emergency Preparedness Guide

For Hurricanes & Other Disasters

Copyright September 24, 2006

Dear Edgartown Resident and Visitors:

The Town of Edgartown continues to be one of the most desirable places to live or visit in the Northeast. One of the major reasons for this is the high quality of life available to its populace. In the wake of recent storms, Town employees did their best to ensure that residents could return to this quality of life as quickly as possible.

We continue to look at ways of improving our service, preparation, and response to major events in the community. This booklet is one of many steps that we have taken to ensure that our Town is prepared for any type of disaster.

We encourage each of you to look at your own preparations as well. Each household should be self-sustaining for a **minimum of three days** because aid may be unable to reach us due to storm damage. Since Northeasters, other dangerous storms and hurricanes are the most common threat to our area; this booklet focuses primarily on that type of natural disaster. This information can also be adapted to other types of catastrophe.

The only real defense against disasters is the informed readiness of the Town and its residents. Together we can continue to make The Town of Edgartown safe as well as beautiful.

Sincerely,

The Board of Selectmen for the Town of Edgartown

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Terms You Need to Know

Tropical Wave: A cluster of clouds and/or thunderstorms without a significant circulation and generally moving from east to west through the Tropics.

Tropical Depression: A cluster of clouds and/or thunderstorms without a significant circulation and sustained wind speeds of less than 39mph.

Tropical Storm: An organized system of strong thunderstorms with top sustained winds of 39—73 mph. *Tropical storms can quickly develop into hurricanes*. When winds reach 39 mph, the storm is given a name.

Tropical Storm Watch: Tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area of warning *within 36 hours.*

Tropical Storm Warning: Tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area of warning *within 24 hours*.

Hurricane: An intense tropical weather system with a sustained wind speed of 74 mph or higher.

Hurricane Watch: Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of warning *within 36 hours.* During a hurricane watch, prepare to take immediate action to protect your family and property in case a hurricane warning is issued.

Hurricane Warning: Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of warning *within 24 hours.* Complete all storm preparations and immediately follow local emergency management officials' advice.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale

Scale #(Category)	Sustained Winds (MPH)	Damage
1	74-95	Minimal
2	96-110	Moderate
3	111-130	Extensive
4	131-155	Extreme
5	155+	Catastrophic

The category of a storm does not necessarily relate directly to the damage it will inflict. Lower category storms (and even tropical storms) can cause substantial damage depending on what other weather features they interact with, where they strike, and how slowly they move.

Northeasters can also cause substantial damage depending on several factors.

Eye: The hurricane's center; a relatively calm, clear area usually 20 – 40 miles across.

Damaging winds begin well before the hurricane eye makes landfall.

Eye wall: The dense wall of thunderstorms surrounding the eye that contains the strongest winds within the storm.

Hurricane Size: Hurricane destructive winds and rains cover a wide swath. Hurricane-force winds can extend outward about 25 miles from the eye of a small hurricane and to more than 150 miles for a large one. *The area over which tropical storm-force winds occur is even greater.*

Storm Surge: A large dome of water, 50 to 100 miles wide that sweeps across the coastline near where a hurricane makes landfall. It can be move than 15 feet deep at its peak. *Storm surge is the greatest potential threat to life and property associated with hurricanes.*

Tornado: Tornados usually occur in severe thunderstorms when wind changes direction and height, causing rotation. *Wind speeds range from 40—318 mph.*

Household Disaster Plan

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to flooding and wind damage.
- The Town of Edgartown does have lots of areas that are in evacuation zones: Know your area; some residents with special needs may be required to evacuate, and some residents may prefer to do so.
- If you are a visitor, Leave early and go far! We are on an island, if you can leave early, you must than pass over the Cape Cod Bridges before all the visitors on Cape Cod. The bridges close with winds in excess of 70 mph.
- If you decide to evacuate, you should try to evacuate to the home of a friend or family member. Red Cross Emergency Evacuation Centers should only be used as a last resort, and **not all centers will be open for every emergency.** Monitor local radio and TV stations or go to (need web site for evacuation instructions) for a list of evacuation centers.
- Red Cross Evacuation Centers will not accept animals. If you decide to evacuate with your pets, the town of Edgartown has established one pet friendly hurricane shelter. For additional information, refer to page 22 of this booklet.
- Have an out-of state contact so all family members have a single point of contact during an emergency.
- Make sure you have a full tank of gas. Gasoline pumps are electrical and will not operate if a storm takes out the power lines. Also check your oil, tire pressure, and vehicle fluids.

