

# **Harbor Hurricane Preparedness Plan\***

## **A. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS**

The order of priority when preparing Fairhope Yacht Club Harbor for a hurricane is (1) Protect human life, (2) Seek to prevent or minimize personal injury, (3) Reduce the exposure of property to damage, (4) Minimize damage to property that cannot be relocated and (5) Seek to restore normal operations as quickly as possible.

The most critical task is securing boats, which may move about and damage the harbor and other boats. The harbor is not a viable sanctuary for boats of any type during a direct hurricane hit. The wet slips, dry and loft storage are not designed to accommodate boats during heavy winds and/or storm surge. These elements tend to push and pound boats against pilings, docks, and other vessels. Loft storage boats are in danger of being moved by wind or being lifted into racks above with tide surge. Increased weight of water-filled boats could collapse the rack system. The Harbor Committee encourages early evacuation of all boats in dry and loft storage, and trailerable boats in wet slips.

Circumstances may prevent evacuation of some boats. This Harbor Hurricane Preparedness Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan"), in addition to describing evacuation procedures, outlines recommended practices for securing boats in the harbor. This Plan also describes procedures for communicating and carrying out hurricane response for all other aspects of the harbor – before, during, and after the storm.

Successful preparation for a hurricane depends on how early and how orderly preparations are made, even though the chances may be great that the harbor will not suffer a direct hit. Boat owners are encouraged to be aware of tropical weather conditions. Preparation procedures should be well underway during the U.S. Weather Service Hurricane WATCH Phase. All boats should be secured or evacuated by the time a hurricane WARNING is issued. A last minute call for area evacuation by the Emergency Management Agency could prevent the necessary time secure or evacuate a boat and properly secure the harbor.

Boat owners with a boat in a wet slip, dry or loft storage are required to be familiar with this plan. Timetables for implementing the various stages of the plan will depend on the storm's forward speed and direction, probability of a storm hit, and the expected intensity of the storm. Remember - to attempt to secure boats while under storm influences is at the risk of lives. The inconveniences of early action are a small price to pay for safety.

Be aware that this Plan assumes a direct hit (the eye passing directly over or within 25 miles of the harbor) and may work only for lower category hurricanes. A direct hit by a Category II or stronger storm could result in major damage to the boats and harbor facilities. This Plan is designed to limit the damage to the harbor and boats. For a major storm this Plan may or may not be adequate.

This Plan should be reviewed annually, prior to the beginning of hurricane season (June 1) and revisions made as necessary.

## **B. PLAN SUMMARY**

[Note: numbering of conditions may be found to be unfeasible because of the necessity for the Harbor Committee to act on an earlier timetable to complete preparations prior to weather deterioration and directives by the Emergency Management Agency. These time frames are based on landfall of the hurricane EYE. Storm conditions will affect preparation well in advance of eye landfall.]

### Condition Activities: Preseason

Review and revise plans, lists, and inventories. Generate boat owner awareness. Select Harbor Hurricane Response Team.

### Condition 5: Season Starts (June 1)

Normal operation. Monitor weather, continue hurricane awareness.

### Condition 4: Storm in Vicinity

A storm has developed and could pose a threat to our area.

### Condition 3: 72-48 Hours to Landfall by the Hurricane Eye

A storm is threatening. Begin implementation of Plan.

### Condition 2: 48-36 Hours to Landfall by the Hurricane Eye

A hurricane may strike within 36-48 hours. Complete securing of harbor and boats. Hurricane WATCH has been issued by the National Hurricane Center and the County Emergency Management Agency probably recommends voluntary evacuation low-lying areas. Determine harbor closing and establish limited entry.

### Condition 1: 36-12 Hours to Landfall by the Hurricane Eye

High probability of strike. Hurricane WARNING has been issued by the National Hurricane Center. Securement and/or evacuation should be completed.

### Condition 0: Hurricane Conditions

Winds and flooding could stop further securement and/or evacuation efforts. Hurricane Response Team maintains communication if possible.

### After the Storm: Return and Recovery

Reestablish communications. Conduct search, rescue, damage assessment, salvage, and cleanup.

### Harbor Committee Responsibility

The Harbor Committee is not responsible for damage to any boat from storms or any other act of God. In the event that a boat is likely to cause bodily harm, loss of life, or damage to property; for example, on fire or sinking, the Harbor Committee reserves the right to take any prudent action necessary to ensure the safety of the harbor and surrounding boats. Any costs incurred in doing so will be charged to the boat owner.

