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1 PREPARE EARLY

This is the most important storm prep tip. Nos. 2-9 are all dependent on No. 1, so remember, perfect weather is storm prep weather!



3 REDUCE WINDAGE

Remove gear and accessories (dodgers, biminis, sails, extra fuel tanks, dinghies, paddleboards, etc) that can blow away or be damaged, or cause damage to the boat if they become airborne.



5 FIXED DOCK VS. FLOATING DOCK

Fixed docks are tough as you'll want lines at a length to account for tide and surge for the duration of the storm. While floating docks don't have this issue, they can float higher than their pilings and float away with your boat. Or they can simply ride higher than normal on their pilings, thus causing enough stress to loosen the pilings and float away.



7 POWER

Test batteries for charge level. Consider buying backups to ensure bilge pumps continue working for duration of storm.



9 GIMME (FLOATING) SHELTER

Consider identifying a "hurricane hole" where the boat can ride out the storm. You may want to consider using more than one anchor. Selecting a site has to be done well ahead of any storm forecast. Consider how you'll get to and from your boat in this new location. Also, these seemingly well-protected areas must be evaluated for how they might fare in the worst of conditions and changing wind directions. If a breakwater is your idea of protection, consider that there are many examples from previous storms of breakwaters being overcome by storm surge and waves.



2 RIDE IT OUT ONSHORE

Storing onshore has proven a good option based on post-storm data. But it also raises the issue of toppling. Some marinas are now securing boats to the ground with embedded anchoring systems and straps. Secure boat stands to one another to keep them from working free as the boat reacts to the wind. Many insurance policies pay hauling costs for named storms.

4 CHECK ALL LINES

Bigger is not better – More is better. Doubling and tripling up on dock lines has proven successful in the past. Spread the load over as many cleats as possible. For moored boats, check all mooring hardware well ahead of any storm warning and add extra lines. In all cases, it's best to replace lines used every day with new lines that have not been under tension and weathered since launch.

6 PROTECTION

Add chafe gear to all lines. Add line snubbers to absorb shock whether at a dock or mooring. Add fenders. You can never have too many fenders in a storm!

8 MAKE IT WATERTIGHT

Check all hatches, portholes, companionways, etc., for proper seals. Get some plugs for your exhaust ports and make a note to remove them after the storm. Close all thru-hull fittings except those used for bilge pumps.

10 PAPERWORK

There's always paperwork. Become familiar with your insurance policy well before a storm. Be sure you'll have a copy accessible after the storm in case the worst has happened. Photos of your boat and accessories will be invaluable. Take all paperwork off the boat.