- If you elderly or disabled and need assistance putting up your hurricane shutters, please contact the **Council on Aging 508-627-4368** for information and ask to be placed on the assistance list.
- Check your insurance coverage, keeping in mind that flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. For general insurance information, visit www.iii.org . This site can also assist you in making a home inventory.

- Stock non-perishable supplies and a disaster supply kit. Use the list in the following section as a guideline.
- Have written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so.

Hurricane Preparedness

Before the Storm Season Begins:

- Test emergency equipment
- Trim trees and shrubs. Do not trim trees and shrubs after a hurricane watch or warning has been issued! The debris will not be picked up and can become harmful missiles during a storm.
- Inspect roof and home for potential dangers.
- Purchase shutters or plywood for doors and windows.
- Clear rain gutters and drains of debris.
- Update emergency contact list.
- Update disaster supply kit.
- Update and review evacuation plans.
- Have a plan in place for your pets.
- Review insurance policies.
- Prepare your boat.
- Register with the Special needs Evacuation Office, if necessary. (See Page 21 for details)

Hurricane Watch:

- Listen to a weather radio or local radio or TV station for latest storm information.
- Prepare to put inside any lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants, and all other objects that can be picked up by the wind. Tie down those items too large to move inside.
- Prepare to cover all the windows of your home using shutters or plywood. **Tape will not prevent windows from breaking.**
- Fill all your vehicle gas tanks.
- Fill the grill's propane tank
- Recharge appropriate equipment, electrical tools, cell phone, etc.
- Complete any last minute shopping for disaster supply kit.
- Start making additional ice.

Hurricane Warning:

- Keep monitoring media broadcasts.
- Cover doors and windows with shutters or plywood.
- Set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings and do not open them unless absolutely necessary.
- Prepare your emergency water supply.
- Take in any remaining items not secured.
- Unplug your TV, computers, and other electronic equipment. Take down your satellite dish or antenna, if possible.
- Cover your pool pump and add extra chlorine to prevent contamination.
- Place valuables and personal papers (birth certificates, Social Security cards, marriage license, insurance policies, etc.) in a waterproof container.
- Have an adequate amount of cash on hand as banks may be closed and ATMs will not work if the electricity is out.

During a Hurricane:

- Stay indoors; an interior room without windows is best.
- Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered.
- Keep listening to the weather radio.
- Keep a flashlight with you at all times in case the power goes out.
- Be alert for tornadoes. (Stay in a secure room/closet without windows.)
- If you are in a multi-story building, go to an interior first-floor room.
- **Do not go outside during the eye of the hurricane**. During the eye of the hurricane, the wind and rain may stop anywhere from a few minutes to more than an hour but **the storm is not over**. The wind will quickly pick up again from the opposite direction, and it may be with greater force than before.

After a Hurricane:

- Remain indoors until an "all clear" is issued by officials.
- Do not use your telephone unless it is an emergency. Do not call 911 unless there is a life threatening situation. For non life threatening emergencies call 311.
- Notify ComElectric of a power outage by dialing 1-800-303-3570
- Call **311, the Island Communications Center;** to report impassable streets, water main breaks, or live power lines down.
- Stay away from standing water and all fallen or low hanging wires.
- Listen for a "boil water order". Assume the water supply is contaminated until you hear otherwise. (See Page 15 for water decontamination instructions.)
- Inspect your home for damage. Make a list of damaged items, and take photos for the insurance company.