### Hold Harmless Agreement

The boat owner holds the Harbor Committee harmless for accidental damage caused when the

Harbor Committee takes prudent emergency action before, during or after a storm. Emergency storm preparations and salvage operations include any activity that the Harbor Committee deems necessary to protect persons from injury or property from damage.

#### Wet Slip Evacuation May be Advised

Both boats and the harbor will suffer less damage if boats are not left tied to docks during a direct hit of a hurricane. With that in mind, the Harbor Committee is aware that mandatory evacuation is nearly impossible to conduct. Also, mandatory evacuation requirements can lead to human safety issues. It is in everyone's best interest to avoid damage to the harbor – damage to the harbor could affect the availability of a place to dock and the future amount of slip fees. Notice to evacuate wet slip boats will be the decision of the Harbor Committee according to guidelines in this Plan. The Harbor Committee will issue the call to evacuate only if it is deemed an absolute prudent and necessary safety action. Evacuation is not mandatory, but strongly advised. Evacuation must be done early enough to allow wet slip boat owners time to safely and properly anchor their boats and to return.

The Harbor Committee will provide information and assistance to encourage the decision to voluntarily evacuate. The Harbor Committee will work to increase the boat owner's knowledge and comfort level for evacuating. If boat owner evacuates the harbor to anchor in Mobile Bay, the Harbor Committee will, to the best of its ability, provide return shuttle boats from local anchorages until such time as the Harbor Committee deems it unsafe to operate such shuttle boats.

#### Dry and Loft Storage Evacuation is Strongly Advised

Evacuation of the dry and loft storage by trailer is the safest course of action for your boat. Unloaded racks systems will fare better. If boats are left in the racks they should be tied down – although conditions or circumstances may prevent doing so. The Harbor Committee is not responsible for tying down or securing any boat in dry or loft storage and assumes no obligations to tie down or otherwise secure dry or loft storage boats. This is a time consuming task.

#### Boat Handling Ceases When Winds Reach Sustained Speed of 25 Knots

Launching, recovering, or otherwise handling a boat is unsafe when wind speed reaches 25 knots. Hoist operations will cease at that time.

#### Plan Review

The Harbor Committee will annually review the Plan to determine if improvements and changes should be made. The Harbor Committee will present the Plan to the Board of Governors for approval on all policy and procedure recommendations. Notification of policy changes is will be made in the form of a notice to be included in the annual slip renewal.

#### Safety Consideration

The overriding consideration in hurricane preparation and decision making in this Plan is the safety of lives. Preventing damage to property is secondary to human safety.

### **C. Harbor Hurricane Response Team**

The Harbor Committee will assemble, prior to June 1 of each year, a Harbor Hurricane Response Team (HHRT). This team shall consist of:

1. Harbor Committee Chair - HHRT Chair
2. Harbor Committee Vice-Chair- Volunteer Coordinator
3. Dry Storage Manager
4. Wet Slip and Pier Managers
5. Two boat owners from wet slips and 1 boat owner from dry or loft storage

#### **D. PLAN – PRESEASON**

During “Preseason,” prior to June 1, when hurricane season begins each year, there is no hurricane threat. This is the time to review the Plan and update or revise it as necessary. The harbor will be inspected and housekeeping and maintenance will be done with storm readiness in mind.

Responsibilities in Preseason are:

##### Harbor Committee

- Remind slip and space assignees of responsibilities during hurricane season via notice in the Mainsheet. Specify that boat owners who do not attend to their boat(s) under the color of this Plan will be billed for services and materials necessary for preparation, response, and recovery.
- Review and update the detailed map of the harbor [Appendix A] showing locations of power shutoff points, sources of auxiliary power, potential hazard areas such as from fallen objects, trees, poles, etc.
- Inspect all areas of the wet slips and dry storage for pre-hurricane season safety, housekeeping, repair and maintenance. Correct problems immediately!
- Develop a prioritized list for all aspects of the harbor of equipment, records, etc. for evacuation. Mark these items for quick identification and prepare a checklist. Consider the value of the item to getting business backing progress after a hurricane. [Appendix B]
- Decide membership of the HHRT, including identifying volunteers to run shuttle boats.
- Update hurricane contact lists and distribute to HHRT.

