

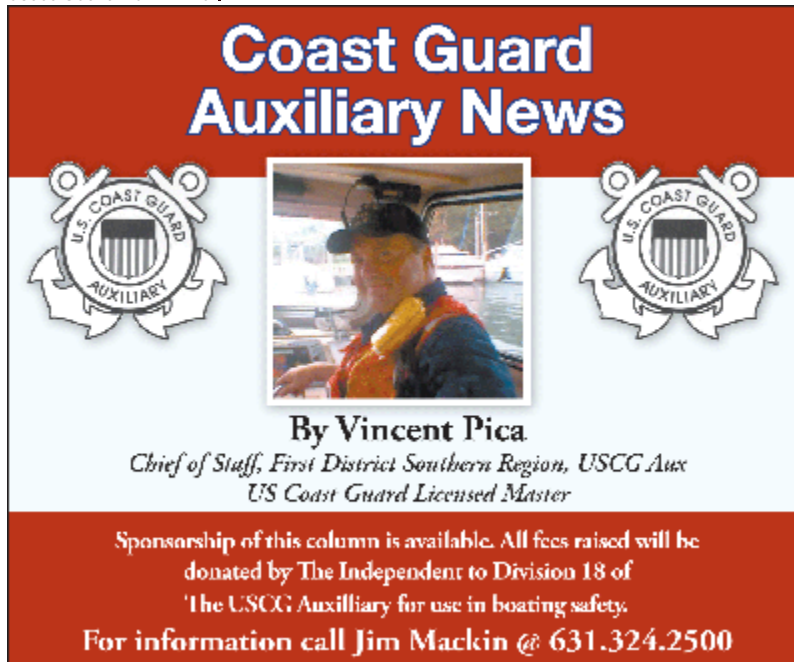
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THE INDEPENDENT

Vincent Pica
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United States Coast Guard Auxiliary




Coast Guard Aux NEWS

June 06, 2012



The graphic features a red header with the text "Coast Guard Auxiliary News" in white. Below the header is a white section containing two U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary emblems on either side of a central photograph of Vincent Pica. Below the photo, his name and title are listed. A red footer contains sponsorship information and contact details.

**Coast Guard
Auxiliary News**



By Vincent Pica
*Chief of Staff, First District Southern Region, USCG Aux
US Coast Guard Licensed Master*

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Hunkering Down - Hurricanes On Long Island 2012...

By Vincent Pica

Last week, Hurricane Beryl gave the southeast US a pretty good dousing – and us a warning. Almost without exception, we get the tail, shoulder or rump of one or two of the dozen or so hurricanes that form in the Atlantic between the Caribbean and Africa and bring so much destruction and misery with them as they thunder west and north.

What Is It?

A hurricane is, in the words of scientists, an organized rotating weather system that develops in the tropics. Technically, it is a "tropical cyclone" and it is classified as one of three states, with hurricanes being further classified into levels of destruction:

Tropical Depression: sustained winds of 38 mph, or

Tropical Storm: sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph, or

Hurricane: sustained winds of 74 mph or greater.

By the way, hurricanes are called typhoons in the western Pacific and cyclones in the Indian Ocean.

Categories Of Hurricanes

We've all heard the weather reporter state that "Hurricane X is now a Category 3 hurricane and headed for so and so." What does that mean?

Category One: Anything not tied down is going e.g. Irene, 2011

Category Two: Trees will go down. Roofs in jeopardy e.g. Floyd, 1999

Category Three: Many trees will go down, small buildings in jeopardy e.g. Betsy, 1965

Category Four: Complete destruction of many buildings, e.g.: Hugo, 1989

Category Five: Catastrophe, wrath of God e.g. Andrew, 1992 Katrina, 2005

USCG hurricane aircraft reported Andrew and Katrina had generated winds over 200 mph at various times.

Tidal Surges

For islanders, as bad as the winds will be, it is the tides and tidal surges that will do most of the damage, which is why even these tails that go by every year leave so much trouble behind. The storm tide is added to the astronomical tides. And when those waves hit something solid, they generate force dozens of times more powerful than wind of the same speed. Andrew generated a storm tide of 17 feet. Camille in 1969? 24 feet.

Add to that the population growth in our area and the increase in the value of homes and it can spell either "an absolute disaster" or "they were prepared."

Ready For The Glancing Blow?

Look, if a Category Four or Five gets up here like in 1938, there are no levels of preparedness except evacuation. A storm surge like Camille's basically means that everything "south of the highway," as real estate agents like to classify the choicest properties on Long Island, is gone for all intents and purposes. But what if the glancing blow like Ivan's in 2004 or, Beryl, who just left town, came in head-on? How can you be ready?

Before the Storm Arrives

1. Have a family action plan – if you're caught at school or at work, who do you call? To grandmother's house we go?

2. Flashlights working? Do you have ample canned goods and water supplies on hand? Cash? Portable radio?

3. Where ARE you going to move the boat? Don't even THINK about staying on her.

4. How about your prescription medicines? A first-aid kit?

What To Do During The Storm

1. Have the radio or TV on. If the power goes out and you don't have a portable radio, I'd get the kids in the car and "to grandmother's house we go . . . !"

2. Propane tanks on your property? Shut them off completely.

3. Turn the refrigerator up all the way and don't open the door idly.

4. Fill the bathtub with water. How about the big spaghetti pot? Anything that can hold water and keep it clean.

5. If ordered to evacuate, do so. Immediately. And tell someone where you are going.

6. When evacuating, don't drive across flowing water. Two feet of flowing water can carry your car away. Yes. Only two feet of moving water. Turn around and go another way.

After The Storm

1. If you were ordered to evacuate, don't go back until the area is declared safe.

2. If you see someone who needs rescuing, unless the threat of loss of life is imminent, call 9-1-1.

3. See standing water? Do you know if any power cables lie in it?

4. Never use candles and other open flames indoors. Keep the flashlight at your side.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. But Beryl just tapped us on the shoulder.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at [DSO-HR](#) and we will help you "get in this thing..."