- Use flashlights at all times. For safety reasons, avoid using candles unless battery powered.
- Remove and store shutters or plywood as soon as safely possible.
- Do not "sight see"; roads will be dangerous due to debris, downed trees, and the potential for downed power lines.
- Contact the Edgartown Emergency Management Command Center to obtain information regarding ice, water, food distribution, and other information:

In Person: **Chief Peter G. Shemeth**

By Phone: **Edgartown Fire Department 508-627-5167**
Communication Center 311

Disaster Supply Checklist

- **Water**-at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days.
- **Food**—see list on following pages
- **Clothing**-seasonal/rain gear/sturdy shoes
- First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs: 2 weeks' worth
- **Special items for infants and elderly**-formula, diapers, bottles, medications / prescription drugs; two week supply, denture needs
- Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture Wipes / Antibacterial lotion / Sunscreen / Insect Repellent
- Flashlight and batteries
- **Radio** – battery operated with NOAA weather radio
- **Cash**- Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods
- Extra set of keys
- Toys, books, games
- **Important Documents** – in a waterproof container or water-tight re-sealable plastic bag: insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social security card, etc.

- **Tools**—keep a set with you during the storm
- Vehicle tanks filled
- Grill and Fuel—Charcoal or Propane
- **Camp Stove** or alternate cooking method / fuel
- Lighter / Matches
- Fire Extinguisher
- Gas for generator, if applicable
- **Pet Care Items**—identification / immunization records / medications / supply of food and water for 3 to 7 days / carrier or cage / muzzle and leash
- Camera and Film
- Water purifying agents—iodine or chlorine
- Disposable plates and utensils / paper towels / toilet paper
- Manual can opener
- **Garbage bags**—clear for FEMA debris, regular for other garbage
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape
- Gloves for yard work
- Cleaning supplies
- Phone set that does not require electricity

Non-Perishable Food List

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Select food items that are compact and light-weight.

If the electricity goes off:

FIRST, use perishable food and foods from the refrigerator.

THEN, use the foods from the freezer. To minimize the number of times you open the freezer, post a list of freezer contents on it. In a well-filled, well-insulated freezer, foods will usually have ice crystals in their Centers (meaning foods are safe to eat) for at least three days.

FINALLY, begin to use non-perishable foods and staples:

- Ready-to eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples: Sugar, salt, pepper, mustard and ketchup packets
- High energy foods: peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Dried fruits and fresh fruits with a longer shelf life
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons, or persons with special diets
- Comfort/stress foods: cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops
- Instant coffee, tea bags

Emergency Disinfection of Drinking Water

Boiling: Vigorous boiling for one minute will kill any disease-causing microorganisms present in **tap** water. The flat taste of boiled water can be improved by pouring it back and forth from one container to another, by allowing it to stand for a few hours, or by adding a small pinch or salt for each quart of water boiled.

Chlorine Bleach: When boiling is not practical, chemical disinfection should be used. Common household bleach (without any additives) contains a chlorine compound that will disinfect water. The Procedure to be followed is usually written on the label. When the necessary procedure is not given, find the percentage of available chlorine on the label and use the information in the following table as a guide.

Available Chlorine	Drops per Quart of Clear Water
1%	10
4-6%	2
7-10%	1

If strength is unknown, add ten drops per quart of water. Double amount of chlorine for cloudy or colored water or water that is extremely cold.

The treated water should be mixed thoroughly and allowed to stand, preferably covered, for 30 minutes. The water should have a slight chlorine odor; if not, repeat the dosage and allow the water to stand for an additional 15 minutes. If the treated water has too strong a chlorine taste, it can be made more pleasing by allowing the water to stand exposed to the air for a few hours or by pouring it from one clean container to another several times.