##### Dry or Loft Storage and Wet Slip Boat Owners

- Review your boat liability insurance policy. The boat owner can be liable for damages caused by his/her boat.
- Devise a plan for securement or evacuation of your boat(s).
- Consider an alternate contacting the event of your absence during storm preparation, and inform them of your plan.
- Keep an adequate inventory of storm gear aboard and maintain dock and anchor lines of proper size and condition.

#### **E. PLAN – CONDITION 5, SEASON STARTS (JUNE 1)**

In Condition 5, beginning June 1 when hurricane season begins each year, there is no hurricane threat. This is the time to begin conscientiously monitoring the US Weather Service Radio and

the Cable Weather Station for development of tropical systems.

Responsibilities in Condition 5 are:

#### Harbor Committee

- Monitor weather forecasts.
- The Harbor Committee will use two sources of weather information to trigger Condition 4
  - National Weather Service/NOAA
  - County EMA

#### Wet Slip, Dry and Loft Storage Boat Owners

- Keep your boat evacuation and/or securement ready.
- Wet slip boat owners must adhere to Harbor Rule 2.24 that all boats must be able to get underway under its own power.

### **F. PLAN – CONDITION 4, STORM IN THE VICINITY**

In Condition 4 there is a tropical depression, tropical storm, or hurricane within a 1,200-mile radius of the harbor. This is the time to assemble the HHRT and to develop a preliminary action timetable for this particular storm. Be aware that progression from Condition 4 to Condition 0 – hurricane in progress can happen swiftly!

Responsibilities in Condition 4 are:

#### HHRT

- Evaluate the storm threat potential by plotting the advance and assessing weather reports, and determine a timetable for action for this particular storm.
- Perform storm readiness inspections on area and equipment.
- Confirm readiness of harbor documents for evacuation.
- As much as possible, determine the number of absentee boat owners expected.
- Schedule Harbor Committee members for storm duties.
- Coordinate securing harbor facilities and equipment.
- Assemble the shuttle volunteers for briefing.

#### Dry Storage Manager, Wet Slip and Pier Managers

- Meet with Fleet Captain, Jr. Advisor and volunteers to determine timetable to begin moving and/or securing Club boats in the Juniors' area to intended securement sites.
- Closely inspect harbor areas for potential problems. Pay special attention to areas where wave action will be severe. Ready extra line, chafing gear and fendering.

### **G. Plan – Condition 3: 72-48 Hours to Landfall**

In Condition 3, we are under a storm threat. This is the time to activate the full hurricane response team and to be well into implementation of the Plan. Everyone should frequently monitor radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins of the storm's progress.

Responsibilities in Condition 3 are:

#### HHRT

- Prepare harbor for storm readiness.
- Prepare to issue a notice that evacuation of wet slips and dry storage is recommended.
- Evaluate the storm threat potential by plotting the advance and assessing weather reports.
- Issue a notice early in the WATCH stage that evacuation of dry and loft is recommended.
- If needed, activate the wet slip evacuation shuttle volunteers.
- Be prepared to step up preparation timetables if forward speed and intensity increase.

#### Dry and Loft Storage Boat Owners

- Evacuation of your boat to safety is strongly advised. If you are not evacuating your boat, properly secure your boat. The Harbor Committee strongly advises against leaving boats in dry or loft storage during a storm.
- Act soon ... Weather conditions may deteriorate quickly.

#### Wet Slip Boat Owners

- Evacuation of your boat to safe anchorage or to haul out is advised.
- If not evacuating, properly secure your boat. Boats left docked in the harbor should have extra lines, fendering and chafing gear. Recommendations for securing a boat are posted at the harbor and at Appendix C to this Plan.
- Once your boat is secured, leave it and don't return once the wind and waves are up. Under NO circumstances should you ride the hurricane out on your boat.
- Act soon ... Weather conditions may deteriorate quickly.

Regarding evacuation shuttle service arranged by the HHRT using Club boats:  
Volunteers will be available to run shuttle boats. Shuttle service using Club boats will cease at 24 hours prior to predicted hurricane landfall.

### **H. PLAN – CONDITION 2: 48-24 HOURS TO LANDFALL**

In Condition 2, a hurricane may strike within 48-24 hours – a hurricane WATCH has been issued. This is the time to complete securing of harbor and boats. The Emergency Management Agency probably has recommended voluntary evacuation of low-lying areas by this time. Entry to the harbor is limited at this time to those involved in hurricane preparation and boat owners in the process of evacuating or securing their boat.

Responsibilities in Condition 2 are:

#### HHRT

- Make continual checks of storm readiness preparations of all areas of harbor
- Continue to evaluate the storm threat potential.
- Be prepared to step up preparation timetables if forward speed and intensity increase.

