

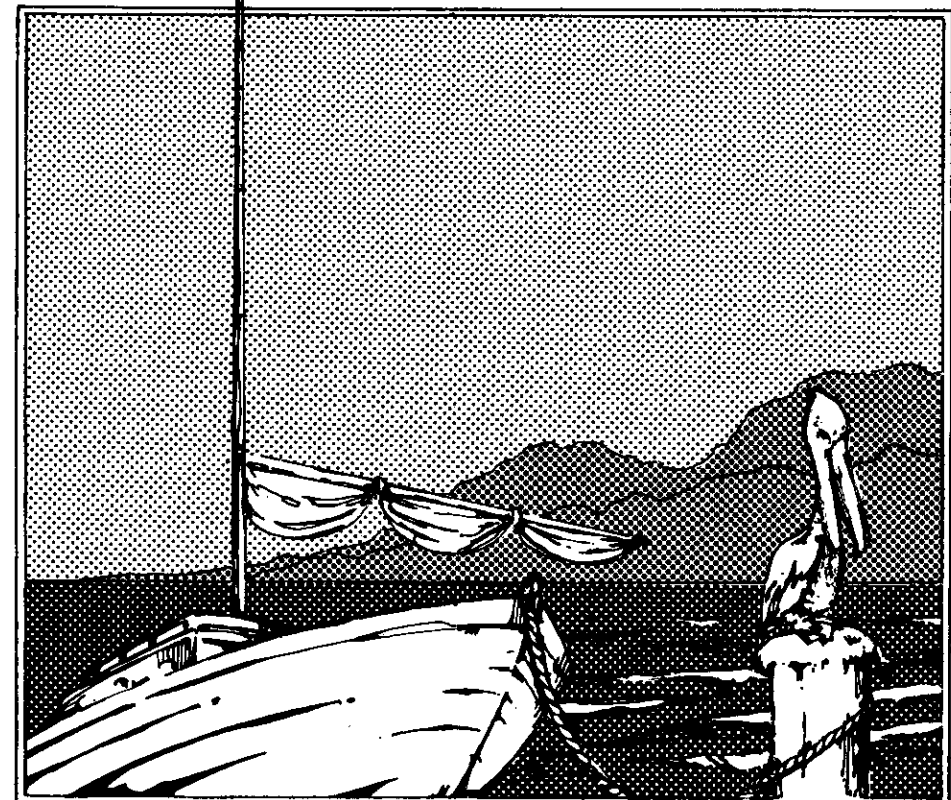
# Boaters' CHECKLIST

FOR HURRICANES &  
SEVERE WEATHER

## BOAT OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY

A boat owner/operator may be held responsible for damages caused by his vessel during a natural disaster. Normally the National Weather Service will issue a 24-hour warning. However, in some instances only a 12-hour warning will be given. Upon receiving this warning, the boat owner/operator should immediately take precautionary measures to see that his boat is properly secured.

This checklist is furnished as a guide to the acquisition of required safety equipment and safety procedures which, if complied with, should reduce the possibility of damage caused by boats. It is stressed, however, that this does not necessarily exempt the owner/operator from being held responsible should his boat cause damage to another's property; nor will the acquisition of required safety equipment and the following of the suggested safety procedures necessarily assure that no damage will occur to the boat or injury to its occupants.



**Louisiana Sea Grant College Program**

Center for Wetland Resources  
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LOUISIANA SEA GRANT

# C · H · E · C · K · L · A · S · T

## PRELIMINARY ACTIONS

- 1. Hurricane moorings should be located in advance. Permission should be obtained from appropriate persons. For keel boats, make certain there is enough water at low tide.
- 2. Practice run should be made to check accessibility, depth of water, and bridges. Locate aids and/or obstructions to navigation and objects to secure lines to or suitable places to drop anchors. (Remember, draw bridges may not open for boats during evacuation procedures.)
- 3. Record and keep with you the vessel's registration number (engine numbers, etc.) description, and location where it was secured.
- 4. Inform the local marine patrol or police officials of your secured vessel's identification and location.
- 5. Vacations, business trips, or other reasons for being out of town during hurricane season will necessitate your making plans with someone knowledgeable of these procedures to care for your boat, should the need arise.
- 6. Check your contract or policy with your marina. Know your responsibilities and liabilities with your boat and the marina.

## EQUIPMENT

- 1. Lines of adequate length (several hundred feet) and size (minimum  $\frac{3}{8}$ " ) and preferably of nylon (for strength and stretch) should be available. Have more than you think you will need. Line size will vary with size of vessel.
- 2. Chafing gear for all lines should be used to protect them from wear at contact points. Old rags are very good. If water hose is used, be sure it is large enough for line.
- 3. Fenders of adequate size and strength (old tires are good) should be well secured to your boat to protect it from other boats, pilings, etc.
- 4. Radio equipment for receiving weather information (NOAA Weather Radio) and communications should be available.
- 5. Anchors should be oversize (25 pounds or heavier) and all methods to improve holding power should be used.
- 6. Fuel tanks should be kept full, if possible, during hurricane season. There is no time or supply available just prior to a hurricane.
- 7. Batteries should be kept fully charged. An extra battery would be a good idea. Keep bilge pumps in working order.

## SECURING THE BOAT

- 1. Prepare in advance a checklist of things needed to secure vessel. Assemble equipment and supplies and keep them together.

- 2. Large trees may be used to fasten vessel. Ensure that they are alive and have a good root system. Some may be stronger than man-made pilings. Be sure to check the strength of things you tie to.
- 3. Tides can reach heights of 10 to 20 feet above normal, particularly when they back up into waterways. When securing lines, take care to consider this. Your boat could be pulled under or be damaged as the tide rises.
- 4. Wind direction reverses itself in a hurricane. Secure boat for all directions. Use more than one anchor.
- 5. Strip boat of all movable equipment such as canvas, sails, dinghies, radios, and cushions and lash down all you cannot remove, such as tiller, wheels, and booms.
- 6. Seal all openings (air conditioning duct tape is good) to make boat as watertight as possible.
- 7. If you leave your boat on a davit, open the boat drains before securing.

## SECURING A BOAT ON TRAILER

- 1. Place wooden blocks between the frame member and the axle inside each vessel. Let about half the air out of the tires and then fill the boat 1/3 full of water to help hold it down. The blocks will prevent damage to the springs from the additional weight of the water.
- 2. Tie your boat and trailer down securely to a strong object such as a telephone pole or large tree, using heavy duty line.
- 3. If boat cannot be secured in this manner, remove the boat from the trailer and partially fill it with water to reduce its vulnerability to high winds, and tie the boat trailer down.

## HURRICANE WARNING

- 1. Leave early for safe harbor. Be sure not to block the passage of other boats that have moorings farther inshore. Cooperate with other skippers in securing their boats and assist them as long as safe and prudent. Follow the directions of the police. Remember, there may not be room for your boat at the last minute.
- 2. Do not stay aboard. Even small hurricanes with sustained winds of 75 MPH have gusts of 110 MPH that would blow anyone off the deck. Rescue efforts are impossible. If living on board, do not stay on board! Seek safe shelter on land.

## AFTER THE HURRICANE

- 1. Check for damage to boat and equipment before moving.
- 2. When proceeding to home port, watch carefully for obstructions, loose debris in the water, etc. Markers and other aids to navigation may be missing.