Tincture of Iodine: common household iodine from the medicine chest or first aid kit may be used to disinfect water. Add five drops of 2% United States Pharmacopoeias (USP) Tincture of iodine to each quart of clear water. *For cloudy water add ten drops and let solution stand for at least 30 minutes.*

Safety Tips

- Sterilize bathtubs, jugs, bottles, and cooking utensils. Let the tub and other containers dry, and then fill them with water that can be used for sanitary purposes.
- Water may be contaminated due to flooding. Assume that the water is not safe and only use properly stored water. Refer to the Emergency Drinking Water Disinfection instructions in this booklet, Page 15.
- Do not use matches until gas lines have been checked for leaks.
- Avoid sight-seeing; roads will be dangerous due to debris, downed trees, and the potential for downed power lines.
- Avoid downed power lines, and all metal objects near downed power lines.
- Treat all intersections as a 4-way stop. *Drive only if absolutely necessary.*
- Be aware of pest problems, such as mice, rats, insects, and snakes.

Safe Generator Usage

- Avoid carbon monoxide injuries by using all grills outside.
- Ground your generator and never use a portable generator inside your home. Do not connect them to your home's electrical system. Refer to the Generator Usage section of this booklet
- Operate chain saws and other lawn equipment safely. Read all equipment warnings carefully.
- If you choose to buy a generator, make sure you get one that is listed with the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).
- Look at the labels on lighting, appliances, and equipment you plan to connect to the generator to determine the amount of power that will be needed to operate the equipment. Choose a generator that produces more power than will be drawn by the combination of appliances, etc. you plan to connect to the generator including the initial surge when it is turned on.
- Follow the directions supplied with the generator. **Under no circumstances should portable generators be used indoors, including inside a garage**. Adequate ventilation is necessary and proper refueling practices, as described in the owner's manual must be followed.
- It is a good idea to install one or more Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms inside your home to detect if CO gas from the portable generator is entering your home.
- Be sure to let the generator cool down before refueling. Do not store the fuel in a garage or anywhere else inside the home, as vapors can be released that may cause illness and are a potential fire or explosion hazard.
- Unless your home's power supply was installed with a disconnect to the main power feeding lines, power you put into your home from a generator could "backfeed" into the main line and cause problems for the electrical utility company, your neighbors, or yourself.

- "Backfeeding" is supplying electrical power from a generator at the residence into the incoming utility lines. This occurs when the necessary equipment used to isolate the generator from the incoming power lines is not installed.
- Improper connection methods not only endanger the building occupants, but pose a serious hazard to electric utility workers as well.
- When placing your generator outside, consider where the emission of fumes will occur. Do not place a generator where fumes can enter your home, or a neighbor's home.
- Consider turning the generator off at night, if possible, so that your neighbors are not subject to the noise and/or fumes.

Evacuation Centers & Pick-up Sites

You should try to evacuate to the home of a friend or family member who lives outside the Evacuation Zones. Visitors should try to evacuate early, getting off the island as there are limited Centers, the boats stop running and the bridges get closed. LEAVE EARLY AND GO FAR! Red Cross Evacuation Centers should only be used as a last resort.

Not every site will be open for every evacuation!

Please monitor the local radio or TV stations, or call the **Edgartown Fire Department 508-627-5167 - Communication Center 311** to find out which centers are available when an evacuation order is given.

Edgartown School
Red Cross 508-775-1540

Boys and Girls Club
Do not use the gym.

Edgartown Town Hall—(Winter Only)
Has a generator

Pets - Call Animal Control at 508-627-9711

TRANSPORTATION

Emergency Management will activate specific bus pick-up points within the hurricane evacuation zones. These pick-up points will be identified when you call into the Emergency Operations Center at **Edgartown Fire Department 508-627-5167**.

Elderly & Other Special Needs Residents

The Edgartown School Library is designated as the current location for care of individuals who are dependent upon assistance with activities of daily living or who require specific medical monitoring.

You must pre-register for assistance services. Do not wait until a hurricane is pending. You may call the Council on Aging at 508- 627-4368 to receive information.

Pet Owners

Pets are not allowed at Red Cross hurricane shelters with the exception of service animals such as seeing-eye dogs. Make arrangements for your pets as part of your household disaster planning. If you must evacuate, it is best to take your pets with you.

You contact the Edgartown Animal Control Officer by calling the Island Communications Center at 311. You should call before a hurricane or other disaster occurs.