#### Dry Storage Manager, Wet Slip and Per Managers

- Secure any loose items that can be affected by wind.
- Assist evacuating wet slip boats and wet slip boat owners asking to haul out.

## **I. PLAN – CONDITION 1: 24 - 0 HOURS TO LANDFALL**

In Condition 1, there is high probability the hurricane will strike – a hurricane WARNING has been issued. This is the time to have completed evacuation and securement efforts.

Everyone should continue to closely monitor radio, TV, NOAA Weather Radio, or hurricane Hotline telephone numbers for official bulletins. Follow instructions issued by local officials. LEAVE IMMEDIATELY IF ORDERED TO DO SO. Under any circumstances - leave areas that might be affected by storm tide or a stream flooding.

Anyone working on the docks or near the water is required to wear life jackets.

Responsibilities in Condition 1 are:

### **HHRT**

- Continue to evaluate the storm threat potential.
- Make final checks of storm readiness of all areas of the harbor.
- Prevent unnecessary traffic to and from the harbor.
- Remove essential files and records from the Harbor Committee filing cabinets in the Club office.
- Be prepared to step up preparation timetables if forward speed and intensity increase.
- Organize post-storm rendezvous.

### **Dry and Loft Storage and Wet Slip Boat Owners**

- Have completed all storm preparation efforts for your boat.
- Stay clear of the harbor, unless you are a member of the Harbor Hurricane Response Team.

### **Dry Storage, Wet Slip and Pier Managers**

- Securement of harbor areas should be completed.
- Make a final check of remaining boats. If conditions permit, secure any remaining boats and photograph all areas of the harbor.
- As late as is practical, remove fire extinguishers and box covers and store in a predetermined location.
- Lash dock boxes to stands and wire/lock tops closed.
- Wire shut all power centers covers. Use 3" strips of wire.

## **J. PLAN – CONDITION 0: HURRICANE**

In Condition 0, the harbor will be under hurricane influence. No boat or harbor preparation will occur. Concern is for human safety only.

Responsibilities in Condition 0 are:

### Harbor Committee Chairperson and Harbor Hurricane Response Team

- Remain in safe shelter.

### Dry and Loft Storage Boat Owners and Wet Slip Boat Owners

- Remain in safe shelter; do not be aboard in a Hurricane!
- One of the most dangerous mistakes a skipper can make is to stay aboard during a hurricane. There is little, if anything, a skipper can do to save a boat when winds are blowing 100 mph, tides are surging, and visibility is only a few feet.

## **K. PLAN – RETURN AND RECOVERY**

After the hurricane has passed, everyone is advised to remain in a protected area until announcements are made on radio or TV that dangerous winds and flooding have passed. Telephone communications may not be possible. Listen to public radio broadcasts for this information. HHRT members are asked to return to the harbor as soon as practical to assess damage, begin the cleanup process and to return the harbor to operating conditions.

Controlling damage after the hurricane is important. This can save time and money for the harbor and boat owners. Depending on the extent of storm damage, admittance to the harbor may be limited to only boat owners, authorities, insurance personnel, and only those contractors and surveyors on assignment. Salvage operations will be discussed with owners and their insurance companies before moving damaged boats.

If there have been high waters, be careful of snakes or other animals that may have gotten into buildings or other high points.

Responsibilities in Return and Recovery are:

### HHRT

- Assemble at a designated time and place.
- Re-enter harbor only when the threat of severe weather has passed.
- Conduct a safety inspection and document damages photographically before permitting boat owners on the property. If necessary, request assistance from the Emergency Management Agency, fire department, utility companies, or police.
- Clearly mark and blockade hazard areas; be particularly careful of fallen electrical lines and leaking fuel.
- Evaluate harbor condition reports as provided by Wet Slip and Dry Storage Managers.
- Begin clean up and repair procedures only after insurance company has been contacted and/or legal documentation of damage has been accomplished.
- Determine the priorities for getting the harbor back in business and make assignments accordingly.
- Make recommendations for improving the Plan (in writing within two weeks of Hurricane).

### Dry Storage Boat Owners and Wet Slip Boat Owners

- Remain clear of the harbor until a notice to safely re-enter has been given.
- Review insurance policy and prepare to evaluate and report damages to insurance agency.

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*\* This is an extract from **FYC Constitution By-Laws Policies**, p42-50, which is the governing document.*