If you have to leave your pets behind as a last resort, prepare an emergency pen in your home that includes a three-day supply of dry food and a large container of fresh water. Make sure that their immunizations are up to date and that they are wearing a collar with identification.

Boat Owners

Trailered Boats:

Store your boat inside a garage or warehouse if possible. If you must leave your boat outside do the following:

- Place wooden blocks between the frame member and axle inside each wheel..
- Release about half of the air from the tires.
- Fill the boat one-third full of water to help hold it down.
- Tie your boat and trailer securely to a strong object such as a telephone pole or large tree using heavy-duty line.

Boats in the Water:

- Hurricane moorings should be located in advance.
- Make a practice run to check accessibility, depth of water, bridges and locating aides and/or obstructions to navigation. (Drawbridges will not open for boats if an evacuation has been ordered.) Locate in advance objects to secure lines to or drop anchors.
- Record and keep with you your vessel registration number, a description of your vessel and where it is secured.
- Check your contract or policy with the marina. Know your responsibilities.
- Wind direction will reverse during a hurricane. Secure your boat for the possibility of wind coming from all directions.
- Seal all openings to make the boat as watertight as possible. If your boat is on a davit, open the boat drains before securing.
- Strip the boat of all movable equipment and latch down everything that cannot be removed.
- Be sure not to block the passage of other boats, which have moorings farther inshore.

Preserving Important Information

Make a complete inventory of your home, garage, and surrounding property. Be sure to include any out buildings. The inventory can be either written or videotaped. Include information such as serial numbers, make and model numbers, physical descriptions, and price of purchase. (Include receipt, if possible.)

Vital documents such as birth and marriage certificates, tax records, credit card numbers, financial records, and wills and trusts can be lost during a disaster. Make two photocopies of these documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box, keep one copy in a safe place in the house, and give the second copy to a trusted out-of state relative or friend.

What to Do After a Traumatic Event

- Talk to other people about your experiences, reactions, and feelings.
- Take it easy – don't push yourself!
- Plan extra time to do usual tasks – you may be distracted and not able to function as efficiently as usual.
- Reestablish your normal routine as soon as you can do so comfortably – this helps you regain a sense of stability and predictability. This is especially important for children.
- Discuss your current emergency plan with family and friends and prepare for future crises.
- Don't forget to eat, and eat wisely – avoid junk food, excessive sugar, alcohol, and caffeine.
- Rest, but get some exercise.
- Recognize that the information about the event can be as upsetting as it is helpful.

- Turn off your radio or television when you start to feel overwhelmed by the news.
- Reach out to help others – either through volunteer activities, donations of supplies, money, or personal support to friends or neighbors.

If you start to feel overwhelmed or increasingly stressed, you may need to seek professional help.

Helping Children Cope with a Traumatic Event

- Be calm and reassuring. Your demeanor will either calm or alarm them.
- Turn off the radio or TV – overexposure to the media can be traumatizing.
- You should acknowledge to your children that the event is upsetting to you, too. Remember to remain calm and have a composed demeanor.
- Give your children extra time and attention.
- Let your children ask questions – it is important that they express their feelings about the event.
- Keep regular schedules for activities such as eating, playing, and going to bed to help restore a sense of security and normalcy.
- Consider how your child can help. Allow them to assist with age-appropriate activities. Children are better able to regain their sense of power and security if they feel they can help in some way.

Disposing of Debris in Edgartown Before and After a Storm

Within 72 hours of an impending storm do not trim trees, cut branches, or place any objects such as furniture or appliances outside. The Highway Department may not be able to remove them and they have the potential to become deadly missiles or projectiles.

- Once you have received your last scheduled garbage pick-up prior to the impending hurricane, secure your trash containers by placing it in the garage or tool shed. As a last resort, securely tie it to your fence or a tree.
- Do not begin plumbing work that is not of an urgent nature unless it can be completed within 48 hours of an impending hurricane. Assistance from the Edgartown Water Company may not be available if a water line is accidentally broken.
- Once the "All-clear" has been given by Edgartown Emergency Management, the Highway Department will mobilize to clear the main arteries in order to provide access for emergency vehicles. They will also work to safely restore water service Where it has been interrupted.
- Place all trees, branches, and other storm debris in the swale in front of your home, being careful not to block fire hydrants or valves. Do not place debris near telephone poles or other utilities that may need to be accessed for repairs.
- **After a hurricane has left the area, there may be a delay in refuse removal. Call your service provider to determine when pick ups in your area will resume and do not place receptacles out until then.**
- It is important to separate flammable and non-flammable debris. Any debris or material that is to be bagged must be done so in clear see-through bags. FEMA contractors will not pick up material that is not visually identifiable.

- Continue to separate your recyclable materials; do not include them in your garbage or in the clear bags.
- After the storm, if you have questions, contact the Island Communications Center at 311 for non emergency questions.

Terrorist Attack

These are general guidelines that apply whether an attack has occurred in your area or elsewhere in the United States. Effects can occur anywhere, also known as "consequence" of an attack.

Be Informed:

- ➢ Be aware of your surroundings. Know where emergency exits are located in buildings you frequent. Notice where exists are when you enter unfamiliar buildings and be aware of alternate exits.
- ➢ Think about how you would leave a crowded public area or get out of heavy traffic if you had to. Do not be afraid to move or leave if you feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- ➢ Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave your luggage unattended. If **you see something** unusual such as suspicious packages or strange devices, **REPORT IT** to police or security personnel.
- ➢ Listen to authorities. They will help you decide if you are in immediate danger.

Be Prepared:

Expand your Disaster Supply Checklist to include the following as well:

- ➢ Dust Masks
- ➢ Eye Protection
- ➢ Plastic Sheeting and duct tape

Avian Bird Flu Threat

Many experts disagree on whether an epidemic will occur or not. Watch news broadcasts and health warnings but do not worry, be prepared.

Stock up on Essentials

If there is an avian flu pandemic, you'll want to minimize your chance of catching it by staying indoors; you might even be required to stay home if the government asks that people remain in quarantine or "shelter in place." Stocking up today on at least seven days' worth of essentials such as water, nonperishable food, emergency and medical supplies will help you get through an extended time at home if an outbreak happens. Once you've purchased these items, store them in a place where you will not be tempted to dip into them for everyday use. See the checklist in this brochure but add to it.

Have an Outbreak Plan

It may feel odd or uncomfortable to talk to family members and loved ones about the worst-case pandemic scenario. But if that scenario strikes, you will be much better off if you have a plan decided on and ready. Talk with your friends and family about how you'd respond to an epidemic. Figure out how you would care for them and what your first response and responsibilities would be; this is an especially important conversation to have with family or friends who have special care needs. Get involved with local groups and community efforts aimed at preparing for a pandemic. If your community has no program in place yet, find out how you and your neighbors can get one started.

Pick up the Habits of Healthy Behavior

The habits that can help keep you healthy in an outbreak are the same good health habits that can keep you from catching the common cold: maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly and get sufficient rest. Particularly in a flu outbreak situation, it will

be important to wash your hands thoroughly and often, reminding loved ones — especially children — to do the same. Be diligent about covering coughs and sneezes; **learn to cough into your arm at the elbow, as well** as with tissues, teaching the children in your family to do the same. Also teach children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.

Your Edgartown Emergency Management will be monitoring this and will keep you informed.

Important Phone Numbers and Websites

Dukes County non-Emergency Number 311
Dukes County Emergencies 911 for Fire, Police, Medical

CELL PHONE USERS SHOULD CALL 508-693-1212

EDGARTOWN Police non- emergency 508-627-4343

EDGARTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
Non-emergency 508-627-5167

Animal Protection MSPCA 508-627-8662

FEMA
www.fema.gov

References

1. NOAA Hurricane Basics: www.noaa.gov
2. FEMA food & Water in an Emergency:

   www.fema,gov

3. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

   Emergency Disinfection of Drinking Water

Prepared by
Edgartown
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT